**SCHOOL *of*
GRADUATE STUDIES**
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

**East Tennessee State University
Digital Commons @ East
Tennessee State University**

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Student Works

12-2010

The Impact of Job-Embedded Professional Development Coaches on Teacher Practice.

Donna T. Hamblin Morgan
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.etsu.edu/etd

Part of the Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation

The Impact of Job-Embedded Professional Development Coaches on Teacher Practice

_____

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

_____

by

Donna T. Hamblin Morgan

December 2010

_____

Dr. Eric Glover, Chair

Dr. Virginia Foley

Dr. Elizabeth Ralston

Dr. Pam Scott

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Job-Embedded Professional Development Coaches on Teacher Practice

by

Donna T. Hamblin Morgan

The intent of this qualitative study was to understand the impact of job-embedded professional development coaches on teacher practice. Coaches in this study worked with teachers to plan lessons, model lessons with feedback, and disaggregate data.

This qualitative study was conducted using interviews of coaches to gain their perceptions of the work they did with teachers and how this work influenced teacher practice. Teachers were interviewed to determine their perceptions of the impact coaches' work had on their classroom practices. Analysis of the coaches and teachers' reflective journals was also conducted to establish the participants' perceptions of their work together and the impact on teacher practice.

Several themes emerged from the data analysis that assisted the researcher in forming the theoretical framework for the study. All coaches and teachers interviewed reported feeling positive about the work they did together planning lessons, modeling lessons with feedback, and disaggregating data. The researcher identified several factors that promoted the coaches' influence on teacher practice and several barriers that limited the coaches' influence on teacher practice. Teachers also identified traits and actions of an effective coach.

Based on the research all the teachers grew in various ways from the work they did with the coaches. Teachers reported changing their practices and attitudes as well as trying new approaches, strategies, and programs. They appreciated coaches' help with classroom management, discipline, and emotional support. Some teachers gained confidence in their

teaching abilities, increased their expectations of students, and allowed students to take charge of their own learning. They went deeper with their teaching and engaged more in reflective thinking about why they do things the way they do.

Job-embedded coaching has the potential to influence teachers' practices and subsequently student learning. Recommendations from study findings may assist teachers, coaches, and school leaders in building an effective coaching model.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dad Eugene W. Hamblin who instilled in me a work ethic that has served me well throughout this process as well as throughout my life. Our Sunday morning phone conversations always gave me the boost I needed to continue working to achieve this goal. I am not sure who wanted this more: you or me? Thank you for being my ultimate "coach" throughout this process.

I was fortunate to have many supporters throughout this mentally, physically, and financially challenging process. However, my very special friends, Carol Lang and Debbie Dunbar who helped me through one of the biggest challenges in my life, deserve the label of "guardian angels". Without your healing hands and hearts I am not sure I would have continued my journey. God only knows the love and gratitude I have for you both.

To my family and extended families who have continued to support me with words of encouragement and understanding as I missed many family gatherings due to this personal goal. Thank you for being there for me. I know you are just a phone call away. I look forward to getting back to some normalcy and having years of fun times together. I am a lucky girl.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to the participants of this study. You folks are great. You shared your insights openly and honestly and allowed me access into your private thoughts about the work you do. I enjoyed getting to know each of you and admire the hard work and dedication you show every day when you step into your classrooms. Your students are fortunate to experience learning with you. To my fellow coaches, you folks are the best. Thank you for the insightful conversations about the work we do. Your love of learning and enthusiasm for teaching are contagious. You have my undying respect and enormous gratitude for the support you have given me.

I would like to express a special thank you to my committee members: Dr. Eric Glover, Dr. Virginia Foley, Dr. Elizabeth Ralston, and Dr. Pam Scott for their guidance, wisdom, and encouragement. I extend a special note of thanks to Dr. Glover and Dr. Foley for coming to my home when I could not make it to you. Thank you for not giving up on me when I wanted to give up on myself. Your kind words and reassurance that you were there for me were such a comfort. I felt so fortunate to have you on my side. Dr. Glover, thank you for inspiring me, challenging my thinking, and giving me valuable feedback. Each time we met I left feeling rejuvenated. Thank you for taking this journey with me.

I would also like to thank Cathy Walsh, my editor; Kim Allison, my auditor; and all my colleagues for your words of encouragement and being my sounding board. A big thank you to Bill Nuss, Todd Barnett, Tony Spears and Julia Decker for reminding me not to take myself too seriously. You keep me grounded and laughing. I appreciate your mentoring and guidance. To the Lunch Bunch – what can I say? You are my daily support system. Thank you for being "my shoulder to cry on".

CONTENTS

9

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, or NCLB is the first piece of legislation to highlight the importance of professional development. Since NCLB (2001) the nation has turned its attention to gaining a better understanding of how students and teachers learn. School leaders have focused their attention on improving teacher efficacy as well as student learning and achievement due to increased accountability. In addition school administrators are faced with hiring teachers who are highly qualified as defined by NCLB. Teachers must have in addition to certification a college major, master's degree, or successful achievement on an assessment for each content area they teach. Lastly, the achievement of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by NCLB is the minimum level of performance school districts and schools must achieve each year. If schools do not achieve AYP for 2 consecutive years, they are placed on the list of nonperforming schools. Although there was little research on what constitutes a highly qualified teacher, there was research that showed teacher quality had an impact and was the most influential factor for promoting student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wenglinsky, 2000). Sanders and Rivers (1996) concluded that "the single most dominating factor affecting student academic gain is teacher effect" (p.6). Wenglinsky's (2000) study identified professional development as an important factor in predicting higher student achievement. He claimed, "Changing the nature of teaching and learning in the classroom may be the most direct way to improve student outcomes" (p.11).

With these studies in mind, researchers increased their examination of how quality professional development influenced teacher effectiveness and student learning. The research showed that quality professional development activities had a significant impact on student

learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Guskey, 2002). Unfortunately leaders and teachers found that traditional forms of professional development and training methods were ineffective. In my review of the literature on professional development, many expressed dissatisfaction with traditional forms of professional development that consisted of "drive-by" (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 46) workshops. Outside consultants, content area specialists, or college professors traditionally delivered these forms of training. Unfortunately the research suggested these traditional forms of professional development were not effective (Kise, 2006; Knight, 2007, 2009; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Speck & Knipe, 2000; Zepeda, 2008). These researchers documented that without support and accountability from school administrators many teachers never tried implementing the newly learned skill, strategy, or program; or they gave up in frustration and returned to what they did before. In the 1980s Joyce and Showers presented evidence that began the shift in thinking about how teachers learned and what tools they needed to transfer newly learned skills into the classroom. However, even with this evidence there were school systems across the country still using the traditional drive-by forms of professional development (Hirsh, 2009).

Often the traditional forms of professional development ignored the needs of the adult learner. Adult learners needed the same things that student learners needed. Lieberman (1995) stated that, "what everyone wants for students – a wide array of learning opportunities that engage students in experiencing, creating, and solving real problems, using their own experiences and working with others – is for some reason denied to teachers when they are learners" (p. 591).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) advocated for a powerful new definition of professional development based on a model of continuous improvement.

According to NSDC professional development means "a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement" (Hirsh, 2009, p.12). With the unveiling of this new definition the NSDC sought legislative amendments to the definition of professional development outlined in NCLB. Hirsch (2009) explained that, "These amendments clarify which practices qualify for federal, state, and district funding, and specify NSDC's position that professional development should directly impact a teacher's classroom practices and student achievement" (p. 10). The NSDC's definition called for all educators to engage in professional learning as a part of the workday. This definition is "…a moral imperative. The inequity in teaching quality and educational resources across classrooms, schools, and districts denies some students the opportunities for academic success" (Hirsh, 2009, p. 11).

According to Knight (2007) "The challenge for educational leaders is to create and deploy professional development that makes it easier for teachers to implement change initiatives" (p.4). Knight (2009) further explained that in order to move schools forward educational leaders have to advance professional learning through a variety of approaches. "One of the most promising approaches appears to be coaching" (Knight, 2009, p. 1). Coaching offers authentic learning, time and support for teachers as they implement new knowledge. Knight (2009) said, "Coaching puts teachers' needs at the heart of professional learning by individualizing their learning and by positioning teachers as professionals" (p.2).

Statement of the Problem

Over the last 3 decades researchers presented evidence that traditional forms of professional development have been ineffective in changing teacher practice and student learning (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Dubin, 2010; Wei, Andree, & Darling-

Hammond, 2009). Nevertheless, Darling-Hammond stated, "We still see teachers engaged in really short…workshops, rather than [the] ongoing, sustained support that we now have evidence changes practices and increases student achievement" (as cited in Sawchuk, 2009, p. 7).

"Educators and policymakers naturally want to know what research says about coaching. Unfortunately, the quickest answer to that question is, not enough" (Knight, 2009, p. 192). According to Knight there are a number of studies about the effects of coaching. However, many do not meet the standards of rigorous research. Knight (2009) cited two reasons why this is the case: one is the lack of outlets for professional publication in the area of professional learning, and two, many forms of coaching are newly developed approaches.

No longer is it acceptable to expect teachers to return to the classroom from a *sit and get* workshop, conference, or any form of training and implement the newly learned strategy without opportunity to have follow-up support (Bush, 1984; Joyce & Showers, 1982). Zepeda (2008) agreed, "Attending to professional learning is more than just arranging for professional development to occur on certain days. This type of professional development is counterproductive to what we know about how teachers learn" (p. 2).

Joyce and Showers (1982) as well as Bush (1984) presented research on the transfer of skills in traditional types of training. They concluded that less than 10% of teachers returned to the classroom and implemented the new skills; however, when teachers received support, such as coaching, the implementation rate went up to 90% (Bush, 1982; Joyce & Showers, 1982). Through interviews with hundreds of teachers, Knight (2007) found that "teachers are unanimously critical of one-shot programs that fail to address practical concerns" and many teachers criticized "training that lacks follow-up and that fails to recognize their expertise" (p. 2).

Research Questions

This study examined the impact of job-embedded professional development on teacher practice as delivered by instructional coaches. This study compared coaches' and teachers' perceptions of job-embedded professional development.

Research questions used to guide this study included:

1. How do coaches perceive their roles?

    A. How do coaches perceive that their work planning lessons influences teacher practice?

    B. How do coaches perceive that their work with teachers on data disaggregation impacts the teacher's lessons?

    C. How do coaches perceive that their modeling and feedback of lessons affects teachers' instructional practices?

2. How do teachers perceive the roles of job-embedded professional development coaches?

    A. How do teachers perceive that the coach's work with planning lessons impacts their practice?

    B. How do teachers perceive that the use of data disaggregation with a coach impacts their planning of lessons?

    C. How do teachers perceive that modeled lessons from the coach and feedback affects their instructional practices?

Significance of the Study

The intent of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of how using job-embedded professional development coaches impacts teacher practice in the classroom. The

results of this study contributed to the knowledge base of job-embedded professional development. The research suggested that the teacher is the single greatest factor in increasing student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wenglinsky, 2000). These studies are significant for staff developers, school leaders, and educators in determining the potential impact of job-embedded professional development on teacher practice and thus on student achievement.

DuFour and Eaker (1998) noted that,

School leaders must be attentive to the content of professional development-the actual skills and knowledge to be acquired through the professional development initiative. They must also consider the importance of the process of professional development – the specific strategies used to help personnel acquire the intended knowledge and skill (p. 52).

By examining the use of job-embedded professional development delivered by instructional coaches, this study provided information to support the value of job-embedded professional development on teacher practice. By measuring the impact of job-embedded professional development on teachers' practices in one school system in upper East Tennessee, this study suggested that using instructional coaches influences teacher practice.

<div align="center">Scope of the Study</div>

This study addressed the research questions referenced above by using qualitative methodology. I conducted interviews with 3 coaches and 11 teachers. The purpose of these interviews was to gather perceptions and viewpoints regarding the impact of job-embedded professional development on teachers' practices. I maintained the overall focus of the interview questioning, maintained objectivity throughout the study, and reflected regularly to ensure this position.

Statement of Research Bias and Limitations

I began my journey as a teacher leader in my first year of teaching. I worked at a laboratory school on a university campus and had the opportunity to influence numerous method students and student teachers. I took seriously my role as a mentor and model teacher and openly shared my love of teaching. What I discovered while in this position for 6 years was that not only did I enjoy teaching students I equally enjoyed working with future teachers to develop their practices.

As a teacher with 21 years of classroom experience and now a system-wide curriculum coach for the school district engaged in this study, I am a strong advocate of job-embedded professional development and the promise coaching brings to the professional development of teachers. Having just left the classroom 2 years ago, I understand the frustration, insecurity, and lack of support teachers feel as they try to implement new initiatives into their classroom practice. Often each summer my colleagues and I attended professional development workshops about a new program. On one occasion I remember walking out of yet another summer workshop with a colleague and feeling overwhelmed that I had just gotten comfortable with last year's program, and now we were moving on to something new. My colleague laughed and echoed my attitude "this too shall pass" (Prince, personal conversation, n.d.). The frustration of trying to learn a new program every year and moving on to something else the next year wore on me. I would typically use the program half-heartedly in my classroom because I never thought my administrator expected me to use the program. Therefore, I never thought I truly implemented the new program successfully. That was until 7 years ago when my school administrator made the commitment to adopt a school-based reform model and continue it for at least 3 years. She promised the faculty that we would not focus on any other programs.

In school year 2003-2004 we implemented the school reform model. The first 2 years were tough, and I struggled to implement all phases of the model in my classroom. However, the principal gave me the support and the time I needed to become comfortable with the model. She also had high expectations of the faculty to implement the model in our classrooms and frequently visited our rooms to ensure fulfillment of these expectations. Each summer a consultant from the company that developed the school-reform model came to our school for 2 to 3 days of trainings on the next phase of the model. In February of each school year the administrator took a team of teachers to the national conference sponsored by the company that developed the school-reform model. This conference allowed teachers, administrators, staff developers, and coaches an opportunity to network and learn from each other about implementing the model. The positive results our school experienced with students' achievement scores caught the attention of the school district's administration. The school system supported the initiative by sending two teachers to become trainers of the school-reform model. In school year 2004-2005 I was selected as one of the two teachers who attend the train-the-trainer workshop. This same year the school district hired the first literacy coach to work in an elementary school in danger of being placed on the list of low performing schools as defined by NCLB. This coach's role was to help the teachers develop their teaching strategies in literacy instruction.

During the summer of 2005 I along with my colleague trained one elementary school in our system with the school-reform model. Over the next 2 summers we trained three additional elementary schools in our district. In school year 2005-2006 the district hired its second literacy coach. The 2 literacy coaches moved to one of our elementary schools and set up a literacy center. They used the literacy center as their home base, but they traveled to the other seven

elementary schools in the district. The two coaches divided the eight elementary schools between them and worked with the teachers to better their practices with teaching reading. The coaches planned and modeled lessons; gave feedback to teachers as they practiced with a new teaching strategy; and analyzed data from three sources: The TCAP assessment, the state achievement test; the Pearson Assessment, a predictive system-wide assessment; and the Palm Pilot Program used to measure reading levels in grades kindergarten through second grade. In the summer of 2006 the two literacy coaches held their first summer literacy workshops for the elementary teachers in our district. These workshops were an opportunity for the teachers to learn new strategies for teaching reading and set goals for the next year in literacy instruction. As the teachers returned to their schools to implement the new strategies learned in the workshop, the two literacy coaches were there to support them with resources, feedback, and data.

In school year 2006-2007 the school district hired two additional coaches: a system-wide technology coach and an instructional coach assigned to a low performing elementary school. Coaching became a part of the school district's professional development plan. During this school year the system received a grant to send the four coaches in the district to the National Staff Development Council's (NSDC) Coaching Academy. After the weeklong training academy these coaches committed to a year of data collecting about the work they conducted in our system with teachers. Their data were recorded in an electronic coaching log submitted to the NSDC. During this same school year, my administrator asked me to attend a weeklong training workshop in the coaching component of the school-reform model. This was my first formal training in coaching teachers.

In school year 2007-2008 the school district initiated a system-wide coaching academy with one teacher from each school in the district participating. These teachers attended the academy for training in coaching teachers in their own schools. The four system-wide coaches trained the building-level coaches once a month at central office during the school day. The building-level coaches were provided classroom release time, two half days a month or one full day a month, to work with teachers in their building. The building principal and the coach made this decision. My principal selected me to attend the system-wide coaching academy. Each principal decided what area the building-level coach would focus on during the school year. My role as a building-level coach was to train the teachers in my school and help them implement the school-reform model in their classrooms. The coaching academy was a 2 year commitment. The school district also hired the first system-wide math coach in January of that year.

In the summer of 2008 I was the sixth coach hired by the system. I am currently the curriculum coach for the 8th grade. My role as the curriculum coach is the same as the other system-wide curriculum coach in that we both work with one school only unlike the two literacy coaches who work with all eight elementary schools, and the math and technology coaches who work with all the schools in the district pre-k thru 12th grade.

In school year 2009-2010 with the school district facing budget constraints the school system decided to retain the coaches in our system for another 2 years and funded our positions with Title monies. Because of this funding change, the three elementary coaches became Title I literacy coaches. Now we have three literacy coaches serving our six Title I elementary schools. The two elementary school that are not Title I schools receive coaching support from the system-wide technology coach and the math coach only. As a coaching team, we thought the school district valued our work in the system by retaining us in this tight budget year. However, this

situation generated much discussion among the coaches as to how much longer we would be able to continue our work with teachers. Were we having an impact on teacher's instructional practices? We thought we were having an impact, but the school system had not formally evaluated our coaching model. It was through these discussions with fellow coaches that I chose to conduct my research on the impact of our work with teachers. As a result of these experiences, I became an advocate of job-embedded professional development. Consequently, I had to put aside my personal bias toward job-embedded professional development and examined this topic openly and honestly. This study examined one school district's use of three literacy coaches assigned to six Title I elementary schools. It specifically looked at the impact of coaching on teacher practice. I sought to understand if the model of instructional coaching used in this system had an impact on teacher practice.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration - the act of teachers working together in order to achieve something (Seed, 2008)

Empowerment - when teachers are empowered they are directly involved in decisions that affect their classrooms, their students, and the school (Seed, 2008)

Mentoring – the task of acting as a mentor to a novice teacher (Seed, 2008)

Professional Development – "a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement" (cited in Hirsch, NSDC, 2009, p. 12).

School-Based Coaching – involves experts in a particular subject or set of teaching strategies working closely with teachers at an individual school or district to improve classroom practice and ultimately student achievement. (Russo, 2004)

21

Collaborative Apprenticeship – "is a professional development model designed to support teacher learning in their professional teaching community during the school day" (Glazer, Hannafin & Song, 2005 p. 59)

Overview of the Study

This chapter establishes the need for the completion of this study. What is the impact of job-embedded professional development coaches on teachers' practices within one school district? In Chapter 2 I include a review of the literature that pertained to professional development and adult learning theory. Chapter 3 consists of the methodologies and procedures used to gather data including a description of the participants, the procedures used, and method of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the data collected and the findings of the study. Finally, chapter 5 provides the conclusions, summary, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 is viewed as a turning point in the history of education reform in the United States (Cornett, 1995; Seed, 2008). There was a growing perception of the need to improve the quality of teachers' professional development experiences, but most improvement efforts were marked by more rhetoric than action. Most professional development activities in the 1970s and 1980s took the form of workshops, conferences, university courses, or lectures conducted by "experts" (Collinson & Ono, 2001). These were typically isolated events with no follow-up to promote the transfer of knowledge and skills from the workshop to the classroom. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) referred to this approach as the "drive-by" workshop model (p. 46).

The most pointed critique of the drive-by workshop approach came from Fullan who affirmed, "Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant changes in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms" (Fullan, as cited in Collinson & Ono, 2001, p. 230). While American schools are still grappling with the issue of how to provide teachers with professional development experiences that will have an enduring effect on teaching and learning, teachers in high achieving countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, China, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia routinely take part in high quality job-embedded learning experiences (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Dubin, 2010; Wei et al., 2009).

Historically teachers' knowledge and skills were virtually excluded from school reform efforts that focused instead on scientific management systems, curriculum packages, and standardized testing (Darling-Hammond, 1998). More than a decade ago Darling-Hammond

acknowledged that, "At its root, achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching—and schools that are organized to support teachers' continuous learning" (Darling-Hammond, 1998, p. 7). Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) recently reinforced this point emphasizing that *professional learning* is essential for enabling teachers to help their students master the sophisticated and analytical thinking required in the technology-driven 21st century.

There is growing consensus that high quality professional development is critical for the future of today's students and the educational system itself (Kent, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Hirsh & Killion, 2009; Seed, 2008; Wei et al., 2009). Ideally professional development activities would be specifically designed for teachers at each stage of their teaching career (West, 2002). Under the current system roughly 30% of new teachers leave the profession while still in the novice stage. In Japan new teachers receive at least 20 days of inservice training and 60 days of professional development during their first year and are provided with expert counseling by master teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Novice teachers in Japan and China engage in collaborative practices that include observations, discussion, critiquing of demonstration lessons, and role playing of students' prospective responses to lessons. Lesson study is an essential component of Japanese professional development that is gradually making inroads in the U.S. (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Dubin, 2010).

In England a national professional development initiative based on best practices has been enacted as part of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (Wei et al., 2009). Longitudinal evidence from primary and secondary school teachers revealed that the observation of colleagues' teaching practices and sharing of teaching strategies are the most common ongoing professional development activities (Boyle, While, & Boyle, 2004). The research also

suggested that most teachers in England involved in longer-term professional development activities changed at least one element (if not more) of their classroom instruction.

The U.K. professional development initiative is a recent phenomenon. Like their counterparts in the U.S., teachers in England traditionally relied on workshops, conferences, and seminars. According to Boyle et al. (2004) an international body of research suggested that these brief learning experiences might make teachers more attuned to their teaching styles and stimulate interest in advancing their knowledge and skills. However, isolated learning experiences are inadequate for producing deep and enduring changes in teaching and learning.

There is no single model of effective professional development. However, there are certain features that are essential for advancing teachers' learning and professional growth. Seed (2008) outlined four requisite elements for effective teaching practice. The first is *collaboration*, which is integral to virtually all the professional development strategies used by teachers in high performing countries (Wei et al., 2009). The second element is *empowerment* (Seed, 2008). Empowered teachers are directly involved in decisions that affect their classrooms, their students, and the school. Curriculum developer, team leader, action researcher, and in-house trainer are among the roles assumed by the empowered teacher. A train-the-trainer approach to professional development carries the dual benefit of maximizing resources and promoting teacher empowerment (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008; Wei et al., 2009). The train-the-trainer model is more cost effective for school districts when they send one or two teachers to become trainers of a specific program, model, or strategy versus multiple teachers. This in turn allows the teacher trainers to return to their respective school districts and train others teachers without bringing in expensive consultants.

The third essential condition for excellent teaching is *reflection* (Seed, 2008). Through reflection teachers critically examine their current teaching practices and imagine novel and innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment. Reflection is a central facet of coaching for both the teacher and the coach (Peterson, Taylor, Burnham, & Schlock, 2009). In the same way that coaching helps teachers reflect on their teaching practices, coaches can stimulate reflection in one another with the same goal of improving professional practice.

The final condition is *time* (Seed, 2008). Time pressures present a formidable obstacle to professional development efforts (Hawk & Hill, 2003). Nations that invest heavily in cultivating high quality teachers ensured that teachers have ample time for professional learning and collaboration (Wei et al., 2009).

Intensive job-embedded professional development represents a radical departure from the antiquated one-shot workshop approach. According to Collinson and Ono (2001) professional development in the U.S. is hindered by an immense gap between rhetoric and practice. From the authors' perspective:

> Changing from the old paradigm to a new paradigm of professional development exposes deeply entrenched school norms and it demands that teachers change their ways of thinking about professional development. The new paradigm of professional development asks teachers to discuss, and evaluate their own and others' teaching; expand their perspectives beyond their particular classroom; and embrace new leadership roles. Such a shift requires major changes for which teachers have no tradition and little preparation. (p. 234)

Furthermore, the new paradigm demands that teachers make a personal commitment to advancing their own learning (Kent, 2004; West, 2002). Online learning communities offer

unprecedented opportunities for ongoing professional learning, support, and development

(Duncan-Howell, 2010). In fact the burgeoning popularity of online learning communities

demonstrates that teachers are actively seeking out opportunities for professional growth and

collaboration. At the same time the cultivation of a high quality teaching force is central to the

tenets of No Child Left Behind (NCLB; Seed, 2008). It is up to the schools and districts to

provide teachers with learning experiences that maximize their professional growth and equip

them with the knowledge and skills needed to maximize students' learning.

Coaching and Professional Learning

Many schools have implemented literacy coaching as an essential component of

schoolwide reading improvement initiatives (Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, & Grogan, 2006;

L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2007; McCombs & Marsh, 2009; Peterson et al., 2009; Wren & Reed,

2005). Coaches targeted literacy, mathematics, and technology as three key areas for focusing

coaching activities (Ertmer et al., 2003). Coaching was essential to effective technology in the

classroom (Glazer et al., 2005). Glazer et al. (2005) envisioned *collaborative apprenticeship*

based on peer coaching as an excellent vehicle for promoting technology integration.

While acknowledging that there are numerous types of professional development,

Murray, Ma, and Mazur (2009) have divided them into two basic categories: teacher mentoring

and peer coaching. In addition to peer coaching there is also expert coaching involving a single

trained coach or a team (Hawk & Hill, 2003). In a number of schools the role of the reading

specialist has been transformed from tutor to struggling readers to coach and consultant helping

teachers improve their reading instruction (Al Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008; Wren &

Reed, 2005).

27

The terms *mentoring* and *coaching* are sometimes used interchangeably but despite superficial resemblances each one has distinct features (O'Connor & Ertmer, 2003; Thomas & Saslow, 2007). The same person may act as coach and mentor. For example Head Start implemented a mentor-coaching program for promoting early literacy development (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). However, capitalizing on the advantages of coaching or mentoring (or both) entails understanding the attributes of each one.

Coaching Versus Mentoring

A defining characteristic of coaching is that while the focus is on helping employees gain a greater sense of self-awareness, build knowledge and skills, and adapt certain aspects of behavior, coaching is driven by organizational aims (Thomas & Saslow, 2007). Coaching is most often implemented when the goal is improving existing practices. Coaching is typically time-limited with regularly scheduled activities unfolding over a specified time period and is often conducted by an external expert.

The concept of mentoring comes from the *Odyssey* where the wise Mentor served as a teacher, guide, and counselor to Odysseus's young son Telemachos (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). In the business and professional world mentoring evolved as a relationship between an older more experienced person and a younger novice for the purpose of cultivating the protégé (alternately, mentee) and socializing the protégé into the profession or organization. In education mentoring is used extensively to support novice teachers. Although less common mentoring was also used as an ongoing strategy for helping practicing teachers master new skills. On a longer-term basis mentoring has been a cost-efficient alternative to hiring an external coach (Thomas & Saslow, 2007).

Some school districts have found that mentoring and coaching complement one another (Wong & Wong, 2008). However, coaching usually produced superior results. To be fully effective mentoring required a cohesive framework and organizational oversight (Thomas & Saslow, 2007). In the school setting the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the protégé have often been poorly defined (Wong & Wong, 2008). On the other hand coaches carried out specific activities and had a clearly delineated responsibility. By definition coaching has been deliberate and focused (O'Connor & Ertmer, 2003). It has been noted that a person can unknowingly be a mentor simply by inspiration and support. It is impossible to unknowingly be a coach.

Coaching in the School Setting

As defined by Neufeld and Roper (2003a), "Coaching is school-based professional development designed in light of the district's reform agenda and guided by the goal of meeting school's specific instructional learning needs" (p. 4). Coaches can be divided into two types. *Change coaches* are involved in schoolwide organizational improvement efforts. The effectiveness of a change coach is contingent on a good relationship with the principal. Change coaches helped develop the leadership capabilities of principals and teachers and helped schools maximize resources. In an environment where the principal's role as instructional leader was given high priority and teachers assumed leadership roles, the change coach had an important role in promoting collaboration between teachers and principals.

Most of the literature focused on the *content coach* whose objective was improving teachers' classroom instruction in specific subject areas (Neufeld & Roper, 2003a). As example, Wong and Wong (2008) outlined the tasks of an elementary school coach entrusted with the responsibility of helping teachers implement a district-wide core academic program. The

coach's activities included: 1) providing support and assistance to all classroom teachers as they worked to implement the new program, 2) conducting demonstration lessons, 3) providing onsite staff development to assure that the teachers were familiar with the new program and understood the program's design and alignment with the standards, 4) helping teachers create an interactive learning environment focused on the content and learning strategies intrinsic to the program, 5) conducting classroom observations and subsequent support, 6) acting as a resource in identifying the most effective learning strategies for diverse groups of learners, 7) helping teachers prepare and pace instruction, 8) working with grade level teams in improving instruction, and 9) meeting regularly with the principal to review benchmark assessment data and evaluate the outcomes of goals set by the grade level teams.

Data collection, analysis, and interpretation were essential features of the coach's role (Martin & Taylor, 2009). As job-embedded instructional coaches in a highly diverse educational setting, Martin and Taylor described their data-driven approach to improving student learning by collecting quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. Dedicated to cultivating communities of practice, the authors viewed data-based inquiry as an essential component of a collaborative effort to boost student achievement.

Wong and Wong (2008) have been extremely optimistic about coaching. However, the literature was replete with descriptions of challenges to the effective implementation of a coaching initiative (Al Otaiba et al., 2008; Hawk & Hill, 2003; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Poglinco and Bach (2004) acknowledged that coaching, like all professional development strategies, has advantages and disadvantages. According to the authors teachers tended to respond favorably to coaches who model instructional techniques in their classrooms. In fact they stated that of all the strategies in the coach's repertoire, modeling was likely to elicit the

30

most positive results in terms of altering teachers' classroom practices. At the same time, they emphasized that, "The coach's own skills and understanding of individual teachers' instructional goals and practices are critical to helping teachers adopt new instructional formats" (p. 399).

Even more important the coach must be adept at fostering the classroom teacher's understanding of novel materials and teaching strategies (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Lack of understanding of a new program or curriculum was an ubiquitous issue for teachers whose backgrounds conflicted with the new approach (Al Otaiba et al., 2008). For example teachers who favored whole language instruction often had difficulty with phonics and phonemic awareness. Poglinco and Bach (2004) stressed that in order to facilitate genuine change in instructional practices coaches must engage teachers in ongoing discussions that "loop back to using the materials and techniques in the classroom to better address the needs of students" (p. 399).

In theory the coach's role was clearly defined (Wong & Wong, 2008). In actual practice there were no clear-cut guidelines defining the coach's role and relationship to the principal and the school leadership team (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Additionally, coaches did not usually use performance standards as a guide for altering teachers' instructional practices. Implementing a strategic coaching program was a complex endeavor. Developing a successful coaching program entailed diligent advanced planning and understanding of all facets of the coaching process.

Promoting Teacher's Learning

Ironically, while the goal of job-embedded professional development was advancing teachers' knowledge and skills, minimal attention was given to teachers' learning. The emphasis on modeling was unwarranted (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Effective professional development

required attention to adult learning principles (Fogarty & Pete, 2010; McCombs & Marsh, 2009). Successful coaching was grounded in adult learning principles (Borman & Feger, 2006).

Adults are self-directed learners who prefer learning experiences that respect the wealth of knowledge they have accrued (Knowles, 1990). From this perspective it was not surprising that teachers often resisted "experts" who were intent on changing their teaching practices. Teachers' resistance to change was well documented and presented a powerful obstacle to altering classroom instruction (Hawk & Hill, 2003; Olson & Barrett, 2004; Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008).

Adults were motivated to learn when they recognized the practical value of what they were learning (Knowles, 1990). Teachers needed to see the results of their learning experience (Fogarty & Pete, 2010). Thus by definition the most effective adult learning was data driven. Professional learning communities represented the ideal venue for encouraging teachers toward excellent teaching practice (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Klingner, 2004). Teachers resisted change when they felt it was externally imposed (Ertmer et al., 2003; Hawk & Hill, 2003). A professional development atmosphere characterized by experiential learning, understanding of how students' learn, reflection upon the application and outcomes of new knowledge and skills, dedication to ongoing learning, and collegial collaboration was most conducive to producing enduring positive change in teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Characteristics of Effective Coaches

Ertmer et al. (2003) explored coaches' perceptions of the characteristics that made an effective professional development coach. According to the researchers while there has been a plethora of information on implementing a coaching initiative, there was surprisingly little

attention devoted to the selection of coaches and the attributes that make a good coach. The

participants were 31 coaches who worked in a large urban school district for roughly 5 months.

The largest segment (17 coaches) was involved in literacy learning and the other coaches had

background in other subject areas, leadership, special education, and English for speakers of

other languages (ESOL). Their teaching experience ranged from 6 to 32 years.

Asked to define coaching, there was general consensus that coaching was a collaborative

process designed to improve teaching (Ertmer et al., 2003). Due to their short tenure as coaches,

most of their activities focused on establishing rapport with the classroom teachers and acting as

information resource providers. Few have engaged in genuine cognitive coaching. The most

striking finding was the overarching importance the coaches awarded to interpersonal or

"people" skills. In fact 24 of the 31 coaches targeted interpersonal skills as especially vital and

many felt the ability to cultivate relationships with teachers eclipsed all other areas of expertise.

Of the subject areas the coaches viewed literacy and technology skills as top priorities, yet even

the literacy coaches gave more weight to interpersonal skills. A number of coaches felt that

literacy skills could be developed thus a background in literacy learning should not be a

prerequisite.

Administrative support at the district and building level was cited as an important factor

that could either facilitate or impede coaching (Ertmer et al., 2003). Obstacles arose when a

principal did not understand the coaching project or conflicted with the coaches on how the

coaches could best help teachers. Several coaches felt it was counterproductive for principals to

mandate that teachers work with coaches as opposed to eliciting their active involvement. Most

of the coaches felt the intensive training they underwent was helpful especially for those who did

not have a background in literacy instruction. Overall the qualities of an effective coach that

33

emerged from the study were excellent interpersonal skills, a strong teaching background, familiarity with best practices, and leadership skills.

Based on the existing literature Kowal and Steiner (2007) defined pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, and interpersonal skills as the three essential qualities of an effective coach. According to the authors there has been virtual consensus on the idea that coaches should be experienced teachers who have proven themselves successful in the classroom. The coaches surveyed by Ertmer et al. (2003) did not dispute the importance of sound pedagogical knowledge and classroom expertise. However, they were divided on the importance of content expertise. The most effective classroom teachers did not necessarily make the best coaches (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Invoking Ertmer et al., Kowal and Steiner (2007) noted that other studies have emphasized the importance of the third prerequisite, interpersonal skills.

Kowal and Steiner (2007) advocated future research into the specific interpersonal qualities that make a good coach. Although widely used the terms "interpersonal skills" and "people skills" were not clarified in the educational literature. Educational researchers drew from the human resources management (HRM) literature where there had been sizable bodies of literature on interpersonal competencies. Kowal and Steiner also proposed conducting comparison studies of more and less effective coaches using psychometrically sound instruments to assess psychological factors such as intelligence, aptitude, and personality traits. Knowledge of what makes a good coach would be extremely useful for selecting prospective coaches.

Coach Training

Kowal and Steiner (2007) observed that there are a few assessments of coach training programs but minimal research regarding the effectiveness of specific programs or the essential

components of a successful training program. In a classic study Veenman and Denessen (2001) summarized the results of five studies examining training on coaches in primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands.

The five programs each focused on different groups of educational personnel: school counselors, school principals, mentors of beginning teachers, mentors of student teachers, and secondary school teachers (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). School counselors were chosen on the premise that counselors rarely provided classroom support for teachers yet there was an observed link between counselors' in-class support and teachers' use of novel teaching strategies. The principal study was driven by evidence that the principal played a pivotal role in the quality of teaching and learning. The two mentorship studies were based on recognition that targeted training helped mentors better cultivate the knowledge and skills of their protégés. This was especially the case for the mentors of teacher trainees who were seldom trained to work with student teachers. Finally the secondary teachers were coached with the goal of promoting the transfer of new knowledge and skills into actual classroom practice.

Coaching was defined as "a form of in-class support to enhance teaching competence through systematic reflection on professional practice" (Veenman & Denessen, 2001, p. 389). The coaching cycle consisted of preconference, observation, and postconference as derived from models of clinical supervision and coaching. A distinction between the coaching models used in the training programs and traditional clinical supervision was that the training model was closer to Costa and Garmston's (1994) concept of cognitive coaching. Essentially the training program employed an eclectic approach to coaching that drew from several paradigms of coaching, mentoring, and supervision.

Veenman and Denessen (2001) used two different modes of evaluation. The coaching skills of the trained and untrained coaching were assessed first by expert judges and second by the educators being coached. The untrained coaches formed the control group. The study was based on 93 trained coaches and 105 coached educators in the experimental group as well as 66 untrained coaches and 71 coached educators in the control group. The instruments used were the Scale for Coaching Skills (SCS) designed to assess how coaches use specific coaching skills and the Teacher Scale for Coaching Skills (TSCS). The SCS items were derived from the goals of the training program and included: the creation of mutual trust, the improvement of teaching practices by providing feedback and motivating teachers to be more reflective, and the enhancement of autonomy and self-actualization by promoting the development of self-improvement plans.

The findings showed that the coach training program had a positive impact on the performance of the coaches (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The trained coaches were given higher ratings by the expert judges and significant distinctions between the trained and untrained coaches emerged in the samples of school principals, school counselors, and secondary school teachers on all three SES scales, specifically Developing Autonomy, Feedback, and Businesslike Attitude (focusing on the objectives of coaching). For the mentors of new teachers significant differences were observed for Developing Autonomy and Businesslike Attitude and for the mentors of teacher trainees the training had significant effects on Developing Autonomy and Feedback.

On the TSCS scale significant differences on Improvement of Instruction were observed among secondary school teachers with trained or untrained coaches (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). Although the effects of training were not significant for the school principals or mentors

36

of new teachers, the effect sizes suggested a trend in the intended direction. No significant differences for trained and untrained coaches emerged in the samples of school counselors and mentors of teacher trainees. However, Veenman and Denessen noted that the counselors, principals, and the two groups of mentors all had high pretest scores for Improvement of Instruction thereby suggesting there might have been a ceiling effect. The training effects were especially marked for the principals and secondary school principals on the TSCS scales Use of Observational Data and Planning of Observational Data.

The teachers expressed generally favorable perceptions of the coaching experience with superior ratings awarded to the trained coaches (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The training program had the most powerful impact on the coaches of secondary school teachers. Veenman and Denessen attributed this to the fact that before the onset of the training program the trainers conducting the coaching program had frequent meetings with the school management team and the program was tailored to match the needs of the school, the coaches, and the teachers. The program had the most limited effects on the mentors of teacher trainees, probably reflecting additional supervision and mentoring beyond what was provided by the coaching program.

Veenman and Denessen (2001) acknowledged that their study did not address whether the knowledge and skills the educators gained from the coaching program would translate into changes in actual practice. Nevertheless, the study illustrated the advantages of a targeted training program for coaches. The particularly strong impact of the program on the secondary school teachers highlighted the importance of aligning the program with the specific needs of the target group.

As an offshoot to the online learning communities that have become popular with teachers (Duncan-Howell, 2010), there also has been online coaching seminars that enabled

coaches to sharpen their knowledge and skills as part of a community of learners (Feger, Woleck, & Hickman, 2004). The online communities provide coaches with opportunities to: deepen their pedagogical and content knowledge, learn about new professional resources and materials they can use in their coaching sessions, analyze case studies to discern what makes a coaching technique effective, and reflect upon their work, their progress, and the future of their development. The online community provides coaches with their own peer coaching opportunities and relieves the isolation of coaches who may be the only coach in their subject area in their school or district.

Responsive Versus Directive Coaching

Ippolito (2009) explored the way K-12 literacy coaches balance responsive and directive coaching. Drawing from various sources, the author outlined the characteristics of each one. Responsive coaching is developmental and psychological, person-focused, designed to develop teachers' capabilities, assumes that there will be a trickle-down effect of coaching, and illustrates Toll's "service provider" and "professional roles". In contrast directive coaching is focused on program implementation and instruction, designed to change teachers' classroom practices or implement a specific curriculum, assumes that changes in teaching will result in changes to students' performance, and reflects Toll's "supervisor" and "technician" roles.

The mixed methods study encompassed a survey of 57 coaches from an urban school district, focus group discussions with 17 coaches, interviews with 9 coaches, and observations of 8 coaches (Ippolito, 2009). In general the actions characterized as responsive by the coaches included asking teachers how the coach could assist them, working with teachers who desired coaching, and encouraging the teachers to adopt practices that work for them personally. Directive actions included asking teachers to make significant changes in their classroom

practices, ensuring that the teachers follow the school or district guidelines, and asking the teachers to analyze student assessment data. Two activities were considered neutral: relating stories about one's own teaching while engaged in coaching and providing teachers with clear information about teaching practices.

According to the quantitative analysis the most responsive coaching activities were meeting with individual teachers (78.6%), supporting and caring for teachers' needs beyond interactions regarding teaching (59.9%), conducting classroom observations of individual teachers (55.4%), meeting with groups of teachers (53.6%), and coteaching (51.8%). The most directive activities were leading professional development workshops (50.9%) and modeling lessons for groups of teachers (42.5%) (Ippolito, 2009).

The coaches tended to feel that the school leadership and school culture was determined whether their coaching was more responsive, more directive, or a balance between the two (Ippolito, 2009). The conditions that set the stage for balanced coaching were a strong leader who collaborated with the coaches, a school leader who asked all the teachers to become involved in coaching, and a school culture founded on open, collaborative teaching practice. These ideal conditions were most often found in elementary schools rather than middle or high schools.

<div align="center">Coaching in Practice</div>

Schoolwide Coaching Initiatives

Feldman and Tung (2002) reported on the use of external coaches as part of an ongoing project sponsored by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE), which partnered with schools to promote whole school reform in urban New England schools and districts. The philosophy of the CCE is built on four key school-based practices: 1) building leadership

capacity and a professional collaborative culture; 2) improving the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment; 3) creating structures that support high academic achievement, including forging partnerships with parents and communities; and 4) data-driven inquiry and decision-making. The study was based on five schools selected as a representative sample and deemed representative of the experiences of the CCE coaches. The data were drawn from interviews with 75 teachers and nine principals, surveys from all teachers and principals, and analyses of the coaching logs of all the coaches.

A key factor in promoting school wide change was the teachers' understanding of the linkage between the vision of school reform and their classroom practices (Feldman & Tung, 2002). From their respective positions the teachers and principals both viewed the coaches as effective change agents. The teachers focused primarily on the coaches' effect on their teaching practices while the principals viewed the coaches as critical confidantes who expanded their own vision of school reform. In particular the coaches helped the principals focus on the "big picture." The coaches generally worked with the teachers during meetings with academic teams and met with the principals individually once each week.

The coaches employed a broad repertoire of activities working with teachers including engaging in data-driven inquiry, examining students' work, and working with the teachers on the school improvement plan (Feldman & Tung, 2002). Most activities were concentrated on teaching, learning, and assessment and the teachers generally found the activities helpful. One discrepancy was that while the teachers expressed very positive views of the coaches, many were more ambivalent or negative toward the school reform model. Teachers who recognized the relationship of their classroom activities to the vision underlying the reform model were more

positive, but many teachers questioned the model and felt there were too many changes taking place at the school.

Neufeld and Roper (2002, 2003b) reported on the implementation of Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) in the schools that comprise the Effective Practice (EP) schools in the Boston Public Schools. The CCL is based on the best practices in collaboration and observation that characterize exemplary professional development (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Wei et al., 2009). The Boston EP schools have had onsite coaching since the inception of school reforms at the beginning of the 1996-1997 school year (Neufeld & Roper, 2002). The first coaches were change coaches who were subsequently joined by literacy content coaches. Despite being welcomed by the teachers and the principal, the program was plagued by problems such as time barriers, hazy priorities, teachers' resistance, and a one-on-one model that made poor use of the coaching resources. The CCL was adopted during the 2000-2001 school year, signifying an innovative approach to professional development and more effective design of the coaching model.

The new model made it possible for more teachers to work with the coaches (Neufeld & Roper, 2002). However, teachers who were used to working with coaches on an individual basis often found it intimidating to learn and practice new knowledge and skills in front of their peers. Ironically, this group approach is central to the concept of lesson study (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Dubin, 2010). Perhaps it is illustrative of the traditional isolation of U.S. teachers that they find it daunting to learn in front of their peers.

A particularly notable finding was that the principals played a critical role in the successful implementation of the CCL model (Neufeld & Roper, 2002). The researchers noted that regardless of the degree of the teachers' dedication or the coaches' talents the multifaceted

41

model could not have been implemented without the principals' skills and commitment. Neufeld and Roper (2003b) reinforced the vital importance of the principals' support in their follow-up study documenting the second year of the project. More teachers became involved in the project the second year. The teachers' understanding and ability to reflect on their skills became sharper. However, the resistance of many teachers to demonstrate lessons in front of their peers was a persistent problem. The extent that the teachers were willing to embrace the collaborative model varied among the different host schools.

Hawk and Hill (2003) described the use of coaching as part of the Achievement in Multicultural High Schools (AIMHI) program implemented in collaboration with the New Zealand Ministry of Education. The project began in 1995 and in 2002 the nine urban AIMHI schools began a coaching initiative that provided teachers with continuous, classroom-based professional development opportunities. According to Kent (2004) competently serving a diverse student body demanded that teachers are equipped to "explore implementation of research insights in their own classrooms regarding needs, interest, instructional history, and proficiency of individual students" (p. 427). The AIMHI schools had a strong foundation of teacher professional development based on effective classroom practices prior to the inception of the coaching initiative (Hawk & Hill, 2003). Classroom coaching was added as a mechanism for maximizing available resources and providing the teachers with opportunities for continual development and improvement.

The coaching model was designed with the recognition that the AIMHI schools had many expert teachers who made excellent models as well as novices in need of support and teachers whose performance warranted improvement (Hawk & Hills, 2003). Each school independently carried out its own needs assessment and determined the most effective model of coaching for its

school. The schools contemplated three prospective models of coaching: paired peer coaching, the use of one expert coach either from within or outside the school, or the use of a coaching team. Six of the schools opted for the coaching team and three decided upon one expert coach. Over time only one school maintained a single coach; the others shifted to the team model. The advantages of team coaching as outlined in a discussion paper included: the development of an empowered faculty as expertise is shared and expanded; flexibility in organizing planning sessions and observations; collective problem solving, development, planning, and knowledge; and shared workload.

Hawk and Hill (2003) elaborated on both the challenges and the successes of the AIMHI coaching project. Time constraints, an ubiquitous issue, posed a particular problem. Most coaches were senior school leaders who had to juggle their coaching responsibilities with their regular daily activities. Even with the team approach the schools did not have sufficient time to offer coaching to all teachers thus they focused on those most in need of improvement. Drawbacks to having a single coach included the isolation experienced by the coaches and the loss of intellectual capital should the coach leave the school. In some cases the teachers' collegial relationships interfered with their coaching, making it difficult for even expert teachers to provide honest and constructive feedback to their peers. Some coaches tended to rely more on advice and encouragement than feedback that would promote learning.

Other problems faced by the coaches actually highlight the need for intensive professional development (Hawk & Hill, 2003). A few teachers resigned rather than change their teaching practices. While the schools regarded this as positive attrition given that these teachers were not meeting their students' learning needs, it raised questions for the coaches about their strategies. In addition the needs expressed by some teachers showed lack of awareness of

43

important issues. Nonetheless, all the coaches and almost all the teachers who were coached concurred that coaching produced positive changes in their classroom practices with resulting benefits for the students. New teachers found coaching especially helpful.

Several participants commented that coaching resulted in deeper learning (Hawk & Hill, 2003). As the project progressed the coaches became more adept at providing feedback to promote teachers' learning and became more aware of effective classroom practices. The result was that the teachers became more confident and effective in relating to their students and meeting the individual needs of their culturally diverse students. The coaches observed a number of positive benefits in the students including greater engagement and pleasure in learning, higher self-esteem, better attention and concentration, declines in behavior problems, increased productivity, and improvement in specific areas (notably reading). The positive changes at the classroom level worked collectively to enhance the schools' academic and social climate.

Literacy Instruction

Swoboda (2007) presented a case study of an elementary school that implemented job-embedded professional development as a strategy for improving teachers' vocabulary instruction. Although the aim was to improve teaching and learning for all students, English language learners (ELLs) were given particular focus. Teachers volunteered to be part of the school's literacy team that participated in the professional development activities led by the school's literacy specialist, the ELL teacher, and the principal. The principal served as researcher and participant-observer for the action research project. The data sources included interviews conducted at the study's onset and conclusion, transcripts of the literacy team meetings, materials from the professional development sessions, and field notes.

Collegial learning was a major part of the project (Swoboda, 2007). In fact one of the positive effects was that the teachers requested additional time for collaboration. As a result of the project the teachers deepened their understanding of students' language construction, adopted novel teaching strategies, and undertook formative assessments of the impact of their teaching on students' learning. An unanticipated positive outcome was that within a year of the project the activities of the literacy team became a model for literacy professional development for the district. The model program was reminiscent of the job-embedded, collaborative professional development used in Japan (Collinson & Ono, 2001).

Garet et al. (2008) investigated the impact of two professional development programs designed to promote early reading proficiency. The first program involved a content and seminar series conducted during the summer of 2005 and during the 2005-2006 academic year. The institute and seminar series was based on Moats' *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* (LETRS) and adapted for the study for the purpose of improving second grade reading. The second professional development program augmented the institute and seminar series with coaching. The coaches worked with the second grade teachers at each school (on average three teachers) to heighten their understanding of the material learned at the institute series and provided the teachers with ongoing support and opportunities to practice their new knowledge and skills. The program developers anticipated that the teachers would experience an average of 60 hours of coaching over the course of the school year.

The coaches received targeted training prior to the project (Garet et al., 2008). In addition to attending the LETRS institute and seminar series the coaches received training in the form of a 3 day coaching institute and 4 day follow-up training on coaching at the school site. The coach training emphasized the coach's role in implementing an effective classroom reading

curriculum, coaching individual teachers via a multi-phase cycle, using assessment data to identify and address students' needs, and arranging meetings with teachers to bolster the teachers' ability to analyze students' work and plan their classroom lessons.

The project included 90 schools from 6 school districts and data from roughly 250 teachers (Garet et al., 2008). The schools were all low-income schools that had not received Reading First funding (which is often accompanied by an intensive professional development program). The schools were randomly assigned to either the conventional professional development program, the professional development and coaching program, or a control group. The school districts used one of two evidence based reading programs.

Quantitative analysis showed that the teachers in both professional development programs surpassed the control group teachers in terms of knowledge of early reading content and classroom instruction. In addition the teachers in the professional development groups employed explicit instruction to a greater degree than the teachers in the control group (Garet et al., 2008). However, there were no other significant differences among the three groups. Coaching did not have a significant effect on the teachers' instructional strategies and neither professional development program had a significant impact on the second graders' reading performance.

More detailed analysis revealed that there was a significant link between the teachers' knowledge of early reading and the children's reading achievement (Garet et al., 2008). In particular the effect was observed for the teachers' knowledge of word level components. The largest effect sizes observed were .038 for teachers' knowledge and .053 for the use of explicit instruction. The implication was that students who had a teacher with superior knowledge who made greater use of explicit instruction would enjoy a small gain in reading achievement.

However, the boost was less than one standard deviation. The overall finding was that knowledge the teachers gained from the professional activities did not have sufficient impact on classroom instruction to make a significant difference in second grade students' reading proficiency.

A much smaller study comparing the effects of professional development with and without peer coaching found that while both modes of professional development produced changes in elementary school teachers' classroom practices, the analysis revealed that close to 2.5 times as many students in classrooms that did not have peer coaching experienced improvements in literacy learning compared to students whose teachers engaged in reciprocal peer coaching (Stichter, Lewis, Richter, Johnson, & Bradley, 2006). Stichter et al. emphasized that no other factor appeared to account for the difference. The professional development program was based on communities of practice, suggesting that all the teachers were exposed to high quality professional development.

Discerning the specific effects of professional development on student achievement can be highly complicated. Hierarchical equation modeling indicated that in general, professional development has had a moderate impact on teachers' classroom practices and slight but in some cases significant effects on student achievement (Wallace, 2009). Teachers' instructional practices mediate the effects on professional development on student outcomes.

Qualitative accounts invariably describe challenges associated with the implementation of a coaching initiative (Hawk & Hill, 2003; Ippolito, 2009). Al Otaiba et al. (2008) focused on the challenges confronting elementary school reading coaches in a Title I school. The authors noted that reading coaches are currently undergoing a transformation from reading specialists who work with children to reading coaches who work with teachers. As a framework for the

study, the role of reading coach was conceptualized as a synthesis of the behavior-consultation model, the reading specialist or reading coach model, and Joyce and Showers' model of the coach in the professional development context. The study focused on a single reading coach who was an instructional leader who served as a consultant to teachers.

The setting was a K-4 Title I school located in the Southeast (Al Otaiba et al., 2008). Close to 70% of the students received free or reduced price meals and more than 35% were ELLs with 10 different native languages. The students were primarily African American (38%), white (29%), and Latino (28%) with small numbers of Asian (3%) and Native American (0.3%) students. The school principal had applied for funding for a full time coach for the twofold purpose of boosting the teachers' confidence and ability to teach reading through knowledge of scientifically based reading research (SBRR) and improve students' reading performance. As envisioned by the principal, the attainment of these aims over 3 years would be supported by developing a comprehensive evidence based school wide reading program encompassing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention; providing all teachers with ongoing professional development in SBRR; and training teachers to use a data-driven approach to differentiating instruction.

The coaching program began with a needs assessment accompanied by the coach's effort to establish trust and rapport with the teachers "in order to build a community of learners" (Al Otaiba et al., 2008, p. 131). Once she identified problem areas the coach embarked on a plan that included the researchers teaching the coach to be a trainer of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). In addition a university team was enlisted to train other members of a school wide team. The second phase of the project began with data collection, the inception of school wide professional development, and the DIBELS training. The third phase of

the plan included schoolwide professional development and reading improvement efforts targeting each grade level. The final phase of the project was abrupt and unanticipated: just before the last day of the school term the principal announced she was being transferred to turn around an under-performing middle school and the grant was terminated.

As described by Al Otaiba et al. (2008) it appeared that the coaching project was forced to end just as the core foundation had been established for ongoing improvement. The researchers conducted a program evaluation using multiple data sources. The teacher survey revealed that at the onset of the project most of the teachers were inadequately prepared to teach phonics and phonological awareness. Most of the teachers lamented the lack of planning time they were given and virtually all "requested additional mentoring and modeling of the instructional strategies in their own classrooms" (p. 143).

Asked to cite the most important things they learned from the projects, the teachers' responses fell into four areas: learning assessment techniques, learning new ways to teach reading, receiving useful materials, and learning the importance of phonics and phonological awareness (Al Otaiba et al., 2008). The teachers also acknowledged four major challenges: "lack of time, knowledge, materials, and support" (p. 143). Based on the teachers' comments, a serious problem was that the needs of the school were beyond the capacity of a single coach even with a support team. For example some teachers expected the coach to be both consultant and reading specialist. At the same time the teachers did not understand the coach's responsibilities. For example one teacher complained that the coach was always "too busy, doing I don't know what since she doesn't have a classroom of students" (p. 144).

The abrupt termination of the project left the teachers feeling "abandoned and frustrated" (Al Otaiba et al., 2008, p. 144). Yet while most of the teachers embraced the potential of SBRR

and were enthusiastic about continuing their professional learning experience, they expressed far less positive attitudes toward the school's core reading program that contrasted with the knowledge of research-based reading instruction they learned from the coach. Al Otaiba et al. (2008) suggested that the transfer of the principal, a highly respected school leader, and termination of the reading project, might actually have reflected unwillingness on the part of district administration to replace the existing reading program with the new reform model.

The eventual outcome of the coaching program highlighted the powerful impact of external forces on building-wide school reform efforts. Within the school a major challenge was that "teachers held what many would call conflicting views and ideas about how to teach early reading" (Al Otaiba et al., 2008, p. 147). Most of the teachers espoused a whole language approach to reading that contrasted with the techniques they were learning through the coach. In addition the teachers in different grade levels had divergent ideas and needs. The primary grade teachers appreciated the coach's support whereas the upper grade teachers would have preferred a reading specialist who worked directly with low-performing students. Al Otaiba et al. (2008) noted that it took a full year for the teachers to become "coachable" (p. 149). Despite the coach's expertise and good intentions, the authors proposed that the teachers probably "needed a more intensive learning experience than they received" (p. 149).

Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney (2009) explored the impact of a large-scale professional development initiative on the literacy instruction of elementary school teachers in the San Diego City Schools (SDCS). Collegial collaboration was central to the professional development program that included a reciprocal peer coaching component. The data were part of a larger 3-year study initiated to evaluate the central elements of the SDSC reform effort: instructional leadership, professional development, and literacy instruction. The data sources included case

50

study interviews with school personnel, teachers' professional development logs, and classroom observation data. The aim of the study was to analyze links between specific professional development activities and specific aspects of the teachers' classroom instruction.

Quick et al. (2009) noted that there was a relatively high degree of congruence between the teachers' and principals' conceptions of effective professional development, and the characteristics of effective professional development that appeared in the educational literature. At the same time not all the qualities of effective professional development were enacted at the participating schools. In general most of the professional development activities were collaborative, tailored to the perceived needs of teachers and students, aligned with more expansive school goals, and focused on the target content area. Yet specific activities, particularly activities related to coaching, were less evident. The teachers had relatively few opportunities for coaching, modeling, practice, and feedback. Furthermore, the teachers thought the professional development activities were disconnected from one another.

Despite the shortcomings the analysis revealed that many best practices as identified in the literature and by education professionals effectively facilitated the teachers' adoption of instructional practices that advanced students' learning (Quick et al., 2009). Curriculum and content focused professional development proved superior to pedagogical focused professional development for altering classroom instruction. While it was evident that the frequency of coaching could be improved, the coaching activities that took place were found to have a positive impact on classroom literacy instruction.

Mathematics Instruction

The *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* outlined by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics places strong emphasis on the teacher's role in providing students

with high quality learning experiences (Campbell & Malkus, 2009; Murray et al., 2009; Olson & Barrett, 2004). Coaching has been used as a professional development technique to promote the integration of reform methods into mathematics education since the 1990s (Olson & Barrett, 2004). However, most classroom coaching initiatives were limited to small numbers of teachers. One schoolwide effect described by Suber, Garrison, and Martin (2001) involved pairing teachers from an underperforming South Carolina school with expert teachers. The classroom coaches acted as consultants who observed lessons and suggested improvements based on identified best practices, validated novel teaching strategies, and addressed the classroom teachers' weak points. Olson and Barrett (2004) used the South Carolina project as the foundation for their own work on classroom coaching.

As part of a larger study examining the professional growth of teachers involved in a systemwide change professional development effort, Olson and Barrett (2004) presented the case studies of three first grade teachers, two novices and one highly experienced teacher with a graduate degree in curriculum and instruction. The change initiative, Primary Mathematics Education Project (PRIME), involved ongoing collaboration between mathematics education faculty at Illinois State University, the administration of a large urban school district, and 337 elementary school teachers. The teachers' professional development program included three summer seminars, four half-day seminars during the school year, monthly classroom coaching, and team conferences with PRIME staff.

PRIME uses coaching based on Costa and Garmston's (1994) cognitive coaching. Consistent with the model, the three teachers determined an issue to work on during a preobservation conference, the coach conducted a detailed observation, and the teacher and coach analyzed and reflected upon the lesson during the postobservation conference (Olson &

Barrett, 2004). Five lessons were observed, analyzed, and refined over a 3-week period. The presentation focused primarily on the experienced teacher.

The coaches adapted the cognitive coaching model as they worked with each of the three teachers (Olson & Barrett, 2004). However, despite the theoretical soundness of the model, analysis of the three teachers' classroom revealed that "providing them with rich mathematical tasks and discussing the embedded mathematical concepts" was insufficient for promoting the intended changes in teacher practices (p. 77). Although the teachers used novel materials and techniques, they remained entrenched in the idea that mathematical problems have only one right answer. Ironically, the teachers were aware that their students were capable of constructing mathematical ideas after the coach modeled a new teaching technique or cotaught a lesson using an inquiry-oriented approach. However, there awareness was not translated into changes in teaching practices.

Olson and Barrett (2004) noted that it is not unusual for teachers to find it difficult to alter their teaching practices even when they willingly volunteer for professional development activities designed for that purpose. Upon scrutinizing the occasions where the teachers recognized that the students were able to articulate their mathematical idea, Olson and Barrett (2004) proposed "if we could evoke their curiosity, then they would investigate students' mathematical thinking" (p. 77). That is, if they could arouse the teachers' curiosity about how and why the students arrived at their responses it might serve as a springboard for exploring their mathematical thinking. The authors labeled their approach to coaching *evoking teachers' pedagogical curiosity*. The approach entailed building upon students' responses to mathematical problems by asking the teachers to contemplate the ways students might respond to related problems.

Like Olson and Barrett (2004), Becker (2001) presented case studies from a sample of 12 teachers and six coaches involved in a project to improve mathematics instruction. The study focused on three of the coaches: a former middle school teacher who had been part of the professional development project for 3 years, a primary school teacher with extensive professional development experience who had been coaching for 3 years, and an upper elementary grade teacher with 20 years of teaching experience who had also coached for 3 years.

The coaches were classified according to their style of interacting with the classroom teachers (Becker, 2001). Lewis, one of the coaches and a former middle school teacher, embodied the concept of "coach as collaborator" (p. 5). His mode of interaction is easily reminiscent of responsive coaching as opposed to directive coaching (Ippolito, 2009). However, a drawback of his collaborative style was that he did not provide the teachers with specific feedback, thus his work with the teachers had minimal impact on their teaching practices (Becker, 2001).

Anita, a second and primary grade teacher, was the embodiment of the "coach as model" (Becker, 2001, p. 6). She would model a number of lessons and then leave the teachers with the materials and ideas on which they could extend the lesson. Anita also acted as peer coach and facilitator. Becker described Anita as an exemplary model. Her lessons were diligently crafted and it was evident that she engaged in long-range planning, providing the teachers with what they needed to continue her lessons. In describing Anita, Becker viewed her modeling as more than a lesson. Specifically, "she takes the first risks" (p. 7). This strategy not only facilitates the teachers' understanding but it also helps them feel more at ease about practicing the lessons. A coach like Anita might be beneficial for teachers who are intimated by the prospect of demonstrating lessons for their colleagues (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003b).

Dana, the upper elementary grade teacher, was the "coach as director" (Becker, 2001, p. 7). She invariably began the debriefing sessions by asking the classroom teacher for her or his perceptions of the lesson. Dana took highly detailed notes during each session and after the teacher's response she would use her notes to guide the teacher to reflect very specifically on each aspect of the lesson. In effect Dana exemplified the concept of directive coaching (Ippolito, 2009). According to Becker (2001) Dana was the most effective coach in intertwining content and pedagogy for improving classroom mathematics teaching.

According to Becker (2001) despite their unique styles the three teachers, each strove to cultivate a shared vision with their classroom teachers about the nature of an effective mathematics-learning environment. The three coaches also possessed a number of shared positive qualities. These were: fairness, openness, nonjudgmental attitude, helpfulness, dependability, approachability, and experience. The fact that the teachers all possessed qualities that gained the classroom teacher's trust and helped them feel comfortable practicing lessons highlights the importance of interpersonal skills in the attributes of a good coach (Ertmer et al., 2003).

Murray et al. (2009) and Campbell and Malkus (2009) both examined the impact of coaching on students' mathematics achievement. Murray et al. (2009) reported on the Mentored Implementation Program (MIP) developed through the Appalachian Mathematics and Science Partnership (AMSP). Professional development for K-12 educators was central to the AMSP. The teachers participated in summer seminars hosted by the partnering colleges and universities and then in professional development activities that included ongoing support. Murray et al. deemed continuing support for teachers in the process of implementing standard-based inquiry

oriented mathematics and science to be a critical element that was frequently absent from traditional professional development.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, specifically the *zone of proximal development,* was the theoretical basis for the peer coaching program (Murray et al., 2009). Murray et al. emphasized that in contrast to most models of coaching and mentoring neither teacher was perceived as more expert than the other. Rather, "they work in partnership, equally supporting and learning from each other" as they implemented teaching activities and techniques that were taught at the summer institute (p. 204). The overall goal of the program was the creation of what Wenger (1998) referred to as a "community of practice" (cited in Murray et al., 2009, p. 204). Working together both teachers reflected upon and constructed meanings from the learning tasks and activities. The emphasis was on mutual problem solving and inquiry. At the inception of the summer institute, the teachers were asked to work with a colleague and continue the partnership in follow-up activities. Training on coaching and mentoring with a collegial peer was part of the summer training.

Murray et al. (2009) employed a mixed methods experimental approach to explore the teachers' collaborative classroom practices and the impact of the coaching initiative on the students' mathematics performance. The sample included 14 teachers from six schools, with nine AMSP professional development participants and 5 teachers serving as a control group. In terms of perceived benefits the peer coaching participants cited a number of positive advantages. Close to half the teachers (47%) viewed sharing ideas, strategies, and techniques as a benefit of the program. In descending order other benefits cited were obtaining feedback and another teacher's perspective (25%), observing another teacher (23%), discussing or communicating with a colleague (19%), and mutual support (4%). Not surprisingly scheduling emerged as the main

obstacle, cited by 39% of the teachers. All of the negatives represented practical barriers. After scheduling other barriers included distance (14%), timing (8%), and finding a substitute teacher (3%).

In addition to the teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the program, Murray et al. (2009) analyzed the postobservation conferences of the teachers. Four themes emerged from the analysis. First, the teachers' comments were more descriptive than reflective or analytical. There was minimal evidence of critiquing, feedback, or inquiry that would facilitate changes in practice. While some observers did attempt to stimulate reflection from their peer partner, their questions were often too vague to elicit a specific response. Ironically, while few of the teachers viewed supporting one another as a particular benefit of peer coaching, Murray et al. noted that the teachers' comments on each other's teaching were highly supportive. Indeed, this was a key problem: the teachers offered their partner *only* positive feedback when the aim of peer coaching was to offer constructive feedback to improve teaching practices. Consistent with the positive support, most of the interactions showed the teachers as equal partners but to the neglect of "meaningful analyses of how classroom instructions could be improved" (p. 208).

Probably not surprisingly given the nature of the peer coaching interactions, analyses of the students' achievement scores and comparison with the control group showed that the coaching program had no statistically significant impact on the students' mathematics performance (Murray et al., 2009). It is noteworthy that none of the New Zealand schools selected peer coaching as the model of choice for their school improvement program (Hawk & Hill, 2003). Two potential drawbacks to peer coaching were that without specific training the quality of coaching was likely to be highly variable, and especially pertinent to the MIP program

57

many teachers are not adept at providing feedback particularly to other adults. The interactions between the mathematics teachers illustrated that particular shortcoming (Murray et al., 2009).

According to Murray et al. (2009) the main missing ingredient to the MIP is "the process of helping teachers think more deeply about their work" (p. 210). They suggested that targeted training would improve the quality of peer coaching. In particular they recommended role-playing as a technique for clarifying the roles of the two partners. They also proposed using videotapes of classroom observation and postobservation conferences to augment discussions between the two peer partners and make them more aware of their roles as observer and the person being observed.

The coaching project described by Campbell and Malkus (2009) took place within a capacity building initiative among urban school districts in Virginia. Five school districts each selected one or more triads of elementary schools with similar student demographics and histories of performance on the state mathematics tests. One school from each was randomly selected to work with a mathematics coach during the 2005-2006 academic year. The pioneer cohort of 12 coaches completed a series of mathematics content courses and leadership-coaching courses during the same period before being placed in a school. During their first year of coaching they took another leadership-coaching course. A second cohort of 12 coaches underwent training during the 2006-2007 school year and were randomly assigned to the remaining schools. The study period encompassed 3 years.

The Daily Activity Logs and Weekly Reflection Logs were based on a proportion of mean time spent in each activity on a contract day. These percentages showed the proportion of Cohort 1 mean contract day time over main coaching activities. This data showed that coaches devoted the bulk of their time (80%-83%) to working with individual teachers rather than

working with teachers in groups such as grade level teams (Campbell & Malkus, 2009). Over a 3-year period, the time coaches spent with teachers decreased substantially. However, the time spent addressing assessment and school based activities increased. According to Campbell and Malkus, the increase in time spent on assessment issues seemed to reflect a district priority. On the other hand the time the coaches devoted to teaching or assisting students apart from classroom coaching activities (modeling, demonstrating lessons, coteaching) seemed to be in response to the requests of individual principals.

Analysis of student achievement data showed that the coaching initiative ultimately had a significant impact on the students' mathematics achievement (Campbell & Malkus, 2009). The effect was especially pronounced for third and fifth grade students. However, the pattern revealed that the benefits occurred over time as the coaches became more experienced. Another important trend was that for fourth grade classes the impact of coaching was contingent on the degree of the teacher's engagement with the coach. Based on their findings Campbell and Malkus stated, "Simply allocating funds and then filling the position of elementary mathematics coach in a school will not yield increased student achievement" (p. 22). Rather, the positive impact of coaching evolved as a knowledgeable coach worked collaboratively with the faculty and administration of the host school.

A perennial issue in closing achievement gaps in the U.S. has been that new teachers were frequently assigned to schools that were most in need of expert teachers (Collinson & Ono, 2001). The experience of the classroom teachers had a major impact on the students' mathematics performance (Campbell & Malkus, 2009). In both the experimental and control group schools the teachers' years of classroom experience was a key factor in the students' achievement, especially for students in fifth grade. Fifth grade students assigned to novice

teachers (teachers with less than 2 full years of teaching experience) performed considerably lower on the state tests than their peers who had more experienced teachers. Additionally minority students in classrooms with novice teachers had test scores averaging 45 points lower than minority students whose teachers had at least 5 years of teaching experience. Campbell and Malkus noted that the coaches had no discernable effect on achievement gaps related to poverty or ethnicity.

As described by Campbell and Malkus (2009) a flaw in the program design seemed to be the failure to maximize the limited coaching resources. The AIMHI schools specifically focused their coaching efforts on novice teachers and teachers who otherwise needed improvement (Hawk & Hill, 2003). Had the elementary mathematics project adopted the same strategy they might have narrowed the gaps in achievement by students with more or less experienced teachers (Campbell & Malkus, 2009). Nevertheless, the positive results showed that specially trained coaches can have a decisive impact on students' mathematics performance especially as they become more confident and competent in their roles and establish good relationships with teachers and principals.

Reciprocal Peer Coaching

Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, and Bolhuis (2007) explored the type of cognitive and behavioral changes that take place when highly experienced teachers engage in reciprocal peer coaching. The framework was the Interconnected Model of Teacher Professional Growth that encompassed four basic domains: *personal*, including teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; *practice*, denoting professional experimentation; *consequence*, covering inferred student learning outcomes, teachers' control, student motivation, and student development; and the *external* domain, covered information sources and various sources of stimulation and support.

The qualitative exploration focused on four secondary school teachers from an urban community in the Netherlands (Zwart et al., 2007). The analysis was designed to determine whether changes in teachers' cognitions preceded or followed changes in behavior. The various patterns that emerged showed that there is no single pathway. The teachers' learning could begin at any point and the person domain was frequently the end point. That is, the teachers underwent more cognitive changes than behavioral changes. An important finding was that neither the consequential nor the external domains seemed to trigger changes, meaning that the teachers were not motivated to change by professional development activities or by the prospect of changes in students' learning outcomes.

Early Childhood Education

Onchwari and Keengwe (2008) investigated the effects of the Strategic Teacher Education Program (STEP) Early Literacy Mentor-Coach initiative model adopted by Head Start to advance children's early literacy development and school readiness. Each Head Start program chose a few teachers to attend a training program developed by the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE) who subsequently became the Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches for their respective Head Start programs. Onsite support was provided through regional centers. The study took place 2 ½ years after the CIRCLE training took place.

The qualitative study was conducted with 44 teachers from Head Start programs in two Midwestern states (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). The issues addressed by the assessment included the training received by the teachers, how the program was carried out, what changes in classroom instruction resulted from the program what challenges confronted teachers in

implementing new strategies, and whether the program was still ongoing. Of the 44 participants, 34 (77%) said the mentor-coach program was still continuing at their sites.

The teachers reported that they began to see positive benefits within 6 months after the training as the number of teachers involved in the mentor-coach program expanded beyond the few who attended the original training sessions (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). The program was based on a train-the-trainer model whereby the first few teachers provided training for others at their Head Start program. Onchwari and Keengwe attributed the snowball effect to the relationships that arose between the mentors and their protégé teachers. They also deemed the train-the-trainer model a cost effective way of building the instructional skills of large numbers of teachers through one-on-one training. The bonds between the teacher and mentor-coach had been important for promoting changes in teachers' attitudes toward a novel pedagogy. According to Onchwari and Keengwe (2008) "Through ongoing support and dialogue between the mentor and mentee, teachers are likely to see the need for change in their instructional practices" (p. 23).

All the teachers received STEP training at some point, primarily once or twice a year (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). Seven teachers received training three or four times a year. Roughly half the teachers expressed very favorable attitudes toward the program, 15 teachers described it as somewhat helpful, and six teachers felt the training was redundant, simply going over skills and strategies they had already learned in their teacher education program. Given this finding, Onchwari and Keengwe (2008) stressed the importance of beginning a coaching initiative with a needs assessment to determine each teacher's stage of development and needs areas. The teachers who had positive views of the program mentioned various strategies for teaching and learning they learned from the initiative. Some expressed a desire for ongoing one-

on-one support. Time emerged as the biggest obstacle to implementing new classroom activities.

Although this was primarily due to the ½ day classes of the Head Start program, time was a

common barrier (Hawk & Hill, 2003; Wei et al., 2009).

Preservice Teachers

Veenman and Denessen (2001) viewed the concept of coaching as closely aligned with

clinical supervision in that the aim of coaching had been to improve professional practice by

providing teachers with feedback on their performance and stimulating reflection. However,

Bowman and McCormick (2000) pointed out that in traditional university supervision the sheer

numbers of students involved in fieldwork experience programs often precluded the provision of

prompt feedback after teaching events. In response some teacher education programs have

turned to peer coaching. Bowman and McCormick explored the impact of a peer coaching

program on 32 elementary education candidates who were randomly assigned to either the peer

coaching program or conventional supervision.

The 7 week study began with an orientation and continued with seminars attended by

both groups of student teachers (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). During the seminars the

students watched videos of experienced teacher modeling skills, engaged in role play scenarios,

and analyzed and discussed the teaching activities. During simulated postconferences following

each seminar the students in the experimental group discussed the strengths and weaknesses of

the lessons and offered suggestions for improvement in duos with their peer coaching partners.

During the field experience the peer coaching pairs taught in the same classrooms where they

observed each other's teaching also under the observation of the cooperating teacher. The peer

coach kept notes that served as the basis for discussion after each lesson although the discussions

were not limited to the notes.

To evaluate the peer-coaching program, all the student teachers conducted a videotaped language arts lesson and an audiotape of their last postconference (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). In addition they completed the attitude scale developed by Joyce and Showers. Most of the analyses favored the student teachers in the peer coaching intervention. The students who engaged in peer coaching scored significantly higher on clarity skills, pedagogical reasoning and action, and the attitude measures of technical feedback, analysis of application, adapting to students, and personal facilitations. The two groups were similar on collegiality and overall ratings.

Qualitative data showed positive perceptions on the part of student teachers in both groups (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). Upon detailed analysis, however, the students who had participated in peer coaching made more positive comments about specific elements of their field experience. Bowman and McCormick stated succinctly that, "Collaboration fosters expert instruction" (p. 261). Not only did the peer coaching intervention produce positive results but it also illustrated the "train the trainer" approach for providing teachers with support when there are limited numbers of experts (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008).

<center>Conclusion</center>

There has been a global trend away from the fragmented workshop approach to professional development of the past toward a community of practice models based on collaboration and a commitment to ongoing learning (Wei et al., 2009). Many school districts have added a coaching component to their professional effects in the form of a change coach or more frequently a content coach (Neufeld & Roper, 2003a). In general discerning the impact of professional development on student learning has been complex (Wallace, 2009). There have been relatively few studies of the impact of coaching and the findings have been inconsistent. In

<center>64</center>

a large-scale study of expert coaching the presence of classroom coaches did not make a significant impact on students' reading performance (Garet et al., 2008). A smaller study of reciprocal peer coaching reported that students from classrooms where there was no coaching actually made greater progress (Stichter et al., 2006). On the other hand a mathematics coaching project had a significant positive impact on students' achievement (Campbell & Malkus, 2009).

The inconsistent findings reported by the research reviewed for this study are not unusual (Borman & Feger, 2006). The missing ingredient may be the degree that classroom coaching influences teachers' instructional practices. Studies did suggest an association between changes in teachers' classroom practice in response to professional development and students' academic performance (Bush, 1984; Garet et al., 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). However, the extent that teachers have been committed to altering their practices is highly variable. In fact coaching efforts have often been met by resistance (Hawk & Hill, 2003; Olson & Barrett, 2004). Exemplary coaches have excellent interpersonal skills and are adept at creating rapport with teachers and making them feel at ease (Becker, 2001; Ertmer et al., 2003).

Coaching as a professional development strategy in the context of education reforms is still evolving. There is evidence indicating that coaching is a promising strategy, but there remain obstacles to maximizing its impact on teachers and students' learning.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design employed in this study and to detail the specific methods and procedures used to investigate the impact of instructional coaches on teacher practice. Qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that is concerned with understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Further, the researcher looks at people's perceptions to understand what they consider real and thus what directs their actions, thoughts, and feelings.

Design of the Study

Qualitative analysis was used to determine the participants' perceptions of the impact of job-embedded professional development, specifically instructional coaches, on teacher practice. The three most common techniques used are interview, observation, and document analysis (Merriam, 1998). For this qualitative study I conducted one-on-one interviews with participants and analyzed documentation from participants' reflective journals.

I analyzed interviews and reflective journals to gather data from 11 teachers and three instructional coaches serving six Title I elementary schools in a district in upper East Tennessee. Eighteen teachers volunteered for the study. I solicited their participation through a mass email sent to all teachers in the six Title I schools. I narrowed that number down to 12 making sure I had two teachers from each of the six schools and maximum variation in the grade levels and years of experience. The teacher participants represented the following grade levels: three teachers in kindergarten, one teacher in multiage kindergarten and first grade, two teachers in second grade, three teachers in third grade, two teachers in fourth grade, and one teacher in fifth grade. Unfortunately, after repeated attempts to reach the fifth grade teacher participant to set up

an interview, the teacher withdrew from the study without explanation after agreeing to participate. I tried to reach one of the remaining six volunteers, but school was already out for summer break. I did not get any responses. The participants' years of teaching experience ranged from 30 years to 1 year with an average of approximate 9 ½ years of teaching experience represented. Four teachers held bachelor's degrees, six teachers held master's degrees, and one teacher held an education specialist degree. In addition, two teachers were National Board Certified, one teacher was a Reading Recovery Specialist, and at the time of this study, two teachers were enrolled in advanced degree programs.

The three coaches were purposefully selected (Appendix A) because they were the three elementary instructional coaches working in the six Title I schools used in this study. One coach had 16 years of classroom teaching experience and coached for 5 years in the school system and 3 years in another school system. Another coach had 12 years of classroom experience and coached 5 years in the school system. The last coach had 8 years of classroom experience and coached 6 years in the school system. Two coaches had their National Board Certification. One coach had a PhD in reading and the other two coaches had master's degrees in reading.

All interviews were set up at a convenient time and place for the participant. The participants read and signed an informed consent document (Appendix G) prior to the start of the interview. I used interview guide 1 (Appendix C) for coaches and Interview Guide 2 (Appendix D) for the teachers. All interviews were digitally recorded to ensure accuracy of participants' words. I transcribed these recordings. All participants were given a pseudonym to protect their identities.

I read each participant's reflective journal. I recorded the information found in the journals using the Document Analysis Forms (see Appendix E) for coaches and (see Appendix

F) for teachers. I hand coded and analyzed the interviews and journals to identify themes and patterns. The coaches recorded their interactions with teachers, identified roles performed in the school, and wrote reflective thoughts on their work with teachers. Teachers recorded their work with the coach. These journals helped teachers and coaches dialogue in postconferences about their work. While analyzing the data, I kept track of thoughts, speculations, and hunches in my research log.

The Role of the Researcher

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). I was the primary data collector for this study. I conducted, transcribed, coded, and analyzed all the interviews. I coded and analyzed all the reflective journals as well. I used discretion every step of the way by respecting each participant's perceptions, opinions, values, emotions, and so on. I am an instructional coach at the secondary level and a trainer for the school system used in this study. Therefore, I knew or was acquainted with all of the participants. I taught 12 of my 21 years in the school system used for this study. As a part of the school system's coaching department, I was responsible, along with my fellow coaches, for planning and conducting the system-wide Coaches Academy each school year. I met regularly with the other five coaches in the system to discuss ideas, questions, and concerns that emerged throughout the school year.

"*Sensitivity*, or being highly intuitive, is a second trait needed in this type of research" (Merriam, 1998, p.21). I was aware of any personal biases on the topic being studied and how these biases may influence my investigation. "Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human beings… the philosophical assumptions underlying this type of research is that reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (Merriam,

1998, p.22). Therefore, the final product of this study was my interpretation of the participants' views filtered through my own constructs.

The researcher must be a good communicator and listener throughout the process. "A good communicator empathizes with participants, establishes rapport, asks good questions, and listens intently" (Merriam, 1998, p.23). I employed the skills developed while teaching students and coaching teachers to assist me in being a good communicator.

<center>Validity and Reliability of the Study</center>

A study conducted in an ethical manner ensures the validity and the reliability of findings. Consumers of research want to know the study is trustworthy. The researcher can increase the validity and reliability of the study through a careful design. Kemmis (1983) stated "What makes the case study work 'scientific' is the observer's critical presence in the context of occurrence of phenomena, observation, hypothesis-testing (by confrontation and disconfrontation), triangulation of participants' perceptions, interpretations and so on" (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 200).

I constructed my interviews to be reliable and valid. Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality. To enhance the internal validity of my study I provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher's role, the participant's role, and the basis for selection of data gathering, triangulation, and analysis. I analyzed the documents collected and based my conclusions on the data. Further internal validity was demonstrated with persistence in triangulation of sources and extensive member checks. I used triangulation of the data to confirm the emerging findings. I used multiple sources of data: coaches' interviews and reflective journals, as well as teachers' interviews and reflective journals.

<center>69</center>

Member checks are another way to ensure internal validity. All participants conducted member checks of their interviews and made corrections as needed.

Firestone (1987) explored the trustworthiness of a qualitative study as providing the reader with "a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusions 'make sense'" (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 199). I employed a colleague and an auditor to examine the findings as they emerged from the data. Having an open dialogue about the data assisted me in building the theoretical framework for this study.

The reliability of a study refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated. However, in a qualitative study achieving reliability in the traditional sense is impossible. Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested thinking about "the 'dependability' or 'consistency' of the results obtained from the data" (cited in Merriam, 1998, p.206). Rather than demanding that researchers get the same results, a researcher wishes the readers to concur that given the data collected the results make sense and are consistent and dependable.

There are several methods researchers use to ensure the results of a study are dependable. Triangulation is a method of using multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple methods to confirm findings. As a result I included multiple sources of data (interviews and reflective journals). In addition the use of an auditor can also ensure dependability. I hired an auditor to authenticate the reflective journals, transcriptions from the interviews, and the findings of my study as well as a peer reviewer.

External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings in one study apply to other situations. The researcher can use several strategies to enhance the possibility that the results of a qualitative study generalize to another situation. One is providing a rich, thick description for the reader so that the reader is able to determine how closely his or her situation

matches the researcher's situation. In addition the researcher can use multisite design. I used

multisite design in that I used six Title I elementary schools within the same district. I also used

purposeful sampling to select the coaches for my study. The teacher participants were recruited

through a mass email sent to all teachers in the six Title I elementary schools involved in the

study. Eighteen teachers volunteered to participate. I selected 12 of the 18 teachers based on

years of experience and grade level taught to maximize variation in the study. These strategies

allow the reader of the research greater range to generalize the results to other situations.

<div align="center">Ethical Protocol</div>

Before beginning the study the following procedures were conducted. Authorization

from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (ETSU-IRB) was obtained.

Permission to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the school district's director of

schools and the six administrators at the school sites. The director of the schools, the schools'

administrators, and participants were given assurance by the researcher that the names of the

school district, schools and participants would remain confidential and anonymous. Pseudonyms

were used to conceal identities. After the teachers and coaches were selected, they read and

signed an informed consent document. Participants were told their participation was voluntary,

and they could withdraw from the study at any time during the process. Interviews were

conducted one-on-one with the researcher and digitally recorded with the permission of the

participant. All transcriptions were given to the participants to conduct member checks. Once

the study was completed, and before publishing, participants were offered a copy. All

transcriptions, audio recordings, and journals were kept securely locked in a filing cabinet at my

home.

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

This qualitative case study was an emergent design and was conducted in a city school system in upper East Tennessee. Participants were selected from one school system. The participants consisted of three instructional coaches and 11 teachers who worked in the six Title I elementary schools. The three coaches involved were purposefully selected because they were the coaches assigned to the six Title I schools. Each coach served two of the six schools in the study. Teacher participants were recruited using a mass emailing through the school system's email server. A letter (see Appendix B) was attached to the email explaining the purpose of the study and requesting participation. Eighteen teachers volunteered to participate in the study. After the list of teachers was generated, I purposefully selected teacher participants so that, if possible, there was a variety of grade levels and years of teaching experience represented in the study for maximum variation. The coaches and teachers were notified after this determination was made. Once the participants were identified, the researcher contacted each participant either in person or over the phone to explain the data collection process.

The coaches and the teachers kept separate reflective journals of their personal experiences while working together throughout the school year. These reflective journals were part of the coaches' protocol that was brought about through discussions in the coaches' meetings from the previous school year. I analyzed the coaches and teachers' reflective journals from school year 2009-10 using the Document Analysis Forms (see Appendix E and Appendix F). To facilitate the ease of data collection from six separate school sites and 15 different participants, all reflective journals were electronically submitted to the researcher through school email.

I asked participants to submit their reflective journals immediately after their interview so I could gain informed consent (See Appendix G) prior to getting access to the journals. After

each interview I immediately transcribed the interview and returned it to the interviewee within 2 days. The interviewees were asked to member check the transcriptions and make any corrections needed. In most cases the participants returned the member checks to me within two days. This process ensured the participant's words were interpreted correctly. An auditor was employed to check the authenticity of the recordings and the transcriptions as well as the interpretations of the data. While waiting for the transcription from the participant, I began reading and analyzing the reflective journal of that participant. I used the Document Analysis Forms (see Appendix E or Appendix F) to record findings within the journal entries that answered my overarching research question. I continued this process throughout to ensure that the data did not become overwhelming. I recorded thoughts and insights in my research log.

Data Analysis

I hand coded and analyzed the data collected simultaneously throughout the data collection phase of the study. Merriam (1998) stated, "Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious and illuminating" (p. 162). In that, I analyzed the data collected immediately after each interview before moving on to the next data collection. I hand coded the transcript of the interview and the reflective journal of each participant. This kept the process of data analysis from becoming overwhelming at the end of the data collection process. After I collected the first interview and reflective journal, and with the purpose of my study in mind, I recorded my reflections, tentative themes, hunches, and ideas to pursue that I found in my first set of data. I made notes of things I wanted to ask or look for in the next data collection round. I compared the second interview and reflective journal with the first set of data. This comparison informed the next data collected, and so on. "The process of data analysis involves making sense

out of the text and image data" (Creswell, 2003, p. 190). By employing this format I began to see tentative themes and categories that answered my research questions.

Summary

"The analysis of qualitative data can range from organizing a narrative description of the phenomenon, to constructing categories or themes that cut across the data, to building theory" (Merriam, 1998, p. 196). In pursuit of an understanding of how job-embedded professional development coaches impacted teacher practice, I triangulated data collected from coaches' interviews, teachers' interviews, and both groups' reflective journals in search of data linked to the phenomenon. I employed ethical protocols using the guidelines and standards of the ETSU-IRB.

I used an educational case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of instructional coaches on teacher practice. Interviews and reflective journals were hand coded to identify emerging themes from the data. I addressed validity and reliability using an auditor, member checks, triangulation, multisite design, peer examination, and purposeful sampling.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to construct a theoretical framework explaining the impact of job-embedded professional development coaches on teacher practice. The study involved collecting data from participants' reflective journals and through one-on-one interviews with 11 teachers and three instructional coaches from six Title I elementary schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select the coaches because they served the six Title I schools. I obtained initial teacher contacts through a mass emailing to all teachers in the six elementary schools. I requested their participation in the study if they had worked with the coach during school year 2009-2010. The research examined the perceptions, reflections, and descriptions from coaches and teachers. Research questions used to guide this study included:

1. How do coaches perceive their roles?

   A. How do coaches perceive that their work in planning lessons

       influences teacher practice?

   B. How do coaches perceive data disaggregation impacts teacher

       practice?

   C. How do coaches perceive modeling with feedback of lessons affects

       teacher practice?

2. How do teachers perceive the roles of job-embedded professional development

    coaches?

   A. How do teachers think lesson planning with an instructional coach

       influences their practice?

B. How do teachers think data disaggregation with the coach impacts their practice?

C. How do teachers think that modeled lessons and feedback from the coach affects their instructional practices?

Results

The reflective journals and personal interviews told the story of how teachers and coaches worked together planning lessons, modeling lessons, providing feedback, and using data to make instructional decisions. Through careful examination and hand coding of the data, themes emerged related to what teachers and coaches perceived to be (1) factors that promoted the influence of coaches on teachers' practice; (2) barriers that relegated the influence of coaches on teachers' practice; (3) evidence that demonstrated teachers', coaches' and students' learning; and (4) components needed for an effective coaching model.

Coaches and Teachers Working Together

Each coach served two schools. The coaches worked in each school twice a week. They were at one school Monday and Wednesday and the other school Tuesday and Thursday. On Fridays the coaches alternated schools thus giving them 3 days in one of the schools every other week. Teachers described meeting with the coach on average at least once a week typically during their planning time. These one-on-one meetings allowed the coach and the teacher to have follow-up discussions about modeled lessons, to plan for the next lesson, to analyze data on class and individual students, and to have reflective conversations about teaching and student learning. The time of these one-on-one meetings ranged from as little as 10 minutes to an hour.

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal:

[Teacher's name] and I met today for 45 minutes during her planning time at her request. Our objectives for the meeting were to help with her overall schedule, how to incorporate guided reading groups/stations effectively, and where to go next with Writer's Workshop.

Some teachers explained that the coach would meet with them after school due to time constraints during the school day. Shelby, a multiage teacher, wrote in her journal about how much she appreciated her coach's willingness to meet on a Friday after school, "Because we didn't have time this week, [coach's name] and I met after school today from 3:30 – 5:30. She is the best."

The coaches also described working with the teachers during their classes. The coaches reported modeling lessons, observing teachers, and observing students. The model lessons varied from week to week depending on the needs of the teachers. All coaches clarified working with teachers by invitation only unless the principal requested that they specifically work with a teacher or group of teachers.

In addition to the one-on-one meetings, the coaches documented meeting regularly with all teachers in grade level meetings; however, the frequency of these meetings was different for each school. Some of the schools met weekly, some met every 2 weeks, and one school met once a month. Typically coaches used these meeting to distribute student assessment data from the Palm Pilot assessment used in grades kindergarten through second or the Pearson Assessment used in grades three through five. On occasion the coaches described working with the teachers in grade level meetings to analyze students' writing samples, develop scoring rubrics for writing, introduce a new teaching strategy, or develop curriculum maps for the new state standards. The

coaches stated that it was through these grade level meetings that they generated most of their work.

Coach Ashlyn, stated, "It is through the grade level meetings that I get most of my business from teachers."

Coach Anastasia confirmed this thought, "The grade level meetings generate work for me with the teachers as we discuss different things."

Roxie, a teacher with 11 years of experience, summed up best what most teachers expressed about working with their coach:

[Coach's name] would help supplement our teaching. We would ask her to gather stuff

for us. She would come in and do mini-lessons. She would let us teach the mini-lesson.

She would come in and observe our lessons or give us suggestions on what we might do

differently. She would always ask us what we would like to focus on to help drive what

we were working on in our classrooms. She was always willing to help with anything

that we needed, any new ideas that she had, or anything that was coming down the pike.

She would ask us at the grade level meetings if we needed anything and then she would

come to our classrooms during our teaching time or our planning time. Depending on

whether it was to come in to go over our test materials, to plan stations, or if we wanted

her to pilot something in our classroom; she let us initiate the topics that we wanted help

with. Sometimes she would bring our attention to something that was new and make

suggestions like, "You may want to try this".

Communication Between Coaches and Teachers

Effective Communication

The teachers and coaches deemed effective communication as essential when building relationships and reflecting about teaching and learning. Teachers and coaches needed to respect each other's ideas and suggestions. Together they learned the best way to teach in order to positively affect student learning. In general the teachers explained that if they needed the coach to work with them they typically emailed or called the coach with a request because the coach was not in their building every day. The coaches were very prompt in their responds to the teachers' requests. Teachers stated how important it was that the coach got back to them in a reasonable amount of time – usually immediately or within the day. All teachers expressed their appreciation of these prompt responses.

Roxie, a teacher in third grade, stated, "Anything that I needed I would email [coach's name], that is, if she wasn't in the building that day. If I did email her, she would respond that day. She was very dependable that way."

Lee Ann, a second year teacher, expressed how much she appreciated her coach's immediate responses to her questions and needs. "She got back with me immediately. Her follow through was great. I could always depend on her."

Priscilla, a veteran teacher, commented, "[Coach's name] would come by before and after school if I needed something. She even gave me her cell phone number to call."

On a deeper level the reflective communication that teachers and coaches engaged in was critical to the coaching process. Reflective practice allowed teachers and coaches to examine their assumptions, beliefs, and practices.

Breakdown in Communication

Contrary to what the teachers stated, one coach did not get the same response from teachers when she wanted to make contact. Coach Olivia made note in her journal:

79

Often I will go into a classroom and a teacher wants me to do a model lesson, and I have had little time to plan a lesson. I have tried to communicate with teachers over e-mail to make plans, but teachers rarely get back with me to make the plans or the emails are so vague that there isn't that opportunity for give and take that face-to-face conversations provide.

Lacey recounted a situation where the coach threw her off guard when she did not communicate with Lacey prior to expecting her to teach an afternoon lesson. Lacey wrote:

At the end of the lesson this morning, I asked [coach's name] if she was going to be able to come back in the afternoon for my second class. She usually is unable, so I give the lesson. She usually leaves me the PowerPoint and materials so I can go over it. When she's not able to come, I go over the lesson during my planning time. Since she said she was going to come, I did not go over the lesson. When she arrived, she informed me that I was giving the lesson, and she was going to watch. I was thrown off guard because I didn't have time to go over it in my head. Even though I had watched and co-taught with her during the morning lesson. I still didn't feel 100% comfortable with it. I think she should have asked me if I felt comfortable teaching the lesson rather than just telling me I was going to do it.

Lesson Planning

The teachers explained that rather than planning specific lessons with the coach, it was more the idea generating that teachers liked the most about collaborating with the coach.

Easton said it best:

I think the greatest gain I've received from [coach's name] was her ideas. She visits all these different classrooms and gets ideas from all of these other places

that she can share with me. We [teachers] are so isolated. We don't have time to

work together. It's having the time to work together with a colleague to generate

ideas that I like the best. It's always better to put two heads together.

Kendall Paige expressed her appreciation for the coach's assistance in helping her

develop a folklore unit:

[Coach's name] helped me plan and gather books. I didn't really know where to start.

How do you get the students to know the difference? She found a semantic chart with all

the characteristics of the four different types. She gave me all these books. They were

tall tales, fables, myths and fairy tales. Not only did I have an idea, but I had a graphic

organizer as well as the books to teach the unit.

Lacey enthusiastically stated, "I loved being able to sit down with [coach's name] and

generate ideas to best teach a specific standard. She had wonderful ideas."

Easton, a second grade teacher, said, "We didn't really use our valuable time together to

write lesson plans. [Coach's name] helped me to generate ideas for my lessons. She had tons of

great ideas."

Stacy, a kindergarten teacher, wrote in her journal, "I find the sharing of ideas/bouncing

ideas off of one another very helpful. Being able to talk through ideas with [coach's name] keeps

me on track."

Shelby discussed the questions she and the coach addressed in planning a unit on Small

Moments:

We talked about how we were going to introduce the unit. We answered questions like:

What are we going to do with the students? What books are we going to use? What is a

small moments book? In general we outlined: What were our objectives? What were

81

these children going to be able to do at the end of this? Then we pulled out some books

that we could read and just talked about how this unit would last about three weeks.

What did we want to do first? What did we want the students to initially understand? At

the end, at the writing celebration, what did we want their pieces of writing to look like?

The coaches reported that they did little specific writing of lesson plans with teachers.

However, all the coaches did some lesson planning although it was minimal. Coach Ashlyn

replied, "If I do lesson planning, it is usually with first year teachers. They get stuck and think

they have to do everything in the basal. It is important that they understand we teach standards

not the textbook." Coach Anastasia and Coach Olivia also commented on working with first

year teachers in the same way.

<div align="center">Modeling Lessons and Providing Feedback</div>

The coaches described numerous occasions within their journals where they modeled

lessons for teachers. They also wrote about teachers modeling lessons for them and giving the

teachers specific feedback about the lesson in a post conference. Coach Anastasia wrote:

> I have them invite me in. I really enjoy going in and modeling. The planning has to
>
> happen first. I sometimes get stuck doing the same things. For example, lately, it has
>
> been writer's workshop. I meet with the teacher, and we develop a coaching plan. Then
>
> I go in to model a lesson. Finally I observe the teacher teach a lesson and give feedback.

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her reflective journal while she was observing a teacher:

> > I would like to see [teacher's name] go deeper with her questioning in writer's
> >
> > workshop. I would like to see her take her writers beyond simply noticing and
> >
> > identifying, to guiding them to learn to think like a writer. This means I need to
> >
> > do a better job at modeling this type of higher order questioning.

Coach Ashlyn gave a typical example of how she did modeling and feedback:

Teachers would ask me to model a lesson, and I would go in and do that. They would give me feedback and take notes on what they observed. We would meet and discuss the model lesson. Sometimes I would model it again, but most of the time just once. I don't give the teacher a form to complete while observing me, but most of them take notes.

Coach Olivia used a specific example of how she ended up doing a model lesson:

One day I was observing and there were some students in the independent reading center. There was one student in the reading center that had a book that was too hard for her. She didn't have the strategies to know what to do when you come to a word that she didn't know. After talking with the teacher about my observation, I did a model lesson on this.

When modeling lessons the coaches stated the teachers typically took notes, observed, and engaged with the students during the lesson. Coach Anastasia wrote, "[Teacher's name] was seated nearby taking notes and would occasionally participate in the discussion."

However, in the interviews the coaches expressed concern about teachers who left the room while they would model a lesson. The coaches stated that this situation was much better than in previous years. Coach Ashlyn speculated as to why this was the case, "I think teachers realize what my role is in the classroom now. They understand that I am there for them to observe me and not for me to teach their class while they take a break."

Teacher viewed the coaches as being an extra set of eyes and ears in the classroom that brought a different perspective and view of what teachers thought they were doing and what they actually did.

Shelby reflected in her journal about a feedback session with her coach:

> I taught a lesson today about making connections to the text with my K-1 class.
> [Coach's name] observed the lesson and offered some great feedback this
> afternoon in our post conference. I used the book *Some Birthday* by Patricia
> Palocco. Some students recalled that we'd done an author study last year on Ms.
> Palocco. I moved on quickly to get into the lesson and probably should have
> taken a few minutes to probe into what they remembered from the author study.
> Sure enough, [coach's name] suggested that I probe a little more into students'
> observations such as this. Point well taken, at the time I was so focused on
> getting to the skills I planned to teach that I didn't take the opportunity to utilize
> other skills such as predicting what the book was about based on what the
> students know about the author. I also missed a comment by a student who
> attempted to make a connection, but two rambunctious boys distracted me. I
> missed a great teaching moment here by moving on with the lesson. [Coach's
> name] reminded me that I needed to make sure I let the students complete their
> thoughts and observations about what they are thinking. I will pay more attention
> to student comments and capitalize on these "teachable moments". I know I
> missed a great teaching point, sacrificed in the name of time.

Jane described how watching the coach modeled helped her to critique herself, "I really like her modeling because it makes me critique myself. It makes me look closely at the students' reactions and my teaching practices."

Shelby reflected in her journal about the benefit of having a coach in the room to model and observe:

The best part about having a coach in the room during lessons, whether the coach is

teaching or whether I am teaching, is the fact that we are both experiencing the teaching

of a lesson together and can observe, then share observations together to evaluate how the

lesson went.

When I asked the coaches how they adjusted their coaching as a result of the feedback

sessions with the teachers, Coach Anastasia stated, "Oh yes, I still adjust. If we don't adjust, we

don't grow. Every teacher, classroom, group and situation is different. I want to meet the needs

of the teachers. If it doesn't work, then I am going to change it."

Coach Olivia discussed an example of how she adjusted, "[Teacher's name] and I totally

went back and revamped that lesson and brought it down to a k/1 level. What really was neat

was that I took it to the other first grade teachers and it worked wonderfully."

Coach Ashlyn recalled:

> At the beginning of the year I was working with [teacher's name] on guided
>
> reading groups because that is what the principal had asked me to work with
>
> [teacher's name] on. However, three or four weeks in to our time together, the
>
> teacher requested that she really wanted to work on writer's workshop. So I
>
> changed, because I felt like that was what she wanted and needed at the time.

When I asked the coaches what area(s) of instructional coaching presented the greatest

difficulty when attempting to change teachers' practice, they listed being able to get initial entry

into the classroom, needing more time to work collaboratively with the teachers, and not having

the support from the principal.

Data Disaggregation

The three coaches identified data disaggregation as an area where they spent a good deal

of their time. The school system used two common benchmark assessments. The Palm Pilot assessment was used with grades kindergarten through second, and the Pearson Assessment was used for grades three through five. These assessments measured students' mastery of grade level standards three times a year. In addition the teachers and coaches analyzed students' writing samples to assess students' growth in writing.

In general coaches reported disseminating data results in the grade level meeting and then going into individual teachers and drilling down into the data to identify students' needs. Coach Anastasia discussed how she and the teachers used the data from the assessments:

We looked at it collectively and how it impacted our school. Then I would go into the classroom, meet with the teachers individually, and look at the ways the data could influence instruction.

Coach Olivia gave a specific example of how she and a teacher used data with the students' writing to make changes:

One of the things [teacher's name] identified as a problem was not being able to confer with all of her students on a systematic basis. She wanted to make sure she got to all of her students. Consequently, we set up a schedule so that she met with four students each day. I explained to her the importance of looking at the students' writing prior to the conference to make a determination about what it is that she needed to do to instruct that individual student.

Coach Ashlyn expanded on how she allowed teacher to look at the data together and make decisions about what strategies would address areas of need:

I will begin the meeting with "Let's look at the students who are high risk. Let's look at the students who are on the border." The teachers have an open discussion about this

child is having trouble with this skill, comprehension questions, etc…Then we talk about strategies we can use for those areas. I look at the data ahead of time and anticipate what the teachers will see in the data so that I can make suggestions.

Priscilla, a kindergarten teacher with 25 years of experience, said,

> Yes, we use the Palm Pilot assessment with dibels. It [assessment] is the steering wheel of the classroom. It is the number one way to measure progress. I would rearrange my reading groups based on these results. [Coach's name] really taught me how to use the data and gave me great comfort in knowing it is ok to move the kids around [in groups]. I am not sure why it was uncomfortable in the beginning for me to do that.

Coach Ashlyn stated:

> We [coaches] spend a lot of time with data because of the literacy assessment we do in K-2….Not only in interpreting results and helping the teachers do this, but also giving the assessment. She went on to say, "We also did the Pearson Assessment this year, we have really gotten into the data for the upper grades.

Coach Olivia agreed with Ashlyn that data disaggregation was where she spent most of her time. She stated,

I think in [school district] where we just started using the Palm Pilot the teachers are still in a learning curve. There had never been a system wide common assessment. Therefore, when we implemented one, I don't think they [teachers] really understood what the data told them. We spent time doing the assessment and telling them [teachers] what the data means. One of the things we are focusing on is having the teachers look at

the data and make instructional decisions. For example, how to group their students based on the data and differentiate their instruction.

Coach Anastasia discussed how her role as a coach had evolved over the last 5 years.

> I would say that in the beginning when I was first hired to help establish our signature school, I was much more of a resource provider. We were training teachers and building up our resources. Technology was coming our way and I helped the teachers use the new technology. Then things started to change where now I work more with data.

The coaches discussed looking at student data as another way of measuring their success with teachers. The three coaches described situations where students' scores increased as a result of the work they did with the teachers. Coach Anastasia affirmed, "It was the students' work, which was a good measure and the students' participation." Coach Olivia stated, "We saw her scores progressively go up on the students' running records. When we did this last assessment of her kindergarten students, the results were phenomenal." Coach Ashlyn boasted,

> I am proud of, [teacher's name], in that, she is completing her Palm Pilot assessments on her own. Many teachers would rather have me assess while they teach. [Teacher's name] is beginning to see the value in the assessments and how they positively affect her instruction and so, she is interested in giving them herself."

Coach Ashlyn wrote in a journal entry about how well the students in [teacher's name] class were progressing with text features and how to use them in writing. She reflected that the teacher had noticed that this was carrying over into their reading. "Many of the students have made remarkable growth with the Palm Pilot Assessment from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, demonstrating how reading and writing are reciprocal processes."

Coach Ashlyn wrote about a session with a teacher where they used the students' writing samples to group the students and determine the direction of the next lesson.

As we read their latest writing pieces, we divided them into groups…writers using letter strings, writers labeling pictures, writers not labeling pictures, and writers writing sentences. Because we had the majority of the students in the letter strings/not labeling picture piles; we decided a writing unit focused on labeling should be our next step for writer's workshop.

Lee Ann discussed in her interview how the coach put the data into a usable format to make it easier to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

We did the Pearson Assessment and looked at the data. We also looked at the TCAP results at the beginning of the year. When the Pearson results came in, [coach's name] gave me a really nice chart that showed separately where the students were struggling and where they did better. For example, the students struggled with main idea and details. Priscilla wrote in her journal,

[Coach's name] and I met to look over the writing samples that I had collected while using her lesson as a model. We were both pleased with the students' progress and decided to continue using single sheets for writing for the next several weeks. We also decided to help the students elaborate on their pictures and chose as our first unit, labeling which should aid in the creation of details in drawing. Also, I had a group this year weak in phonemic awareness. [Coach's name] did some research, and she discovered that we needed to backup and move them [students] forward. We were assessing them on one level that they were not ready for. So, I will use the data from this last assessment for the students coming

to me for summer school in about a week. So, yes, she has really helped me see

the importance of using data to plan my instruction.

Shelby put in writing her appreciation of the coach's input on analyzing test results and

making suggestions on how to help some students who were struggling:

I shared data from my recent palm pilot testing. I have four students, three first graders

and a kindergartner who I am tracking through the progress monitoring on the Palm Pilot.

Every two weeks I assess the first graders' ability to decode and recode nonsense CVC

words. We looked at the details of the testing and [coach's name] pointed out a couple of

errors that were repetitive throughout the test. She then suggested a strategy (roll-a-cube)

that I can use with these students that should help them practice this skill. She said that

she has materials in the Literacy Center that she will send me. It's helpful to have this

information as well as the materials sent to me. I'm anxious to see how this strategy

works with these children.

Kendall Paige used the data from her assessment date to determine which skills to add to

her literacy stations:

We used the Pearson Assessment data to focus on the skills the students did not master. I

added those skills to my literacy stations. This allowed the students to continue working

on these skills while I continued to teach. [Coach's name] helped me make test probes

for my students to practice tested standards prior to the test this spring. She also worked

with my students on how to take a test.

Candy explained, "We looked at the running records from the Palm Pilot. [Coach's

name] helped me come up with a chart to assist the children in selecting books. She helped me

level my library, and the students could use the chart when selecting books."

Roxie shared how the coach developed colorful reports of the data and helped her get online to get her results:

> [Coach's name] helped us decipher the information from the reports. We mainly looked at how my class did as a whole and identified skills that the students were weak in. She would help me come up with stations that we would use in the classroom to help reinforce the skills with the students.

Factors That Promote Coaches' Influence

The factors that promoted coaches' influence included: (a) teachers being active participants in the coaching process and in their own professional development, (b) teachers willing to disclose their area of need, (c) teachers and coaches being reflective, (d) principals viewing coaches as valuable members of the faculty, (e) coaches' demonstrating actions and possessing traits of an effective coach.

Teachers Being Active Participants in the Coaching Process and in Their Own Professional Development

Coaches documented numerous examples of teachers taking an active role in the coaching process as opposed to expecting the coach to have all the answers and do all the work. There were only a few incidences where teachers left the room when the coach came in to model a lesson.

Coach Ashlyn made this observation in her journal:

> As I was teaching, [teacher's name] sat on the floor with the students and even participated by raising her hand at one point to ask a question. I can count on [teacher's name] to stay in the room and be extremely attentive when I am

91

modeling a lesson. She is either participating with the kids or sitting close by

taking notes in her notebook.

Shelby, a kindergarten teacher, reflected in her journal.

I continue to learn so much from [coach's name] and I truly enjoy collaborating

with her. I feel like we are doing action research together and learning about how

five and six year olds think about their reading.

Lee Ann reflected about how working with the coach started to solidify things for her:

Things started to come together. The students were really responding to it [her

teaching methods]. I have a toolbox of strategies that I can pull from. I have my

notebook where I write everything down from what I have done with [coach's

name] and reflect on what worked.

Coach Ashlyn wrote, "*We* planned writer's workshop for next week *together* and *collaborated* on what we thought the students were ready for."

Shelby exhibited her desire to better her abilities in working with struggling readers. She wrote:

I've been studying Beverly Tyner's work on teaching struggling readers. I have created a

framework for lesson plans for each of the five levels of reading. The form helps me to

plan what I need to do each day with every reading group.

Candy read a book recommended to her by the coach when she was struggling to implement her literacy stations. She stated, "I read the book *Literacy Stations and Photographs.* [Coach's name] recommended it to me. I gained valuable information and ideas from the book…. She [coach] is the reason my literacy stations are working this year."

Coach Anastasia articulated a successful experience she had with a teacher because the teacher was an active participant:

[Teacher's name] gave me feedback. She was very specific about what she wanted and needed. She expressed when she wanted to take over and when she didn't feel comfortable. She could observe me and then we would brainstorm about what to do differently. We created a huge unit that was fantastic.

Coach Ashlyn wrote:

I really enjoy working with [teacher's name] because she is so willing to try anything in her classroom if you are there to support her. She is always so appreciative, thanks me for helping her, and has such a pleasant disposition. [Teacher's name] is looking for ways to improve her practice.

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal about the importance of mentoring new teachers,

[Teacher name] is a typical new teacher…soaking up whatever I give her to use with her students. She is eager to learn and wants her students to grow. Mentoring new teachers like [teacher's name] is so important because it provides the foundation for her future instruction. What she learns and the strategies she uses now will affect how she teaches for a long time.

Coach Ashlyn reflected about the importance of teachers following through with plans between her visits. "[Teacher's name] writers got right to work. They are getting the routine of writer's workshop because [teacher's name] is committed to teaching it daily. Too many times teachers 'half teach.' They don't consistently do it every day. Then when I go to model a lesson, the students are not sure what we're doing because they have not done it since I was last there. I

know [teacher's name] is not this kind of teacher. It is obvious that they do writer's workshop in my absence."

Kendall Paige wrote in her journal about extending on a lesson that the coach had modeled the day before. "The next day, I took the lesson a step further by having the students complete a concept web to organize the information they have gained from reading their leveled books on Ecosystems."

Teachers Willing to Disclose Their Area of Need

Coach Olivia discussed in her interview the work she had done with a teacher who wanted to completely change her instruction. The teacher's dilemma was trying to implement literacy centers with the skills baskets her mentor teacher had suggested. The skills baskets were not moving her students forward:

> She came to me wanting to really change her instruction completely. She wanted to implement literacy centers and had not done it before….She wanted to do something different. Her whole classroom changed. She started doing the centers. Each student knew exactly what to do in the centers. She had small groups of readers while the other students were in the literacy center.

Shelby, a National Board certified teacher, talked about how it was a collaborative effort in deciding on the next topic:

> It was really both of us. She would mainly ask me what the needs of my students were. I don't ever remember her coming in and saying I think you need to work on this. She would come in, and we would talk about what we wanted to do with the students with regard to comprehension. We also did a few little things with writing. Her observations

of me were after we talked and she modeled lessons. She never came in and said, "These are things I need you to work on." It was never in an evaluative way.

When I interviewed the teacher Coach Ashlyn talked about, it was apparent that the teacher was impacted by the experience:

> [Principal's name] talked to me and got Coach Ashlyn to come in and work with me. I knew I needed to improve, but I was just so defeated. I know I have improved greatly. I feel like there is still a lot more out there. Coach Ashlyn helped me tremendously. We do literacy centers in the lower grades, and I had never done literacy centers before. So I went to the summer workshop, and I thought I understood how to implement them in my classroom, but really I didn't. I thought as long as the students were actively engaged that was all I needed. Coach Ashlyn being in my classroom helped me to implement literacy centers in the correct way. She helped me take it from an abstract concept to something very useful. She taught me a lot about techniques through her modeling.

Candy told me in her interview:

> Most of the time I would go to her and say I need help with this or that. We worked on reading and writing together. After [coach's name] observed me, she would make suggestions about what I might do differently or what I might do in the next lesson.

Many of the teachers expressed their desire to become better teachers of writing. Easton explained, "In my situation, [coach's name] and I would sit down together and her first question would be, 'What would you like to work on?' I felt like writing in second grade was my weakness."

95

Sally stated, "I selected the focus for the meetings. I struggled with teaching writing and I wanted [coach's name] to help me with that. I just needed work with writing."

Easton, a second grade teacher with 8 years of experience, gave a perfect example of her weakness in teaching writing.

> My weakness is putting writing into action in my classroom. That is where we started. I went to some workshop and they had these topics for students to write about [*sic*]. On the sentence strips I would write, for example, "When I grow up…' and I would place that on the board and that was their [students] writing station for the day. That is all I would do for writing. Now instead of using those writing prompts, I use literacy and help the students write by visualizing things, using hand-on things like the hats. I get the students more engaged.

Teachers and Coaches Are Reflective About Their Practices

Lacey, a second year teacher, expressed how being reflective was imperative; "Working with [coach's name] has helped me reflect on my teaching. Being a reflective teacher and being open minded about trying new things is crucial in becoming a master teacher."

Shelby, a National Board Certified teacher, wrote in her journal,

> [Coach's name] reflections about her own teaching continually encourage me to do the same when she is not in the room. I guess what I am saying is that with all the knowledge she has, she continues to reflect on her teaching and what the children are learning. I never want to get to the point where I think I don't have to do that and [coach's name] example of reflecting will motivate me to remember that.

Coach Olivia revealed in her journal how reluctant teachers are to be reflective about their practice. She wrote about a postconference she had with a teacher who wanted other teachers to understand teaching writing the way she understood it.

I suggested that teachers needed additional professional development, but they needed time to write themselves and to reflect on that process. This gets very theoretical and is a path that teachers with whom I have worked in the past do not like to tread.

Coach Olivia explained why it is essential to be reflective.

In working with [teacher's name], I observed that what she does in teaching is fabulous, but she needs a better understanding of why it serves learning. This will take her knowledge from having an "intuitive" understanding about why it works to truly understanding why it works.

Principal Views the Coach as a Valuable Member of the Faculty

When the principal viewed the coach as a valuable member of the faculty, teachers were more likely to request the assistance of the coach. In a few cases the principals and coaches work together to address the needs of the faculty.

Sally expressed her appreciation of getting time during the school day to work with the coach:

[Coach's name] knew the standards backwards and forwards…Just being able to sit down with us and help us develop the lessons for the new standards was great. It meant a lot that [principal's name] got us subs so that we could work with [coach's name] during the school day.

Although it was rarely the case, principals asked coaches to work with struggling teachers. Coach Ashlyn discussed a success story that started with the principal making a recommendation. She wrote:

The relationship actually started when the principal asked me to work with this teacher. He said something to the affect, 'I really need you to work with [teacher's name]. She is still doing things she did 10 years ago. She needs to be doing literacy centers and guided reading. I am not sure she knows where to begin or how to do them.' When I asked him if he had told her I was coming in to help, he said that he told her she needed to change some things and he wanted her to use me as a resource. [Teacher's name] was so open to the process. I mean she was willing to change and improve her practice. At first, she had to realize that she could do so much more than she was actually doing.

I asked the teachers to describe qualities of an effective coach. Table 1 is a culmination of words and phrases used by the teachers to describe actions demonstrated by an effective coach:

Table 1

Actions of an Effective Coach

Actions Demonstrated	**# of participant responses**
Listens	11
Builds relationships	10
Shows does not just tell	9
Asks Questions	7
Encourages	7
Motivates	6
Shows mutual respect or valuing	6
Loves children	6
Shares ideas and materials	4
Goes the extra mile	2
Assesses situations quickly	2

Listens

All teachers expressed the value of having a coach that listened to what they had to say. Either through their journal entries or in their interviews this was a recurring action. Easton requested that the coach be, "…willing to listen to what I have to say." Jane appreciated how her coach, "…always listened to me no matter if it was teaching related or personal. She was always

there for me if I needed a shoulder to cry on." Shelby stated, "[Coach's name] genuinely listens to what I have to say and respects my opinions and thoughts."

Builds Relationships

The coaches expressed the importance of building relationships with teachers as the first critical step in getting into the classrooms. Coach Anastasia stated,

> You have to start out as a resource provider. However, you have to get out of it [resource provider], or you will not make a difference in instruction. Therefore, you have to start there to build the relationships. Relationship building is the most important role.

Coach Ashlyn expressed how she built a relationship with a teacher by providing resources. She stated,

> Teachers just don't have a lot of time to gather resources. On the one hand you hear you are doing too much for them [teachers], but if [teacher's name] wants to do a unit on biographies, and I have an hour to go pull resources, why not? I think that builds our relationship.

Coach Olivia explained,

> One of the most crucial things to being a coach is developing relationships. You are able to develop personal relationships if you are viewed as being part of that faculty. When you are at one school, versus two schools, you are viewed as part of that faculty. They [teachers] know you are there to help them, and you have more time to help them.

Kendall Paige, a third grade teacher, described her relationship with the coach, "It was an open relationship. I felt like if I boo booed she was there to help me find my way and make it work. It was like a guardian angel type of situation." Lacey supported this when she stated,

"[Coach's name] was more of a mentor to me. I could always go to her for guidance. She always answered my questions. If I had a problem, she would always give me a clear honest answer."

Jane expressed the significance of getting constructive feedback from her coach,

> I have a great relationship with [coach's name]. I feel very comfortable to contact her to get more feedback on anything. [Coaches name] would not only praise me, but she gave me constructive feedback. I can't tell you how much that helped me. It was awesome.

Priscilla expressed how her relationship with the coach was easy to build, "She never makes me feel like she is being condescending or like that she is there to oversee me….She is really there as a partner. If I am confused, she can unconfuse [*sic*] me in one of the nicest ways."

Shows Does Not Just Tell

The teachers acknowledged that not only was it nice to have a coach to give them great ideas, but it was just as important that the coach showed them how to teach the ideas. Roxie stated, "I want someone who is willing to show me and not just tell me how to do something. I think we are all visual learners." Lee Ann, a fourth grade teacher in her second year of teaching, described in her journal, "[Coach's name] used an anticipation guide. I had never seen this used before, and I loved it! I feel like using an anticipation guide would really help me to see what the students already know and do not know." Stacy reflected, "She [coach] didn't just say you need to teach writing and if you need something call or email me. She was there to share ideas, model lessons, help develop rubrics."

Asks Questions

The teachers articulated the importance of the coach asking questions to help generate

thoughts as well as to make them think reflectively about their practice. Easton said an effective coach "…asks me questions like… what are your thoughts? What works best?" Roxie commented, "I wouldn't expect them to know everything, but I would expect them to have a willingness to ask questions and help me figure things out."

Encourages

Teachers were encouraged in a number of ways by the coaches:

Coach Olivia gave an account in her journal about a teacher who was struggling with a decision of whether or not to quit the school's writing committee. The teacher sensed that her being there on the committee was holding the school back. Coach Olivia wrote,

> There has recently been some tension on the writing committee regarding beliefs about how to teach and assess writing. I encouraged [teacher's name] to stay on the writing committee and to find a way to help the other teachers understand writing in the way that she understands writing. She feels that because there is such a push for standards and testing this year that teachers feel overwhelmed and will not want to do this at this time.

Kendall Paige said, "I like that she was encouraging to me."

Shelby reflected in her journal, "She [coach] encouraged me to continue conferring with children on an individual basis so that I would have specific data on their status."

Stacy appreciated her coach's words of wisdom:

> [Coach's name] reminded me again that not every student is going to excel at writer's workshop, and that I need to be patient, remember where they are in their writing, and celebrate even the small successes with them. [Coach's name] words keep me grounded and positive.

102

Priscilla stated:

>Well, when I was down trodden and aggravated, and I couldn't stand it any
>
>longer, [coach's name] would say, "It's alright! Go back in there, you will be
>
>alright." So when I was thinking I was the suckiest [*sic*] teacher in town. She
>
>was there to say, "It's alright!" She was my cheerleader.

Motivates

Motivation offered by the coaches inspired teachers to continue learning and searching for understanding about how best to teach their students.

Lacey expressed the impact of working with the coach had had on her desire to go back to school.

>Working with [coach's name] has gotten me so excited about reading and that is why I
>
>have gone back to school. I want to do that for a teacher one day. [Coach's name] is so
>
>inspiring, I want to share and impact someone like she impacted me.

Shelby commented in her journal at the end of the week.

>I am feeling so motivated right now. Again, this week, my discussions and
>
>teaching with [coach's name] has taken me to a deeper level of understanding of
>
>my students and how they think and just what they are capable of [*sic*]. They are
>
>really teaching me how best to teach them! I just need to pay attention to what
>
>they are saying through their words and actions!

Priscilla commented, "The coach should have a lot of motivation and be able to inspire motivation in others."

Shows Mutual Respect or Valuing

The teachers offered numerous examples of mutual respect and valuing of the coach's

work and vice versa.

Lacey felt comfortable enough to make suggestions to the coach after a lesson she observed the coach model. She reflected:

The last part of the lesson was the state rubric. This is where she lost some of the class. When they see it [rubric], they get so confused. They don't really understand all the words. [Coach's name] goes over it and this is when most of my students doze off. I think next time I'll ask her just to show them the rubric, but not go over it because it confuses them and we lose a lot of them when they see it.

Shelby recounted a situation where she disagreed with the coach's recommendation about a graphic organizer that they were using to teach in reader's workshop. Modifying the graphic organizer was what they agreed upon in a planning session. However, she wrote:

After considering this revision, I decided not to change the graphic organizer….I was very happy that I had stuck with the same graphic organizer….She [coach] thought that I may still want to create another graphic organizer, but agreed that if the students continued to be successful with this graphic organizer than I should continue to use it…I do feel confident in offering my own suggestions to [coach's name] when they are contrary to what she may have advised. We have a mutually respectful relationship. While she has far greater knowledge of teaching literacy, I know my students and in this case, felt with more practice they would be successful. [Coach's name] displays openness to observations I make and honestly, I feel like we are learning together. She displays a respect for my knowledge, which I greatly appreciate.

The coaches expressed the importance of building relationships with teachers as the first critical step in getting into the classrooms. Coach Anastasia stated,

104

You have to start out as a resource provider. However, you have to get out of it [resource provider], or you will not make a difference in instruction. Therefore, you have to start there to build the relationships. Relationship building is the most important role.

Coach Ashlyn expressed how she built a relationship with a teacher by providing resources. She stated,

Teachers just don't have a lot of time to gather resources. On the one hand you hear you are doing too much for them [teachers], but if [teacher's name] wants to do a unit on biographies, and I have an hour to go pull resources, why not? I think that builds our relationship.

Coach Olivia stated,

One of the most crucial things to being a coach is developing relationships. You are able to develop personal relationships if you are viewed as being part of that faculty. When you are at one school, versus two schools, you are viewed as part of that faculty. They [teachers] know you are there to help them, and you have more time to help them.

Kendall Paige stated, "We had an open relationship. I felt like if I boo booed she was there to help me find a way to make it work. It was like a guardian angel type of situation. If I needed something, I would call her. It was not an authoritative situation. She was there to help me not evaluate me."

Shelby, a multiage teacher, reflected on her relationship with the coach in her journal,

[Coach's name] and I talked about how the 6 traits fit into writing instruction for K-2 students. Many teachers in K-2 are using the writing workshop format of teaching writing based on the study of Katie Wood Ray and Lucy Calkins. The

instruction is based on TN standards but is taught in a workshop format using

units of study. [Coach's name] and I have talked about and studied this format of

instruction for several years. We already have a strong relationship built in terms

of knowing how we each think philosophically about teaching reading and writing

to children.

Shelby wrote:

I like working with [coach's name] because we can have deep, theoretical,

research based discussions about instruction as well as deal with practical,

specific instructional needs. She usually has some piece of knowledge to share,

but if not, she offers to go find out and get back with me. She is as excited to

learn and talk about literacy instruction as I am, and I feel she respects what I

have to share as well. Priscilla stated, "Usually she left me alone because she

trusted me to do it and come back to her and say 'Well, that bombed! Now what

should I do?' She had the confidence I could do it."

Loves Children

Teachers acknowledged the importance of coaches building relationships with the

students and truly enjoying working with the children.

Easton noted her students' relationship with the coach, "She knows the students, she loves

the students, and they love her. They get excited when she comes into the classroom to model a

lesson." Jane complimented her coach, "The students love her [coach]. She is so sweet and gets

the students excited about learning. She genuinely cares about each and every one of them, and

the students know it."

Shares Ideas and Materials

Teachers valued the collaboration with the coach to generate ideas for teaching different topics. Throughout the journal entries, teachers wrote about how their coach helped them gather resources, brainstorm ideas, share materials, create materials, and anything else that the teachers needed.

Goes the Extra Mile

Candy stated, "She would do more than I asked for." Stacy commented, "A coach is someone who is willing to say I don't know, but I will find out." Roxie said, "The coach would be willing to research…to go the extra mile to help me find the answer.

Assesses Situations Quickly

Shelby was concerned that the coach was adept at assessing situations quickly as not to waste the teacher's time. She stated, "They have to be able to assess the situation quickly. How can I help this person? I don't want to waste their [*sic*] time; what is it that I am seeing? They must analyze and get to the one thing you need help with."

Table 2 is a culmination of words used to describe the traits of an effective coach.

Table 2

Traits of an Effective Coach

Traits	# of Responses
Friendly	11
Knowledgeable	11
Trustworthy	11
Approachable	9
Helpful	9
Dependable	9
Caring	8
Consistent	7
Fun	7
Flexible	6
Outgoing	5
Energetic	4
Genuine	4
Tactful	2
Humble	1

Friendly

Lee Ann discussed how she felt like she had known her coach all her life. "She was just so friendly and made you feel at ease. I felt like I could ask her anything." Lacey thought it was

important for a coach to have an "open door policy – a friendliness that made teachers feel welcome."

Knowledgeable

Every teacher commented on coaches needing to be knowledgeable about the subject matter, child development, research-based strategies, or curriculum.

Lee Ann stated that she felt confident in her coach because she was "very knowledgeable and had years of teaching experience."

Sally bluntly stated, "Knowledgeable…knowing what they are doing."

Shelby commented on the level of education of her coach, "Honestly, I think [coach's name] get a lot of respect because of her level of education. She can back up what she teaches. She is a role model to many of us."

Lacey discussed the importance of the coaches "knowing the curriculum."

Trustworthy

Trust was extremely imperative. Teachers repeatedly stressed the importance of being able to trust the coach. They needed to know that the coach was not going to betray their confidences.

Shelby spelled it out clearly, "Trust is H-U-G-E huge."

Stacy commented that she respected someone who could just be honest, "…don't feed me a line. I need to trust that the coach is honest with me."

Roxie supported this thought, "I don't want a coach who just pats me on the back and says good job. I need to know that the coach will tell me the truth about my teaching and guide me to fix it."

The coaches also discussed the significance of trust in building relationships with teachers. Coach Anastasia stated,

Teachers want to know that you are not a spy for the principal. They don't want you to discuss what you see going on in their classrooms in a negative way to other teachers. For that matter, most [teacher] don't want you to discuss positive things either. In all honesty, it has to remain confidential. The minute you betray the trust of one teacher, you have ruined yourself with the rest of the faculty. They will not invite you into their rooms. You might as well move on.

Approachable

Lee Ann stated, "She [coach] was easy going, and I felt like I could ask her anything."

Kendall Paige commented, "They need to be open…they know how to get teachers to let them in."

Sally expressed the coach should "make you feel at ease no matter what they are talking about."

Lacey confirmed, "You can have all the knowledge you want, but if you can't relate to people you are not going to get very far with teachers. You are not!"

Roxie supported this thought when she said, "Personable, because you can know everything, but if you cannot connect with people it doesn't matter."

Helpful

The nature of the coaching position is to be helpful. Teachers articulated repeatedly that the coaches in the system were very helpful.

110

Lacey said it best, "Helpful, to me that is the number one quality. My experience has been that all the coaches in the system have that personality. Their willingness to help has been wonderful."

Easton described an effective coach as being able to "help me with research based strategies to teach certain topics and help me use data to modify lessons to meet my students' needs."

Coach Anastasia exhibited a helpful spirit when she jumped at the chance to get a teacher motivated about using Day Books with her students to organize their writing materials and resources.

> I jumped at the chance to get them [Day Books] going in her room. I left school and ran
>
> to Target. I purchased 22 composition notebooks and made it back in time for our
>
> session. She [teacher] was thrilled to have them ready for student use that day.

Dependable

As stated earlier in this chapter, teachers expressed the need for the coach to be dependable and follow through with what they say they will do. Lee Ann wants her coach to be "willing to get back to me right away." Candy commented about her coach this year, "What impressed me most was if she [coach] told me she was going to do something, she did it."

Caring

Teachers listed caring as a trait, but no examples were given.

Consistent

Roxie stated, "I think a coach needs to be consistent. The consistency is important to build that trust back and forth." Stacy stated, "I want somebody who is willing to follow through on what they say. That is very important to me as well as other teachers I know."

Fun

Lacey wrote in her journal:

> [Coach's name] came to my class and modeled a lesson on "Organization" today. My class has lots of mixed feelings toward writing. Some of them love it, while others hate it. So, several students were excited to see her [coach], while others groaned. The great thing about her is that she knows how to handle those students so well. She kills them with humor and that really lightens them up.

Sally expressed, "They [coaches] need to be fun." Lacey thought it was important for the coach to have fun activities "to get my students engaged."

Flexible

Coaches needed to be flexible in their approach to working with teachers. Time did not always allow the teacher and coach to communicate prior to the coach's scheduled visit. Candy stated that her coach was "always willing to do whatever I needed her to do."

Outgoing

Teachers listed outgoing as a trait, but no examples were given.

Energetic

Teachers appreciated a coach who was energetic and willing to work with enthusiasm. Lacey declared "I want a coach who is energetic, enthusiastic, caring, and fun. That's not too much to ask." [laughter] In all seriousness, I want them to be upbeat and not act like it is a burden to do something."

Genuine

Stacy said, "Somebody I can relate to." Roxie stated, "Someone who will be honest with you and not just give you a pat on the back and say 'good job'."

Tactful

Jane, "They must be tactful and not think they are the best at everything."

Humble

Lee Ann commented about her coach, "She was very humble."

Teachers Gain Confidence in Their Abilities

The coaches thought that seeing a teacher's confidence grow was an important clue that the teacher was feeling successful. Coach Olivia stated, "[Teacher's name] felt positive about it. You could see her confidence in herself as a teacher grow. I think that was huge. Now she is pursuing a master's degree in reading." In working with a teacher on leading a writer's workshop, Coach Ashlyn thought, "It gave her confidence. Although I think she is still a little insecure, she is excited about things and willing to keep growing."

While modeling a writing lesson, Coach Anastasia made this observation in her journal:

> I always see her taking notes and sitting in the back of the classroom. I am going to start having her move up with me and actually co-teach with me. She is an excellent teacher and needs to build the confidence to come to the front of writing and start taking over.

Teachers Become Leaders in Their Schools

Coach Olivia wrote about a teacher who was a leader in the school and the struggle the teacher was having with wanting other teachers to understand writing. She reflected,

> I can honestly say that [teacher's name] understands writing and how kids become better writers better than any teacher I have worked with. She has read many books on writing, tried various ways of teaching writing, and her students usually can talk about and describe the writing process better than any students I have ever met. She wants other

113

teachers to understand writing like she does, especially those on the writing committee. We discussed how to make that happen. And I suggested that teachers needed additional professional development, but they needed time to write themselves and to reflect on that process. This gets very theoretical and this is a path that teachers with whom I have worked in the past do not like to tread….It appears that she and one other teacher in this building are the only ones who feel so strongly about writing from this perspective. I encouraged her to stay on the writing committee and to find a way to help the other teachers understand writing in the way that she understands writing. She feels that because there is such a push for standards and testing this year that teachers feel overwhelmed and will not want to do this at this time.

Barriers That Limited the Coaches' Influence on Teacher Practice

The barriers the relegated coaches' influence included: (a) teachers unwilling to see beyond their own practices, (b) teachers not investing in the process, (c) principals' lacking support or understanding of how to work with or utilize the coach, (d) coaches "wearing too many hats" to be effective, (e) coaches working in more than one school, and (f) coaches and teachers lacking time to work together.

Teachers Unwilling to See Beyond Their Own Practices

The coaches were clear in their reflections and thoughts about teachers who were unwilling to see beyond their own practice. Coach Ashlyn shared her frustration in trying to help teachers expand their practices:

The principal really wanted the teachers to do peer observations. So we went in together to observe other teachers. I gave her a peer observation form I designed for teacher to use while they observed their colleagues. It really hit [teacher name] the hardest. Some

114

teachers would sit there and say, "I already do that, and I already do this" and not see

beyond their own practices.

Coach Olivia described a situation in which she shared multiple ideas and strategies with

a teacher only to be told by the teacher that these ideas would not work any better than the

practices she already used.

Coach Anastasia shared a story about what she thought was a huge accomplishment at

first but soon learned that the teacher was just giving her "lip service" to appease her.

> There was a teacher and everyone said to me, "You won't get in there". The principal
>
> said, "Nobody gets in her classroom". However, I did get in her room, and I went to the
>
> principal to share my accomplishment. The principal was shocked. We [teacher and
>
> coach] did curriculum mapping and the teacher said, "This is great". However, she was
>
> talking a big game. She never did change one thing. She played the game and was
>
> fabulous at it. This teacher even let me come in and model, but she never implemented
>
> one practice.

Teachers Not Investing in the Process

The coaches shared stories of situations where the teachers expected them to have all the

answers and the ideas for where the teacher needed help. Coach Olivia was frustrated with a

teacher who didn't respect her time and often was late for meetings and then never knew what

she needed help implementing. Olivia said,

> I had one teacher that when I would go and meet with her, she would be on her phone
>
> checking Facebook. There were times she would come in very late to our appointments.
>
> I would come to her room to meet and she wouldn't come in until the very end. Although
>
> she invited me into her classroom, I didn't feel like she was invested in the process.

When I would ask her what she wanted to work on. She would say, 'Whatever you think.'

I just didn't feel I was able to accomplish anything at all.

Coach Ashlyn shared how important it is for the teacher to know what he/she wants to

work on in order for valuable time to be used productively, "She [teacher] didn't really know

what to ask for, she needed it all. It was hard to find a good starting point with her."

Coach Ashlyn also shared her frustration with teachers not following through with plans

between modeled lessons:

I would come back the next week and the students would say, "We haven't done this all

week." The teacher had not helped follow through with the lesson. This isn't going to

work. The teacher needs to have buy in.

Coach Anastasia worked with a teacher who did not see the benefit of looking at data.

The teacher stated in her interview, "No, not really, the Pearson data was made available to me,

but I didn't really use it to do anything. I did look at my students' writing samples though."

Principal's Lack of Support or Understanding of How to Work with or Utilize the Coach

Coach Ashlyn expressed her frustration with a principal who was hands off when it came

to her working with the teachers. The principal had no expectations of the teachers to work with

the coach. Coach Ashlyn stated,

I feel badly that this new teacher was not rehired. I tried to work with her [teacher], but I

can't force myself on people. If the principal would have set that expectation for the new

teachers in the building to work with me, maybe things could have been different.

All the coaches expressed the need for a strong relationship with the principal. However,

through the interviews and reflective journals it was clear that the six principals had different

expectations of how to make use of a coach in their schools. Coach Ashlyn expressed,

I think it is very difficult to change a teacher. Sometimes the principal put the

responsibility on me. That puts me is a terrible spot. If they [teachers] don't see the need

to change, who am I to go in there and tell them that?

Coach Olivia shared in her interview that actions speak louder than words when it comes

to valuing the role the coach plays in the school,

One of the things I have paid attention to through the years is the actions of the principal

instead of words. In some schools they [principals] say we value what you do…yet they

don't…like not even provide you with a desk…or access to a printer…if someone else

needed the computer or printer you were bumped. Their actions don't say they value you.

Priscilla made an interesting observation about the way the principal used the coach when

she first arrived in the school:

I didn't get to see her enough. It is just that simple. When she [coach] first came to

[school name], she was assigned to someone. I think the leadership would choose who

she worked with which I thought was interesting. It has been my experience that when

you send someone in to change someone else they are usually unchangeable. [Coach's

name] would have better spent her time working with me, someone who is willing to try

new things. I think that my children could have been better writers if I would have had

her for a longer period of time.

Coaches "Wear Too Many Hats" to be Effective

The coaches reported that they did not have a job description defining their

responsibilities in the schools or the system. This lack of defined responsibilities allowed

principals to determine the role each coach played in the school setting. The coaches reported

that often times the principals did not understand the correct way to use them to work with

teachers to improve their practice. One coach was acting administrator when the principal was away from the building, one was given the role of tour guide, all were asked to substitute at one point or another, one was expected to teach small groups of students weekly, and sometime the principal wanted the coach to act in an evaluative role. Besides the work coaches did in the schools, they also had Central Office obligations to conduct the Coaches' Academy to train building level coaches five times throughout the school year and to work with one of the system level supervisor to develop Pearson Assessment for grades kindergarten through fifth. School year 2009-2010 was the first year for this assessment, and it took a tremendous amount of time away from coaches to work with the teachers in their schools.

Coach Olivia stated, "I was supposed to go in and watch [teacher's name] centers to give her feedback. However, the building principal had me down to give building tours for a group from Senator [name] office at the same time I was supposed to observe.

Easton enthusiastically replied:

> I loved every minute of it [working with the coach]. I just wish she didn't have to wear so many hats and be pulled in so many different directions. There were times when she was supposed to be in the classroom, but she had to take care of something else. She would always let me know that she couldn't be there. It was always disappointing for the students. They knew when she was supposed to come. They were let down – definitely.

Lacey expressed concern for the coach:

> I know [coach's name] was spread all over the place, and she was pulled in all different directions. Sometimes she became overwhelmed and forgot something, but she was just trying to do too much that some things fell through the cracks or

118

got dropped. In her defense, she always came with everything she needed, but sometimes you can only be spread so thin and do so much.

Coach Anastasia wrote in her reflective journal:

Due to an administrative issue in the office, I was unable to attend [teacher's name] afternoon session. I was disappointed I couldn't be there for [teacher's name], but it was a parent issue I had to handle as principal in charge. This is just a factor of being a school leader. I will follow up with [teacher's name] and go back to her room on Monday.

Coach Anastasia expressed frustration in her reflective journal about not getting to work with a teacher due to the principal pulling her off schedule to work with grade level teams to do curriculum mapping.

This impacted my time with [teacher's name] to work side-by-side. We have been communicating with "drive-bys". I run in his classroom, and he runs by me during his planning. This gives us the opportunity to plan and check on resources. [Teacher's name] is a seasoned teacher who wants another team member to bounce ideas off of [*sic*] and have a collaborator in the process. All teachers want a pat on the back…for a job well done.

Coaches Responsible for More Than One School

Because all three coaches served two schools each, all the coaches and many of the teachers expressed their desire to have one coach per school if not more.

Lacey, a fourth grade teacher, expressed her frustration with not having her coach in her building each day. She wrote:

As the class was winding down, [coach's name] told me about another activity she would like to do with the class. Unfortunately, class time was up. She told me she would tell me more about it later, but I didn't hear back from her. With her splitting her time between two schools makes us lose track with each other. I forget to talk to her about things and when I remember, she's at the other school.

Coach Olivia stated, "One of the most critical things to being a coach is developing relationships. When you are in one school only, you are viewed as a part of the faculty." She also commented in her journal about her frustration of not being able to watch a teacher do a follow-up lesson because she was in her other school the next day. She wrote, "I hate that I can't carry the lesson through or watch [teacher's name] do the lesson."

Coach Anastasia supported this thought, "Being in one school is important to build relationships and become a part of the faculty."

Coach Ashlyn thought, "The coach could meet with teachers on a regular basis. They could do more professional development on the school site."

Roxie stated, "If we had one coach per school, I think the coach could truly understand the teachers' strengths and weaknesses and be able to say, 'this is what the teacher really needs'."

Coach Olivia explained in her journal how difficult it is to have quality coaching experience with teachers due to trying to cover two schools.

Face-to-face conversations like this make it difficult to "coach" a whole school, let alone two schools. To conduct coaching with these conversations, teachers have to willingly give up their planning time or after-school time to communicate and make plans. Often times, this is very difficult. Just like when [teacher's name] and I stayed until 5:30 on Friday evening.

120

Coaches and Teachers Lacking time to Work Together

A reoccurring theme throughout the journals and interviews was the lack of time for teachers and coaches to truly collaborate. Face-to-face reflective conversations took time and needed to occur on a regular basis. However, *all* participants expressed their frustration with this obstacle.

Shelby explained:

> Time, of course, it would be more time. Everybody's going to say that! Because it seems like once planning time was over, we still had more questions. It was almost like, our train of thought was interrupted and it is hard to get that back. So we always took a lot of notes, she kept a journal and I kept a journal and we tried to pick back up from where we left off but that was hard.

Coach Anastasia commented, "I think we [coaches] are harder on ourselves. I really feel like I could give more time to all of my teachers."

Roxie: "It was a great relationship, but something that always seems to be a problem was finding time to work with [coach's name]. It was just hard to do."

Kendall Paige: "The only way it can get better is if [coach's name] could be there more next year. I would love to see how much more I could grow next year. I have already learned so much this year."

Priscilla had a sense of humor about her lack of time with the coach:

> I need to see her more. It is like the 'Brill Cream Team.' Here is a little dab, and I hope it holds you until I get back. [laughter] I would have liked it if she could have come to me more often and regularly. I was honored that she didn't have to

stand over me. However, I am still growing and learning even after 25 years in

teaching. There is always something else I can learn or do."

<p style="text-align:center">Evidence of Growth and Learning</p>

Evidence of Teachers' Growth and Learning

Every teacher in this study disclosed that working with the coach had affected her

teaching in some way. Although there are numerous examples from the data, I chose to report

what the teachers thought were their greatest gains in working with the coaches. I also included

some excerpts from the coaches' journals about what they observed as teacher growth.

Stacy, a kindergarten teacher with 6 years of experience, talked about the impact the

coach had on her practice.

> [Coach's name] definitely had an impact on my teaching. I don't want to say forced, but I
>
> mean that in a loving way, me to do writer's workshop. She gave me the tools I needed to
>
> do the job. She didn't just say you need to teach writing and if you need something call
>
> or email me. She was there to share ideas, model lessons, help develop rubrics. [Coach's
>
> name] has made me a better writing teacher and showed me the importance of teaching
>
> writing. Before [coach's name], I didn't really teach writing other than a poetry journal
>
> where I would put a poem in it and have the students draw a picture. I would also teach
>
> concept of print and starting on the left-hand side of the paper."

Lee Ann, a second year teacher in fourth grade, commented in her interview at the end of

the year about her growth,

> I don't know what I would have done without her [coach]. She made copies, organized
>
> the books in my library, and she helped me a lot with teaching social studies. This was
>
> my first year teaching social studies and honestly, I hated social studies in school. I just

did not enjoy it. I really wanted to make it more fun. [Coach's name] showed me

different ways to do note taking skills. She came in, modeled, and shared all the

foldables from Dinah Zikes. She really helped me to grow in teaching social studies. I

love how she came in to teach and then let me try it.

Kendall Paige, a third grade teacher with 7 years of experience, acknowledged in her

interview how she completely changed her attitude about teaching reading,

This is the best year I have had teaching reading. I totally changed, and I enjoyed

teaching reading for the first time. I have never been as creative with reading as I have

been with math. Never! I have always loved math because it is so interactive. I guess

for me when I was a little girl I would read. It didn't seem fun to me. [Coach's name]

helped me realize how fun reading could be and changed my view of teaching reading. It

is not all about the basal anymore, I look at it as words off a page…let's make posters,

let's make anchor charts, let's use post-it notes. It took reading out of the seat and made it

fun. She helped me go deeper."

Priscilla, a kindergarten teacher with 25 years of experience, talked about her biggest

change as a result of working with her coach,

I think the work I have done with [coach's name] has impacted my writing the most. We

[fellow teachers] were first trained in *Write from the Beginning.* Then [coach's name] came in

with Lucy Calkin's [author] work. I think watching her [coach] teach using Calkin's methods

and knowing *Write from the Beginning* helped me meld the two together. It made it easier for

me to get better writers. I was able to put the pieces together for me and pull from different

resources. So, if [coach's name] had not come along, we would still be doing *Write from the*

Beginning because it was all we knew. It helped me to think in a different way about writing.

123

Candy, a kindergarten teacher with 4 years of experience, recounted several things that she learned from her coach.

One of the things [coach's name] noticed when she observed me was that I needed to teach more reading strategies not just here is the word and here is the sound. It really turned my teaching around because before I was phonics driven. I now involve the students more with print. My whole thing now is being more strategic…teaching the students how to be more strategic in their learning. We did a lot with writing and she helped me get more excited about writing….One thing she really helped me realize was that reading and writing go hand in hand. I had an "ah-ha" moment. Most the time they [reading and writing] can be integrated.

Jane, a fourth grade teacher with 19 years of experience, was succinct in her response to the question about her greatest gain, "I would say it is in teaching techniques and strategies. I am sure that is where I have grown the most. I feel like I am getting the big picture now."

Roxie, a third grade teacher with 11 years of experience, had several areas that she thought the coach had helped her to grow.

I think it would be in the nonfiction area. [Coach's name] and I talked about better ways to teach literacy through science and social studies. She helped me to develop mini-lessons and to learn different teaching techniques. She also helped me in teaching my small groups and differentiating for my different ability groups.

Easton, a second grade teacher with 8 years of experience, recounted her teaching experience with writing.

Remember when I told you about how I use to teach writing by just putting a sentence stem on the board. Well, that just doesn't cut it with second grade. The problem is that

this does not spark the students' interest. So I have grown the most in teaching writing

because [coach's name] gave me the tools and the skills to make writing more engaging

for my students.

Lacey, a fourth grade teacher with 5 years of experience, talked about how she had been

fortunate to work with her coach since her first year in teaching. Her coach had just recently

moved from her coaching position to being the principal at the school. Lacey went back to her

first year in teaching to explain how she had grown as a result of her work with the coach.

[Coach's name] has helped me a lot with my teaching, but it was her guidance with

classroom management and discipline that saved my career. I am not kidding. I was torn

up because I didn't think I was going to be asked to come back after my first year. She

helped me with this, and I thank her immensely. If I had not improved, I wouldn't have

survived. I feel like I have control now; in fact, I think I am over strict but that is okay.

Now that she is my principal, she knows how much I have grown and that feels good.

Sally, a third grade teacher with 13 years of experience, looked at growth differently than

the other teachers. "I guess, she [coach] just makes things fun. I am trying to make things fun. I

guess not being boring."

Shelby, a kindergarten-first grade teacher with 9 years of experience, learned the most

about asking questions to probe students' thinking and finding just the right book.

What I like when [coach's name] did lessons was she really probed the students with lots

of questions. That is the one big thing I learned from her. That is, don't waste an

opportunity to get them [students] to really think, because they can. They really can!

Well, that is if you ask the questions in the right way. [Coach's name] would make

requests and ask questions like: Tell me more about that; tell me about your thinking; or

that's really interesting, can you explain that to me?...Another thing I learned was when you are trying to teach those reading strategies, you have to find just the right book that the students can relate to. The strategy is what will be difficult for them. You don't want the students trying to figure out the story when you are trying to teach them a strategy.

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal:

> While observing today, I noticed that Jane demonstrated a deeper knowledge of the writing process than I have seen her in previous units of study. When a student suggested that Jane use an ellipsis at the end of one of her pages because she had ended in the middle of the sentence, Jane took advantage of this teachable moment by stating, "Your suggestion was helpful to me as a writer because it helps when we give each other suggestions. You may think of something I could add to my writing that I didn't think of. We do that with each other when we share our writing."

Coach Ashlyn described later in her journal entry:

> [Teacher's name] also demonstrated deeper knowledge of content during her lesson today. She modeled how to make a heading in the form of a question. She talked to the students about making sure that they answered their heading in the chapter. She also suggested to the students that this is why it is important to read over what you have written. [Teacher's name] stated, "This is what authors do." When she said this she was modeling for the students how to put the pages of their books back together. This statement tells me that Jane thinks of herself as an author, and she is telling her students she is an author also….She is so eager to learn new ideas and ways of teaching….She has come so far in the last couple of years and has been so willing to try new ideas and totally change her instruction

from relying solely on the basal program to expanding her reader's and writer's

workshops. I am proud of how she is a lifelong learner.

Coach Ashlyn wrote:

[Teacher's name] demonstrated the process of a writer by thinking aloud in front

of the students throughout the whole lesson. I complimented her on the

information that she provided today and how important it was that she modeled

her thinking aloud for her students. Writing is a process and she was such a

model an example of that process today during her lesson. I also told her it was

exciting to get to observe her teacher. She can "show off" what she knows and

what she has learned.

Priscilla share how she changed the way she taught writing:

[Coach's name] taught me to let the children lead you especially in their writing.

Before working with [coach's name], I would lead the students in their writing by

giving them prompts. Now I use books to show the students examples of how

authors write. The students use post-it note to mark examples in books. I am

giving them more writing vocabulary. Most of all, watching her believe that

every child can write makes you realize that you believe that too, and you are not

all by yourself.

Shelby, a well-read teacher, reflected in her journal about her growth in working

collaborative with her coach:

Again, this week, my discussions and teaching with [coach's name] has taken me to a

deeper level of understanding of my students and how they think and their capabilities.

They are really teaching me how best to teach them! I just need to pay attention to what

they are saying through words and performance! I feel very fortunate to have a resource

such as [coach's name] to work with because of her depth of knowledge and the method

in which she makes suggestions and throws out ideas. We tend to be partners together in

this journey and I'm learning so much.

In my interview with Jane she remarked numerous times about the impact [coach's name]

had on her teaching. Jane's teaching experience was mostly in middle school and now she was

teaching fourth grade. She recognized that what was different about elementary school was the

way you worded and presented the material. She expressed, "[Coach's name], helped me with

that tremendously. She taught me a lot about techniques through her modeling."

It was important to the teachers that coaches give them constructive feedback and not just

a pat on the back with a "good job". Jane stated, "She [coach] would not only praise me but she

gave me constructive feedback. I can't tell you how much that helped me. It was awesome."

Jane went on to say the success she has had with the coach in reading and writing was

transferring over into her math classes as well:

I like the idea of introducing things and letting the students take charge of their learning.

Students have to take ownership of their learning. It is so neat to see the children teach

each other. They take what I am doing in direct teaching and model that behavior with

each other.

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal about a new teacher:

[Teacher's name] shared with me that she had used the two column notes that I

had modeled for her previously. She really liked using that strategy because it

involved the students' thinking and learning more than just having them copy her

notes. She also mentioned that it [graphic organizer] helped the students' organize

128

their thinking. I am very pleased that she sees the benefit of getting the students more engaged in their own learning."

Lee Ann shared an observation she made during a coach's lesson:

[Coach's name] used an anticipation guide in her model lesson today. I have never seen this used before, and I loved it! I feel like using an anticipation guide will really help me to see what the students already know and do not know. I think this will be a great pre-assessment activity I can use! Also I noticed that the way [coach's name] says things makes a big different. Her excitement rubbed off on the students. I need to use my hands more and use inflection in my voice.

Lee Ann wrote in her journal towards the end of the year:

I have grown so much in my teaching. I feel like I have also grown in handling classroom discipline problems. I have so many students this year that have to be dealt with differently. I have learned a lot. I think the students are more engaged now and less likely to be disruptive. My classroom is running much more smoothly. I give them very little free time because that is when they start doing things that are inappropriate.

Priscilla stated in her interview,

I think the work I have done with [coach's name] has impacted my teaching of writing the most. We were first trained in *Write from the Beginning*. Then [coach's name] came in with Lucy Calkin's work. She taught me that it is okay to meld the two together and pull what is good from both. It made it easier for me to get better writers. So if [coach's name] had not come along, we would still be

doing WFB because that was all we knew. It helped me to think in a different

way about writing.

Shelby reflected in her journal,

We [coach and Shelby] discussed the recent implementation of a writing prompt

for K-2. I am having a very difficult time with conducting a prompt for my

students. My professional feeling is that it's not natural to ask children to write

about a topic they may not make a connection with (the given prompt). I believe

that within a Unit of Study, children should choose the topic they write about. I

shared my student's writing with her [coach], and we discussed whether or not the

prompt and the scoring by other teachers really gave me any more insight as to

what my students need regarding writing instruction. [Coach's name] offers other

perspectives to me that make me stop and think about a different viewpoint. One

thing I gleaned from this discussion is that I need to find ways that the prompt can

help me with instruction without giving up my belief that writing workshop is the

best way to teach. It's affirming to me that [Coach's name] believes the same

regarding teaching writing through the workshop format. We have read a lot of

research together that supports this view.

Kendall Paige stated how she implemented using Post-it note after observing the coach

use them in a model lesson:

It opened the idea of letting the students use post-it notes in the book. I

transferred the idea of using the post-it notes for another skill later on. I would

usually just give the students an index card, but instead I now give them the Post-

it notes because the notes motivate the students to participate. Who knew?

130

Evidence of Coaches' Growth and Learning

While observing a teacher model a lesson on text-to-self connections, Coach Olivia made this observation;

One student's connection was about the characters in the book fixing a gate and under "How this helped me…" she wrote, "I can see my daddy fixing my gate." Then it hit me that the text-to-self connections help kids to visualize what the story is about. I always knew that T-S connections helped students to use background knowledge to infer what was going to happen next, but I had never thought about how T-S connections help students to visualize. This takes the phrase "learning from the students" to heart. I felt like I was truly learning something from this student.

Sometimes the coach is the learner. Coach Ashlyn wrote, "As she [teacher] was writing the words on the chart, she drew pictures with each word. [Teacher's name] knows that pictures help her kindergarteners read the words. Sometimes as a coach going into different classrooms at various grade levels, I forget to do this. This was a good reminder for me."

Coach Ashlyn observed in her journal:

[Teacher's name] students are so eager to write. She has generated that enthusiasm with her own. I love watching her teach. It is her gift! I know [teacher's name] has not taught writer's workshop like this before, but you would never know it. All she has to do is observe and away she goes! Sometimes I feel somewhat inadequate coaching her because she is so knowledgeable about children and child development. I wonder what I could possibly teach her. I learn from her every time I am in her classroom and take it into my other classrooms for future lessons.

Evidence of Students' Growth and Learning

Jane explained how her students' scores on text features from the Palm Pilot data increased from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year:

My students were at 38 and they just needed to be at 24 by the end of the year. It was huge. I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that we focused on the text features. The students just excelled. We not only let them read nonfiction, but we also let them write nonfiction. The students really got it. Most of them soared. I know that it is because of the work I did with [coach's name]. She changed my teaching completely.

Lacey was concerned about her students understanding how to use the state rubric for scoring writing. However, after several model lessons with the coach Lacey was pleased to write in her journal the following:

The students did really well with this. The paper was very strong, a 5 or 6. All but one student graded it so. This shows me that they are able to tell the difference between a weak and a strong paper in "organization". It feels good that our hard work is paying off.

Sally reported:

Having [coach's name] come in the classroom at a regularly scheduled time has been great. It has made me take time to let the students write, and they are enjoying it. I see improvement already in their ability to think of ideas.

Jane stated, "With [coach's name] help my students' scores have increased notably." Jane expressed her appreciation for [coach's name] "tutelage" in teaching her how to conduct writer's workshop:

It was awesome! The students wrote books, biographies, nonfiction pieces, and poetry. My students love to write now. It [writer's workshop] has engaged my students in a way

132

that now they want to write. I can see a big difference in my students and the way I teach them.

Jane expressed the impact of the students' enthusiasm, "The students' excitement was very motivational to me. They were engaged and enjoying the learning. It is a great way to teach."

Priscilla wrote in her journal:

> [Student's name] had found a book with labels at his home. Before [coach's name] began her lesson, I shared his book. I thought it was important to share [student's name] find with the class. I was thrilled that a student was able to make a personal connection to the lesson."

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal about a lesson she observed, "The students remembered everything we had added to our anchor chart from yesterday, even ellipses. Kindergarteners who can recognize ellipses!! Amazing!!"

Roxie shared:

> [Coach's name] came in to my class and modeled note taking on Post-it notes. The students loved it and took to it pretty well. It helped them to get the facts, and afterwards my students started note taking all the time. They even did it on their own with their nonfiction as well as the fiction. I thought that was a success because the students were doing it on their own and saw the benefit of using this strategy.

Shelby recounted in her interview about a lesson that [coach's name] did with the students on making connections to the text. Later in the week the students commented on how they had made a connection. One student said, "Can we find [coach's name] and tell her I made

a connection?" Another student said, when she passed the coach in the hallway, "I made a connection." They got so excited about it. Of course, that truly tickled [coach's name] because she knew the students had in fact learned what we taught them about making connections.

Lacey shared a story of excitement when the entire class retained how to score a sample passage correctly. She wrote:

[Coach's name] asked the class if it was a weak paper or a strong paper. The entire class graded it as a weak paper. [Coach's name] and I both were so excited because it was a weak paper. We could not stop smiling because the whole class chose correctly.

Components of an Effective Coaching Model

When I asked the teachers and coaches to think outside the box and imagine the ultimate model for a coaching program in the system, the following suggestions were made.

Coaches Thoughts About the Coaching Process

Coach Ashlyn wrote in her journal about a teacher that she had modeled a lesson for twice. However the teacher was apprehensive about teaching the lesson.

She seemed a little apprehensive because this is a unit of study she has not taught before, which I understand. This is why the coaching process is so important. It allows me to stay by her side as I support her in teaching something she has never taught before. I dare say that she would have never started writer's workshop in the first place if she had gone to a workshop where she had merely listened and received information without the support in her classroom.

Improvements for the Coaching Program

It was unanimous; all participants stated that we needed to have one coach per school. By having one coach per school, coaches would be able to build relationships, become a member

of a faculty, work side-by-side with the principal to support his or her vision for the school, and conduct more professional development on the school site.

Kendall Paige suggested:

> Well, the perfect set up would be to have a coach in every school. If we had a coach at every school, we would be able to have that support every day. This is how excited I get off just getting to work with [coach's name] two day a week. I can't imagine how much more I would grow in my practice if she was there every day. I might actually end up liking reading more than math. [laughter] I feel so empowered to do more just because I had her support.

Priscilla, a veteran teacher, gave her insight about how the school systems tries to maximize their resources. "Yes, we want professional development, and we want to get the biggest bang for our buck, so we spread the coaches too thin. We put them in a different school every day." Priscilla went on to say how it is difficult for coaches to build relationships if they are not a part of a faculty. She closed her thoughts with, "There are too few of them, stretched too thin, and they are asked to do things outside their training."

Sally agreed that we need one coach in every school but she also thought there were other ways to grow as a teacher, "Observing other teachers is very beneficial. I like getting ideas from others." She stated that she received more benefit from working with a coach than going to system wide in-services, "When you go to in-service things, you sit there thinking, yes, this is good, but it isn't going to really work for me."

Jane articulated the benefits of working with the coach, "I think everybody needs to have the experience of working with a coach. If it were not for this experience, I would not be where I am today. Whether it is required or not, you can gain something from it."

135

Easton expressed her desire to have more time to sit down with the coach and her colleagues and plan together. Lee Ann supported this thought and added, "I think it would be great to go to workshops and come back to our classrooms and have the coach here to help us implement what we learned."

Candy expressed why it was beneficial to have her coach working with her and why others would benefit, "Being able to see things modeled and getting feedback from the coach was so beneficial for me. I could see how she interacted with the students." Candy also compared the difference between working with the coach and going to a workshop, "I have used things from workshops, but I like things demonstrated for me. I learn better that way. I never felt threatened to try new things. Even if I messed up, she was there to help me."

Shelby explained why having the coach in the building everyday was essential, "To really do full follow-up and full support, the coach needs to be in the school every day." Shelby also recommended:

It would be ideal to have half of a day to work with the coach during the school day instead of a 1 or 2 day something in the summer. I just don't think that is the best way to change teachers. Teachers need to have support once they return to the classrooms.

Coach Ashlyn stated in her interview that she thought the school system needed a vision for the coaching program, "We have been doing this a good 5 years, and I still don't think we have a clear vision of what we want the coaching model to look like in our system."

Coach Olivia supported this thought:

I don't think [school district] has articulated their vision for coaches. We have been doing this for five years now. Why not go ahead and say this is where we are, this is where we want to be, and this is how we want coaches to get us there.

136

To write out and articulate the vision for coaches would be essential. I realize that

the schools are site-based, but we certainly need to have a common vision.

Summary

Themes emerged from the interview and journal data to tell the story of how coaches and

teachers worked together to change instruction. Overall the coaches worked with teachers to

plan lessons, model lessons with feedback, and disaggregate data. Teachers saw the value of

working with the coach as they changed their practices. In order for the coaching process to be

productive, the principal must accept the coach as a valuable member of the faculty. This in turn

lets teachers know that the coach has credibility with the principal making teachers more likely

to ask the coach for assistance. The coaches' influence on teacher practice was promoted by

quite a few factors and limited by several barriers.

According to the teachers in this study, coaches should possess certain traits and

demonstrate certain actions to be effective. For example building relationships with teachers and

principals helped to build trust and allow the coaching process to influence teacher practice.

Finally, the coaches and teachers in this study identified what elements should be in place for a

coaching model to be successful.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the impact of job-embedded

professional development coaches on teacher practice. The study focused on the experiences of

the coaches and the teachers as they worked together to plan lessons, model lessons with

feedback, and disaggregate data during school year 2009-2010.

Through analysis of one-on-one interviews with the participants and the participants'

reflective journals, themes emerged that enabled me to construct the theoretical framework for

this study. Although I looked at the work teachers and coaches did together, I found more to the

story than just the observable work the coaches and teachers engaged in. As coaches and

teachers worked together, several factors surfaced that promoted the coach's influence and

several barriers emerged that limited the coaches' influence on teacher practice.

The factors that promoted coaches' influence included: (a) teachers being active

participants in the coaching process and in their own professional development, (b) teachers

willing to disclose their area of need, (c) teachers and coaches being reflective and engaging in

true dialogue, (d) principals viewing coaches as valuable members of the faculty, and (e)

coaches' demonstrating actions and possessing traits of what teachers perceived as an effective

coach.

The barriers that limited coaches' influence included: (a) teachers unwilling to see

beyond their own practices, (b) teachers not investing in the process, (c) principals' lack of

understanding of how to work with or make use of the coach, (d) coaches "wearing too many

hats" to be effective, (e) coaches working in more than one school, and (f) coaches and teachers lacking time to work together.

<div align="center">Study Findings</div>

The research questions used to frame this study examined the perceptions of coaches and teachers and their collaborative work with regard to three areas: lesson planning, modeling lessons with feedback, and data disaggregation. These findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research that are presented in this chapter were constructed from the results delineated in Chapter 4 and filtered through my personal experiences as an instructional coach, 21 years of classroom teaching experience, and professional education. For reporting purposes I combined the coaches and teachers' perceptions under each of the areas listed above.

Coaches' Impact on Lesson Planning

All teachers regardless of their level of experience valued the time to work with the coaches to generate ideas for solving instructional challenges within their classrooms. Teachers praised the coaches for their repertoire of great ideas for teaching lessons. Coaches were privy to numerous classrooms where they built their collection of ideas. Coaches shared ideas that they observed in teachers' classrooms to help other teachers solve similar problems or challenges in their classrooms. Teachers worked with coaches during their planning time or after school to plan lessons. In one instance a teacher recounted her appreciation of getting to work with the coach during the school day. The principal provided substitutes for half a day so the teachers could develop curriculum maps with the coach.

Teachers respected the coaches' level of education and work experience. These two factors helped teachers gain confidence in the coach and gave the coach creditability. The coaches trained with the NSDC Coaching Academy in their first year of working as coaches in

the system. This training allowed the coaches to develop skills to help teachers think reflectively about their practice and to understand the different roles coaches perform when working with teachers. These two factors helped teachers develop confidence in the coach and gave the coach credibility. These three coaches stayed current with research-based best practices and read numerous professional books and journals.

Lesson planning held less of an impact on teachers' practice; however, the teachers enjoyed the opportunity to converse with the coach about how to teach a particular lesson. The bouncing back and forth of ideas and strategies was beneficial to all the teachers in the study.

Peer interactions were limited within these schools; therefore, the teachers expressed great appreciation and enjoyment of the coaching process. The coaches did not do lesson planning per se with the veteran teachers. However, they helped generate ideas and engaged in discussions with teachers to assist in planning lessons. These collaborative discussions usually materialized after teachers reviewed assessment data with the coach during grade level meetings. Teachers employed the coaches to help them address the needs of students in their classrooms. On the other hand novice teachers needed more mentoring with the logistics of managing instruction and classroom procedures. They wanted more specific, systematic lesson planning to help pace lessons, determine what order to present material within a lesson, and techniques for managing classroom instruction. With the new teachers coaches observed overuse of the textbook versus standards to pace instruction.

Coaches' Impact on the Use of Disaggregated Data

This school system places a strong emphasis on data collection, analysis, and application as a tool for instructional improvement. System-wide benchmark tests in math and English are administered three times a year. Coaches spent the majority of their time helping teachers

140

analyze and interpret assessment data as well as administer assessments with the students in K-2nd grades using the Palm Pilot program. In grades 3-5 the coaches helped write system-level benchmark tests to measure students' mastery of standards at the end of the first three quarters of the school year. In addition teachers and coaches worked together to analyze students' writing samples. The coaches' ultimate goal with data disaggregation allowed teachers to draw conclusions and make instructional decisions about where to go next with their teaching. One coach stated that the teachers were still in a learning curve with using system-wide benchmark data. In order to facilitate teachers' ease of analyzing data some coaches displayed data in an easily readable format for the teachers. One coach made her data charts colorful and easy to read. Coaches reported teachers used the data to make instructional decisions. In one instance the coach reported that a teacher started to administer her own benchmark assessments with her students because she saw the value of the information she received from the data.

Teachers reported using the data to establish reading groups, to add skills to their literacy centers, to determine where to go next with their instruction, to identify skills mastered or not mastered by the students, and to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of the students. Teachers and coaches also used students' writing samples to determine what individual students needed next in the writing process. The teachers also grouped their students according to the data derived from the writing samples.

Coaches' Impact on Teacher Practice Through Modeling Lessons With Feedback

In addition to learning how to use data to make instructional decisions, the teachers reported growth in their teaching practices because of the modeling and feedback that occurred with the coach. The coaches documented modeling lessons, watching teachers teach, and conversing with teachers about what they observed. Teachers documented in their journals that

141

they observed the coach model lessons. Although we had implemented in school year 2009-10 a request for teachers to keep a reflective journal of their work with the coach, what I found was that most teachers were more descriptive in their writing rather than reflective. However, it was interesting to note that teachers and coaches who held National Board Certification were more reflective than teachers who were not National Board Certified. I know from experience that teachers who go through the certification process are required to do reflective writing. This can be a difficult skill that requires significant practice to learn.

From the perceptions of the coaches and the teachers, modeling of lessons by the coach had the greatest impact on the teachers' practice. While presenting a model lesson coaches wanted teachers to engage in note taking, to work with the students, or to coteach with the coach. Also important to this process was the feedback and discussion about the lesson in a postconference. Teachers reported that having the coach model the lesson was best for them because they were hands on learners. They wanted the coach to show them and not just tell them how to do the lesson. Teachers appreciated that they could observe the coach's way of questioning and engaging their students. Many of the teachers reported feeling safe as they tried a new strategy because they trusted that the coach to guide them if they stumbled and praise them for a job well done. Relationships were important for this level of comfort.

Coaches observed teachers' confidence grow as they engaged in new practices and saw the results of their students' scores increase on benchmark tests. For example one teacher believed she had grown as a teacher of writing. Another teacher reported changing the whole way she ran her classroom because of the work she did with the coach, while another teacher expressed her newfound enjoyment of teaching reading for the first time.

Findings Beyond the Research Questions

Factors That Promoted the Coaches' Influence

As I analyzed the data factors emerged that promoted the coaches' influence on teachers' practice. In order to influence instruction teachers need to participate in the process. When teachers were active participants, their level of understanding about what they observed and their ability to model the lesson back was evident to the coaches. Coaches and teachers reflected about what happened in the lessons and made suggestions of ways to improve or maintain the level of learning they desired. The teachers in turn modeled lessons for the coaches to practice implementing a newly learned strategy modeled by the coach. The coaches observed and gave the teachers feedback. Together the coach and teacher reflected about the lesson. The coaches asked open-ended questions to help guide the teachers to think reflectively about their practice. Coaches also reported that when teachers are willing to disclose their area of need, it allows the coaches to identify a starting point more quickly. Again, trust played a big role in helping these teachers to disclose their weaknesses. Otherwise valuable time was used to assess where a teacher needed help if he or she cannot identify an area for the coach.

As I worked my way through the data, I found myself wondering, "Where do our habits, beliefs, and opinions about teaching and learning come from? What is it that drives us to do things the way we do and never question its effectiveness?" One teacher expressed openly that she did not enjoy teaching reading because of her childhood experience with reading in school. She never enjoyed reading and therefore she believed that teaching reading could never be fun. However, she changed her beliefs about teaching reading once she observed her students engaged in a lesson with the coach. They were having fun and learning at the same time. Another teacher told her coach that she had used skills baskets the previous year because her

mentor teacher told her too. However, when she discovered that the baskets were not moving

her children along on the learning continuum, she wanted to find a way to incorporate the skills

baskets with her literacy centers so as not to hurt her mentor's feelings. So some teachers get

their habits, good or bad, from other teachers and never question their effectiveness. Dewey

(1932/1985) pointed out the problem of habit,

> Habit gives facility, and there is always a tendency to rest on our oars, to fall back on
>
> what we have already achieved. For that is the easy course; we are at home and feel
>
> comfortable in lines of action that run the tracks of habits already established and
>
> mastered. Hence, the old, the habitual self, is likely to be treated as if it were *the* self; as
>
> if new conditions and new demands were something foreign and hostile (as cited in Kise,
>
> 2006, p.10).

These coaches advocacy of change for teachers was often challenging them to attempt

something foreign. Some teachers were resistant to the coaches' attempts to influence or change

their practice. These teachers were unwilling to see beyond their own practices and open their

minds to another way of teaching or thinking. For example one coach recounted how a teacher

told her that the strategies she was sharing were no better than the strategies this teacher was

already using. In some cases the coaches could show the teacher evidence from the data and

they still resisted. These teachers were unwilling to expose, inspect, or test new ideas.

Dewey's concept of habit matches Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith's (1994)

description of mental models as, "the images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our

minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world. Like a pane

framing and subtly distorting our vision, mental models determine what we see" (p. 235). Senge

et al. (2000) and Duffy (2003) pointed out that because people are often oblivious of how their

mental models control their actions, these models can prevent change unless we purposely

expose, inspect, and test them.

Similarly, Costa and Garmston (1994) pointed out that,

> While the traditional model of clinical supervision addresses overt teaching
>
> behaviors, we believe that these overt behaviors of teaching are the products and
>
> artifacts of *inner thought processes* and intellectual functions. To change the
>
> overt behaviors of instruction requires the alteration and rearrangement of the
>
> inner and invisible cognitive behaviors of instruction (p.16).

These questions led the way for my journey to learn more about how dialogue and

reflection influences coaches' work in changing teacher practice. Although the coaches served in

roles that had less impact on classroom practice, they did interact with teachers to change

personal and professional beliefs about teaching and student learning. True dialogue can lead to

change. This is different from simple discussions where each person expresses his or her point

of view and competes to have the other person understand as he or she does. Instead, it is a

meaningful conversation where the coach and the teacher disclose their assumptions that affect

their thinking about teaching and learning. Knight (2007) stated, "Dialogue brings people

together as equals so they can share ideas, create new knowledge, and learn (p.46). Bohm (2000)

explained the unique qualities of true dialogue as follows:

> In dialogue, there is no attempt to gain points, or to make your particular view
>
> prevail…It's a situation called win/win, whereas the other is win/lose – if I win, you lose.
>
> But a dialogue is something more of a common participation, in which we are not playing
>
> a game against each other but with each other. In dialogue everybody wins (p.7).

Dialogue often occurred naturally when coaches and teachers talked about practices they learned, adapted, or implemented in their classrooms. Coaches used many communication strategies to make it possible for authentic dialogue to occur. Knight (2007) stated,

> They [coaches] engage participants in honest, respectful, empowering conversation about content, and they think and learn with participants during the conversation. By seeing others as equals, by listening empathically, and by encouraging everyone to speak their minds, coaches can encourage dialogue (p.47).

In this study one of the coaches and one of the teachers demonstrated this type of trusting relationship. As I read their journals the entries were very reflective and exhibited exactly the type of dialogue discussed above. Their trusting relationship allowed the other to ponder the habits, opinions, and beliefs that were exposed. Both the teacher and the coach were learners in the process. They view each other as equals. Together they examined what they were doing and why they did it that way. Each respected the others thoughts and felt comfortable to challenge something that was contrary to what they believed. This was an excellent example of how it should be and can be. [Appendix H]

Although I did not interview principals for this study, it was clear from the interviews and journal entries how important the role of the principal was to the success of the coach in the school. In some schools the coaches perceived that the principals viewed themselves as the sole instructional leader in the building; therefore, the coach's role had less impact on teaching and student learning. While in other schools the principals relinquished their instructional leadership to the coaches or took a hands-off approach in which case teachers experienced little growth unless they took the initiative to seek out the coach for help. Yet, there were situations where the coaches and the principal worked together to achieve teacher growth and student learning. For

example one coach worked with the veteran teacher who was stuck doing the same thing she had been doing for 10 plus years after the principal encouraged this teacher to consult with the coach. The teacher knew she needed to change, she just did not know where to begin. After 2 years of working closely together with the coach, this teacher's test scores have risen. This was a successful example of how a coach can assist the principal in supporting teachers.

Teachers identify traits and actions that coaches must possess in order to be an effective coach. When teachers identify these qualities in a coach, they are much more likely to enlist the coach's assistance. These traits and actions were demonstrated repeatedly in the conversations and actions of the coaches presented in chapter 4.

The coaches strived to establish trusting, safe relationships with their colleagues. One of the roles mentioned by the coaches as being conducive to this was the role of resource provider. Teachers were able to witness the coaches' commitment to help, their resourcefulness, and "meet the needs of teachers without an expectation for change" (Killion, 2009, p.16). Teachers expressed their appreciation for the coaches' prompt responses and follow through with their needs. However, as one coach explained coaches have to move beyond being just a resource provider in order to have an impact on instruction. The role of resource provider has modest influence on classroom practice or little expectations for use of the resources by the classroom teacher. After the coaches built trusting relationships with the teachers, then conversations happened between the coaches and teachers about how to use the resources and their impact on teaching and learning.

Depending on the level of teaching experience, coaches adjusted their roles to meet the needs of the teachers. One coach related her experience with a novice teacher who needed more of a mentoring role. The novice teacher did not know what to ask for; she needed everything:

147

encouragement and emotional support; help with procedures, discipline, and curriculum expectations; assistance with lesson planning, assessments and using data. With the veteran teachers, the coaches experienced more of a collegial partnership. These teachers knew what they needed assistance with and articulated it clearly.

Coaches and teachers valued effective communication. Teachers value constructive feedback from the coaches. They need to hear more than "You are doing a good job." Specific feedback helps teachers reflect and change practices that are not effective in increasing students' achievement. Teachers appreciated coaches responding to their email or phone call in an immediate manner. Being able to depend on the coach to do what she said she would do built strong relationships and trust. Coaches went out of their way to meet with teachers before and after school. They purchased and made materials for teachers' classrooms and supported the teachers in any way possible. On a deeper level the reflective conversations between the teacher and the coach were critical to the coaching process and building mutual respect and valuing. Respecting each other's ideas and suggestions also contributed to the relationship and the growth and learning of both the teacher and the coach. When there was a breakdown in communication, neither the coach nor the teacher acknowledged or confronted the other about this lack of communication.

Collaboration between the coaches and the teachers helped to generate ideas for lesson plans and helped teachers feel less isolated. Not all interactions between the coaches and teachers changed or deepened understanding about teaching and learning. Kise (2006) wrote about three levels of collaboration. Level I: Superficial Collaboration included teaming for administrative tasks such as fundraising, field trips, procuring resources, or discussing interventions for specific students. Level II: Segmented Collaboration included teaming to

148

engage in cross-disciplinary efforts such as conducting an experiment in science and composing a related essay in language arts. Or, teachers might divide up the subjects, one teaching math in both rooms while the other teaches social studies. Teachers collaborating about expectations for behavior or uniform rules and consequences might also fall here. However, Kise stated that these two levels seldom resulted in significant changes in classroom practices or increases in student achievement.

Level III: Instructional Collaboration included teaming to engage in deep discussions about teaching and learning, serving as resources for each other in developing curriculum and lessons that meet the needs of all learners. Together the coach and the teacher unearth assumptions about teaching and learning, gain from each other's natural strengths, share strategies and ideas, and learn more about what is possible in the classroom. Some literature referred to this as reflective practice (Kise, 2006).

Although most of the collaboration in this study fell into levels I and II, there were examples of teachers and coaches truly engaged in reflective practice [Appendix H]. This example in Appendix H demonstrated what true collaboration looks like between a teacher and a coach. Their trusting relationship allowed the other to ponder the habits, opinions, and beliefs that were exposed. Both the teacher and the coach were learners in the process. They view each other as equals. Together they examined what they were doing and why they did it that way. Each respected the other's thoughts and felt comfortable in challenging something that was contrary to what they believed. This was an excellent example of how it should be and can be.

When reflective practice exists, teachers gain a better understanding of the why behind what they do. The teachers are more aware of what Polanyi (1983) described as tacit knowledge – when teachers possess knowledge and skills that they may not even be able to identify.

149

Schön (1987) wrote that reflection was necessary for learning to occur. He distinguished between "reflection in action" that occurs while teachers are in the midst of a lesson, and "reflection on action" that take place after the teaching occurs. During reflection in action, "our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it" (p.26). Reflection on action involves "thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome" (p.26).

Palmer (1998) described reflection as "the inner landscape of the teaching self." He observed how reflection enabled teachers to ask profound questions about what, how, why, and who teaches. He stated, "Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse…teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run form what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge" (p.2).

Barriers that Limited the Coaches' Influence

The coaches in this study performed a variety of complex roles from resource provider, data coach, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, mentor, catalyst for change and learner. The coaches expressed frustration in working with teachers who were unwilling to see beyond their own practices or teachers not invested in the coaching process. Some teachers expected the coach to have all the answers and did not contribute to the growth of the relationship or their own professional development.

Not only does the coach need to build relationships with the teachers but also with the principal. The principal is ultimately the instructional leader in the school. The principal and coach should have a reciprocal relationship. Coaches need the support from the principal in order to have teacher accountability. The support from the principal is critical for the teachers to

150

see the coach as a valued member of the faculty. Change cannot happen until these relationships are established.

There were situations where the coaches experienced a lack of support from principals. Coaches did not directly address the issues but made reference to situations where *if* the principal had been more aware of how to use them things might have been different for teachers. Killion (2009) described how principals are essential to the success of coaches within a school. She explained that the principal's actions help coaches focus their daily work with teachers on teaching and learning by:

- creating structures and schedules that allow teachers to interact with coaches individually and in teams;
- meeting frequently with coaches to review their work plans and the impact of their work;
- protecting coaches' time from interruptions that distract their attention from the most critical work with teachers;
- examining with coaches data about their work;
- holding coaches accountable for meeting their role expectations;
- upholding the parameters of the school's or district's coaching program; and interacting with teachers about the importance of coaching to support continuous improvement (p.18).

The coaches in this study strived to be all things to all people. Without a job description it was difficult for the coaches to know their roles and responsibilities. Killion (2009) stated, "Without a clear framework for their day, coaches find that their time is fragmented…the

potential exists that coaches will take on too many roles and, as a result, dilute the impact of their work" (p.9). She also discussed the balancing of the roles,

> Multiple factors influence the balance among the roles. They include coaches' job
> description, their role expectations, the goals of the coaching program, the goals of a
> school's improvement plan, the context in which they work, the time of the school year,
> the experience of the coach, and the experience of the teacher (p.14).

Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, due to funding changes these three coaches worked in six schools divided equally among the three. This was a new configuration of the coaches' assignments that served as an obstacle for the success of their work. It was difficult for the coaches to focus on the needs of all the teachers and do it well when they worked in two schools. All three coaches disclosed their desire to work in one school only so they could build relationships and become a part of the faculty.

Not surprisingly all participants identified the lack of time as a barrier to the coaching process. Every coach and teacher in this study at one point or another discussed the lack of time to work collaboratively together. As one coach stated, if teachers wanted to truly change they had to be willing to give up their planning time and work together after school. Very rarely were the teachers given times during the school day to work together or with the coach. The grade level meetings were usually short and used to disseminate assessment data. Protecting coaches scheduled time to work with teachers was another issue for coaches. At times, some principals assigned additional duties for the coaches that did not fall under the coaching umbrella.

<div align="center">Final Thoughts</div>

Fullan (2001) stressed how important it is for leaders to have moral purpose. According to Fullan moral purpose is acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the school

where one works and making a difference in the lives of students. This leadership belief relates directly to how these three coaches and 11 teachers view their work with each other and how their work relates to increasing students' success. The coaches demonstrated in their daily work with teachers their beliefs that all teachers and students can learn. Their beliefs shape their behaviors. The coaches demonstrated encouragement, support, and patience for the teachers. Most of the teachers expressed gratitude for the coaches and the work they do. They believed the coaches were there to support them as equals and to grow alongside the teachers as they worked together.

All the teachers grew in various ways from the work they did with the coaches. Teachers reported changing their practices and attitudes, trying new approaches, strategies, and techniques. They appreciated coaches' help with classroom management, discipline, and emotional support. Some teachers gained confidence in their teaching abilities, increased their expectations of students, and allowed students to take charge of their own learning. They went deeper with their teaching and engaged more in reflective thinking about why they do things the way they do.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

The data collected and analyzed in this study suggests the following conclusions for the school district level, principal level, and coaches' and teachers' level.

School District Level:

- In order for a coaching program to be most effective certain elements need to be present. There should be at least one coach per school with no coach serving more than one school. Teachers benefit from observing other teachers and coaches as they model lessons. Teachers and coaches need time to work together

during the school day to plan and reflect on their work. Coaches should work with teachers in a nonevaluative capacity. Coaches should be advocates who support teachers professionally, personally, and emotionally. Teachers need ongoing support in their classrooms to implement newly learned strategies and techniques.

- Although the school district used in this study operates on a site-based philosophy, there is not a district wide vision for how coaches can contribute to teacher professional development. Consequently, a committee of stakeholders should compose a vision statement for the coaching program and how coaches will be employed to meet the needs of the teachers. Along with this vision there needs to be a formal job description written for the coaches to follow outlining their roles and responsibilities within the system and schools. This should help alleviate the misuse of coaches for activities (i.e. substituting, administrative duties) that do not address teachers' needs.

- School systems should formally evaluate the coaching program. Coaches need to know where to improve and what impact they are having on teaching and learning.

Principal Level:

- Principal support is vital to the coach's success in the school. If the principal views the coach as a valuable member of the faculty, teachers are more likely to enlist the assistance of the coach. Support from the principal for teachers to work with the coach assists in helping the coaches make connections with teachers. One of the findings of this study is that some principals lacked the knowledge of

154

how to employ a coach and respect the autonomy needs of the coaches. School

systems should train principals in how to effectively use coaches to improve

teaching and learning.

- In order for the coaches to be most effective in supporting teachers, it is important

  to remove responsibilities that do not relate to this goal. Before assigning a role

  or responsibility to a coach, it is important to ask, "How does this impact

  teachers' growth?" Ultimately, teacher growth is the goal of a coach.

Coaches' and Teachers' Level:

- Trust is a critical element of the teacher and coach relationship. Drawing a

  distinct line between the coach's role and the principal's role in the school is

  important. Coaches should not be placed in a position of evaluating teachers.

  Building and maintaining trust is critical if teachers are going to feel safe to work

  with the coach. Word spreads throughout the faculty that the coach can be trusted

  to maintain confidentiality and support teachers in their instruction. Teachers

  should feel comfortable discussing ideas with the coach and asking questions

  about their current practices and strategies without worrying about the

  information getting back to the principal. Coaches are able to observe teachers

  and give them suggestions for improvement in a non-evaluative manner.

- Teachers value working with a coach over going to a workshop/in-service

  meeting. The teachers see the benefit of having one-on-one support from the

  coach throughout the year versus one or two days with an "expert". Teachers

  attributed their preference for coaching as the support they needed to implement a

  new strategy successfully until they felt comfortable doing so on their own.

Therefore, school systems should examine how they spend their staff development dollars.

- All adults need support when learning something new. Therefore, coaches' understanding that teachers need different things at different points in their careers is imperative. However, coaches need opportunities for professional development also. Coaches require training to help them understand the different needs of veteran versus novice teachers.

- Like teachers, coaches need support from their fellow coaches to share ideas and discuss issues that arise within the coaching role. Time should be made available for the coaches in the school system to meet regularly.

- Teachers value the time they have during the school day to collaborate with peers and the coach. Common planning time for grade level meetings assists in allowing this to occur. Collaborating with the coach and other teachers develops the critical thinking needed to allow teachers to examine their learning processes related to their profession.

- In this study I found that teachers and coaches who are National Board Certified were much more reflective in their writing than teachers who were not. For this reason school systems should encourage professional development for teachers on how to be a reflective practioner. This could be accomplished in a number of different ways through central office workshops, coaches working one-on-one with teachers, or entire faculties working together in professional learning communities to support reflective practice and discussions. Being a reflective practioner requires going beyond the surface of describing what we do to trying to

make sense out of what we do. Reflective thinking and writing takes practice. Ultimately, we want all teachers to be reflective practioners.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Future Research</div>

Because job-embedded coaching is a fairly new tool used to support teachers, there is still more research that needs to be done on the impact it has on teaching and learning. There are many unanswered questions about how this type of professional development helps school leaders meet the needs of teachers. With this in mind, the following suggestions are made for future research:

- What types of support should school systems offer in order for the coaching process to flourish? We need to learn more about how principals, central office supervisors, and the superintendent can support coaches.

- Teachers in this study mentioned how frustrating it was to implement a new innovation each year. Therefore, investigations into the number of innovations adopted by a school system over a period of time in relation to the effectiveness of the teacher should be conducted.

- What is the impact of coaching on student achievement? From the literature studied, there is very little conclusive evidence in this area.

- What leadership practices best support the coaching process? Coaches would benefit from this information in that understanding the dynamics of the different leadership styles or practices could help them in working with principals.

- It is sometimes difficult to hire the right coach for the job especially if the coach is trying to work in more than one school. Each school has a unique organizational culture. Are there different attributes of coaches that are

appropriate for different kinds of school cultures? School districts would benefit

from research that examines the personality traits, skills, and content knowledge

needed for coaches to be effective. This could assist personnel directors,

principals, and superintendents with hiring practices if they had a comprehensive

list of traits, skills, and content knowledge.

- It is important to investigate why some teachers are resistant to the coaching

    process. Are there things that coaches could do that would allow these teachers to

    open up to the process? What keeps teachers from trying new practices?

Conclusions

Job-embedded coaching has the potential to influence teachers' practices and

subsequently student learning. In this study coaches assisted teachers in planning lessons,

modeling lessons with feedback, and analyzing and interpreting data from multiple assessments.

Teachers valued their work with the coaches and gave numerous examples of how this work

changed their practices. Teachers observed the coaches work with their students using particular

teaching strategies and then practiced implementing those strategies with their students and

received supportive nonthreatening feedback from the coach. Coaches selected research-based

practices and provided professional development directly in the classroom setting, positively

impacting teachers' practice. Job-embedded coaching has been a valuable tool for the district

investigated in this study. Additionally, my findings and conclusions indicate possibilities for

improving the effectiveness of these coaches. Lastly, in this district my findings suggest

valuable possibilities for the application of job-embedded coaching in other districts as well.

REFERENCES

Al Otaiba, Hosp, J.L., Smartt, S., & Dole, J.A. (2008). The challenging role of a reading coach, a cautionary tale. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 18,* 124-155. doi:10.1080/10474410802022423

Becker, J.R. (2001). *Classroom coaching: An emerging method of professional development.* (Report No. SE067908). Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Snowbird, UT. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED476637)

Borman, J., & Feger, S. (2006). *Instructional coaching: Key themes from the literature.* Providence, RI: The Education Alliance. Retrieved October 12, 2008, from http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/pd/TL_Coaching_Lit_Review.pdf

Bohm, D. (2000). *On dialogue.* New York: Routledge.

Bowman, C.L. & McCormick, S. (2000). Comparison of peer coaching versus traditional supervision effects. *Journal of Educational Research, 93,* 246-261.

Boyle, B., While, D., & Boyle, T. (2004). A longitudinal study of teacher change: What makes professional development effective? *Curriculum Journal, 15,* 45-68. doi:10.1080/0958517040200189470

Bush, R.N. (1984). *Effective staff development. In making our schools more effective: Proceedings of three state conferences.* San Francisco: Far West Laboratories.

Campbell, P.F., & Malkus, N.N. (2009). *School improvement through elementary mathematics coaches: Impact on teacher beliefs and student achievement.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Collinson, V., & Ono, Y. (2001). The professional development of teachers in the United States and Japan. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 24,* 223-248. doi:10.1080/02619760120095615

Cornett, L.M. (1995). Lessons from 10 years of teacher improvement reforms. *Educational Leadership,* pp. 26-30.

Costa, A.L., & Garmston, R.J. (1994). *Cognitive Coaching: A foundation for Renaissance schools.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998, February). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership,* pp. 6-11.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*, 1. Retrieved June 6, 2009, from http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/392

Darling-Hammond, L., & Richardson, N. (2009, February). Teacher learning: What matters? *Educational Leadership,* pp. 46-53.

Dubin, J. (2010, February). American teachers embrace the Japanese art of lesson study. *Education Digest,* pp. 23-29.

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Duffy, F. N. (2003). I think, therefore I am resistant to change. *Journal of Staff Development, 24*(1). Retrieved August 18, 2010, from http://www.nsdc.org/members/getDocument.cfm?articleID=60

Duncan-Howell, J. (2010). Teachers making connections: Online communities as a source of professional learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 41,* 324-340. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2009.00953.x

Ertmer, P.A., Richardson, J., Cramer, J., Hanson, L., Huang, W., Lee, Y., et al. (2003). *Critical characteristics of professional development coaches: Content expertise or interpersonal skills?* (Report No. SP041807). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482675)

Feger, S., Woleck, K., & Hickman, P. (2004). How to develop a coaching eye. *Journal of Staff Development, 25*(2), 14-18.

Feldman, J., & Tung, R. (2002). *The role of external facilitators in whole school reform: Teachers' perceptions of how coaches influence school change.* (Report No. SP041180). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED470680)

Fogarty, R., & Pete, B. (2010). Professional learning 101: A syllabus of seven protocols. *Kappan, 91*(4), 32-34.

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of education change* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Garet, M.S., Cronen, S., Eaton, M., Kurki, A., Ludwig, M., Jones, W., et al. (2008). *The impact of two professional development interventions on early reading instruction and achievement.* (NCEE 2008-4030). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved November 11, 2009, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20084030.pdf

Glazer, E., Hannafin, M.J., & Song, L. (2005). Promoting technology integration through collaborative apprenticeship. *Educational Technology Research & Development, 53*(4), 57-67.

Guskey, T.R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice, 8*, 380-391.

Hawk, K., & Hill, J. (2003). *Coaching teachers: Effective professional development but difficult to achieve.* Paper presented at the AARE/NZARE Conference, Auckland, New Zealand. Retrieved December 14, 2009, from http://www.aare.edu.au/03pap/haw03086.pdf

Hirsh, S. (2009). A new definition. *Journal of Staff Development, 30*(4), 10-14, 16.

Hirsh, S., & Killion, J. (2009). When educators learn, students learn. *Phi Delta Kappan, 90,* 464-469.

Ippolito, J. (2009). *How & why do literacy coaches balance responsive/directive relationships with teachers?* Paper presented at the National Literacy Coaching Summit, Corpus Christi, TX. Retrieved February 2, 2010, from http://literacy.tamucc.edu/files/presentation_ippolito.pdf

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1982). The coaching of teaching. *Educational Leadership, 40,* 4-10.

Kent, A.M. (2004). Improving teacher quality through professional development. *Education, 124,* 427-435.

Killion, J. (2009). Coaches' roles, responsibilities, and reach. In Jim Knight (Ed.), *Coaching: approaches and perspectives* (pp. 7-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kinnucan-Welsch, K., Rosemary, C.A., & Grogan, P.R. (2006). Accountability by design in literacy professional development. *Reading Teacher, 59,* 426-435. doi:10.1598/RT.59.5.2

Kise, J. (2006). *Differentiated coaching: A framework for helping teachers change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Klingner, J.K. (2004). The science of professional development. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 37,* 248-255.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Knight, J. (Ed.). (2009). *Coaching: Approaches & perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Knowles, M. (1990). *The adult learner: A neglected species.* Houston: Gulf.

Kowal, J., & Steiner, L. (2007, September). Instructional coaching. *Issue Brief.* Retrieved January 25, 2010, from the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement: http://www.centerforcsri.org/files/CenterIssueBriefSept07Coaching.pdf

L'Allier, S.K., & Elish-Piper, L. (2007). Ten best practices for professional development in reading. *Illinois Reading Council Journal, 35,* 22-27.

Lieberman, A. (1995). Practices that support teacher development: Transforming conceptions of professional learning. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*, 591-596.

Martin, M., & Taylor, K. (2009, Spring). Beyond looking; Using data to coach for instructional improvement. *Horace, 24*(4). Retrieved November 14, 2009, from http://www.essentialschools.org/resources/492

McCombs, J.S., & Marsh, J.A. (2009). Lessons for boosting the effectiveness of reading coaches.

McMillan, J.H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (Rev. ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Murray, S., Ma, X., & Mazur, J. (2009). Effects of peer coaching on teachers' collaborative interactions and students' mathematics achievement. *Journal of Educational Research, 102,* 203-212.

Neufeld, B., & Roper, D. (2002). *Off to a good start: Year I of Collaborative Coaching and Learning in the Effective Practice Schools.* (Report No. TM035260). Cambridge, MA: Education Matters. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED480875)

Neufeld, B., & Roper, D. (2003a). *Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity.* Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Retrieved September 23, 2009, from http://www.annenberginstitute.org/pdf/Coaching.pdf

Neufeld, B., & Roper, D. (2003b). *Expanding the work: Year II of Collaborative Coaching and Learning in the Effective Practice Schools.* (Report No. TM035259). Cambridge, MA: Education Matters. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED480874)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110,§ 115, Stat. 1425 (2002). Retrieved November 14, 2009, from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html

O'Connor, D.L., & Ertmer, P.A. (2003). *Today's coaches prepare tomorrow's mentors: Sustaining the results of professional development.* (Report No. SP041809). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482676)

Olson, J., & Barrett, J. (2004). Coaching teachers to implement mathematics reform recommendations. *Mathematics Teacher Education and Development, 6,* 63-78.

Onchwari, G., & Keengwe, J. (2008). The impact of a mentor-coaching model on teacher professional development. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 36,* 19-24. doi:10.1007/10643-007-0233-0

Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peterson, D.S., Taylor, B.M., Burnham, B., & Schock, R. (2009). Reflective coaching conversations: A missing piece. *Reading Teacher, 62,* 500-509. doi:10.1598/RT.62.6.4

Poglinco, S.M., & Bach, A.J. (2004). The heart of the matter: Coaching as a vehicle for professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 85,* 398-400.

Polanyi, M. (1983). *The tacit dimension.* Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith.

Quick, H.E., Holtzman, D.J., & Chaney, K.R. (2009). Professional development and instructional practice: Conceptions and evidence of effectiveness. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14,* 45-71. doi:10.1080/10824660802715429

Russo, A. (2004). School-based coaching. *Harvard Education Letter, 20*(4), 1-4. Retrieved March 17, 2008, from http://www.plcwashington.org/coaching/resources/school-based-coaching.pdf

Sanders, W.L., & Rivers, J.C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee.

Sawchuk, S. (2009). Staff development for teachers deemed fragmented. *Education Week, 28*(21), 7.

Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seed, A.H. (2008). Redirecting the teaching profession in the wake of *A Nation at Risk* and NCLB. *Phi Delta Kappan, 89,* 586-589.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn.* NewYork: Doubleday.

Senge, P. M., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R. B., & Smith, B.J. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization.* New York: Currency Doubleday.

Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1997). *A new vision for staff development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Speck, M., & Knipe, C. (2000). *Why we can't get it right: Professional development in our schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Stichter, J.P., Lewis, T.J., Richter, M., Johnson, N.W., & Bradley, L. (2006). Assessing antecedent variables: The effects of instructional variables on student outcomes through in-service and peer coaching professional development models. *Education and Treatment of Children, 29,* 665-692.

Suber, J.S., Garrison, B.E., & Martin, G.B. (2001). South Carolina's teacher specialists on-site program: Developing teachers' skills to enhance student achievement. Paper presented at the South Carolina Educators for the Practical Use of Research, South Carolina.

Swoboda, V.H. (2007). Using job-embedded professional development and a school-based team to improve vocabulary instruction in an elementary school. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 68,* 1781.

Thomas, N., & Saslow, S. (2007, May). Improving productivity through coaching and mentoring. *Chief Learning Officer,* pp. 22-26, 55-56.

Veenman, S., & Denessen, E. (2001). The coaching of teachers: Results of five training studies. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 7,* 385-417.

Vygotsky, M.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wallace, M.R. (2009). Making sense of the links: Professional development, teacher practices, and student achievement. *Teachers College Record, 111,* 573-596.

Wei, R.C., Andree, A., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2009, February). How nations invest in teachers. *Educational Leadership,* pp. 28-33.

Wenglinsky, H. (2000). *How teaching matters: Bringing the classroom back into discussions of teacher quality.* Princeton, NJ: Policy Information Center.

West, P.R. (2002). 21st century professional development: The job-embedded continual learning model. *American Secondary Education, 30*(2), 72-81.

Wong, H., & Wong, R. (2008, September). Academic coaching produces more effective teachers. *Education Digest,* pp. 59-64.

Wren, S., & Reed, D. (2005, June). Literacy coaches: Roles and responsibilities. *SEDL Letter,* pp. 6-12.

Zepeda, S.J. (2008). *Professional development: What works.* Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.

Zwart, R.C., Wubbels, T., Bergen, T.C.M., & Bolhuis, S. (2007). Experienced teacher learning within the context of reciprocal peer coaching. *Teachers and Teaching, 13,* 165-187. doi:10.1080/13540600601152520

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to the Coaches

Dear Literacy and Instructional Coaches:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Leadership and Policy at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. I am pursuing my dissertation topic on the impact of job-embedded professional development coaches. My specific interest is how this form of professional development impacts teachers' practice. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of how using instructional coaches in the school setting impacts teacher practice in the classroom. Your participation is requested, because you are a literacy/instructional coach in two of the six elementary schools used for this study and you work directly with the classroom teachers in your schools

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may choose, at anytime, during the research process to withdraw from the study. Participation in the study will require a one-on-one interview with me at a time and place convenient for you and submission of your 2009-10 e-reflective journal of your work with teachers. The interview questions will be about your work with the classroom teachers in your assigned schools. The interview, with your permission, will be digitally recorded and transcribed. To maintain your privacy, you will be assigned a pseudonym for the study and will not be identified by your real name anywhere within the final report. A professional typist and/or I will transcribe the digital recording. An outside auditor will read the transcription of the recording; however, he/she will not be able to identify you by name. To maintain confidentiality, the recording will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office.

Your name and the name of your schools, and any other identifiable information gathered for this study, will remain private and confidential and will be used for educational purposes only. If you would like a copy of the recording and the corresponding transcription, you may request one from me.

You will also be asked to member check your transcription for accuracy. Once your recording is transcribed, it will remain in my possession and will be destroyed, along with the transcription and e-reflective journal, 5 years after publication of the dissertation.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request. If you feel like you would like to be a part of this study, please contact me immediately. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study, please do not hesitate to ask. I look forward to hearing from you and having you participate in my study. Contact information is provided below.

Sincerely,
Donna Morgan
Curriculum Coach
SHHS 8/9 Campus
morgand@jcschools.org
Work: (423) 232-2187 Ext. 2240
Home: (423) 262-8073
Mobile: (423) 262-7465

APPENDIX B

Letter to the Teachers

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Leadership and Policy at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. I am pursuing my dissertation topic on the impact of job-embedded professional development delivered by instructional coaches. My specific interest is how this form of development impacts teachers' practice. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of how using instructional coaches in the school setting impact teacher practice in the classroom. Your participation is requested because you are a teacher in one of the six schools employing an instructional coach.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may choose at anytime during the research process to withdraw from the study. Participation in the study will require an interview and disclosure of your reflective journal produced this school year of your work with the instructional coach. The interview, with your permission, will be digitally recorded and transcribed. To maintain confidentiality, you will not be identified by name on tape. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym for the study. A professional typist and/or I will transcribe the tapes. An outside auditor will read the transcriptions of the tape; however, he/she will not be able to identify you by name. The tapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. Each participant will be offered a copy of the tape as well as a copy of the transcription. You will also be asked to member check your transcription for accuracy. After data are analyzed, you will be as to again for your input on the tentative emerging themes for plausibility. Once the tapes are transcribed, they will remain in my possession and will be destroyed 10 years after publication of the dissertation.

Your name and the name of your school, and any other information gathered in this study, will remain confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request. I look forward to your participation in this study. Please contact me through email or by phone if you have specific questions about participation.

Sincerely,

Donna Morgan
Curriculum Coach
SHHS 8/9 Campus
morgand@jcschools.org
(423) 232-2187 Ext. 2240

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for Coaches

Interview Guide 1: For the instructional coaches

Research questions used to guide this study include:

1. How do coaches perceive their roles?

    A. How do they perceive that their work influences teacher practice?

    B. How do they perceive their work with teachers to analysis and use data

    impacts the teacher's planning and carrying forth of lessons?

    C. How do they perceive that their modeling of lessons affects teachers'

    instructional practices?

General information regarding coaching/teaching:
1. Tell me a little about yourself as an instructional coach? How long have you worked as an instructional coach in this setting?
2. What areas of instructional coaching do you spend the majority of your time focusing on and why?
3. Generally, how do you feel that you are able to influence teacher practice?
4. Tell me about a particular relationship with one teacher you can recall as being successful?
5. How did you determine and measure this success?
6. How long and how often did you meet and who determines the focus of the meetings?
7. Why did this relationship seem successful to you?
8. How do you think the teacher felt about the experience?
9. Describe a situation in which the relationship between yourself and the teacher was more difficult and you felt less successful as a coach?
10. Why do you think it was less effective in terms of affecting teacher practice?
11. How might you change your approach upon reflection of the process?

Specific components of coaching/teaching:
12. Step me through the process of a session with a teacher in data disaggregation? Lesson planning? Modeling and feedback?
13. Describe an occasion where you modeled a lesson in a teacher's classroom?
14. What did the teacher do during the lesson?

15. How did you communicate with the teacher after this modeled lesson in respect to his/her teaching practices?
16. Describe the feedback and/or discussion after the modeled session?
17. Tell me how you adjusted your coaching as a result of a modeling and feedback session with the teacher?
18. Describe a lesson in which you observed a teacher and offered specific feedback as a result?
19. What do you listen and look for when you are in a classroom?
20. Describe a post lesson observation feedback session.
21. How did your feedback alter/improve the teacher's classroom practice?
22. Which of the components of coaching do you feel are most and least effective in terms of professional learning?

Changes in practice:
23. What area(s) of instructional coaching present the greatest difficulty when attempting to change teacher practice?
24. If you could identify one area of support that you offer teachers that benefited their practice, what area would you select and why?
25. If you could design a program to benefit most teachers in regards to professional learning with an instructional coach, what suggestions would you offer?
26. Do you have any additional comments or thoughts regarding your work as an instructional coach in improving teacher practice?

Interview Guide for Teachers

Interview Guide 2: For the teachers

> 2. How do teachers perceive the roles of job-embedded professional development coaches?
>
>> A. How do teachers perceive the coach's work influences the teacher's practice?
>>
>> B. How to teachers perceive the coach's analysis and use of data helps teachers to plan and carry forth lessons?
>>
>> C. How do teachers perceive the coach's modeling of a lesson affects the teacher's instructional practices?

General information regarding coaching/teaching:
1. Tell me a little about yourself as a teacher? (i.e. your educational background and experience)
2. How have you worked with an instructional coach in this setting?
3. Specifically, what did you receive coaching help on during this time together?
4. Who initiated the topic for coaching?
5. Tell me about your relationship with the instructional coach? How often you meet, how long you meet at one time, and who determines the focus of the meetings?
6. How comfortable do you feel about your working relationship with the instructional coach?
7. How do you feel this relationship might be enhanced or improved so that you receive the maximum benefits?

Specific components of coaching/teaching:
8. Share any opportunities in which you and the instructional coach worked together in the classroom?
9. Describe a successful experience in working with an instructional coach? What happened after this session that impacted your practice?
10. Step me through the process of a session with the instructional coach in data disaggregation? lesson planning? modeling and feedback?

11. Describe an occasion where the instructional coach modeled a lesson in your classroom?
12. What interactions did you have with the coach after the lesson and describe those?
13. After the lesson was modeled, what was your subsequent teaching like?
14. Describe your teaching after the modeling and feedback session? What are your plans now that you have experienced the modeling and feedback?
15. How would you describe and define an effective instructional coaching session?
16. What essential characteristics define an effective instructional coach?

Changes in practice:
17. Describe the area of your greatest gain and learning as a result of working with an instructional coach?
18. Was there a situation when you needed more information from the instructional coach?
19. Was this communicated? How?
20. What could the instructional coach have done differently to make this experience more enriching?
21. If you could identify one area of support from the instructional coach that benefited your practice, what area would you select and why?
22. If you could design a program to benefit most teachers in regards to professional learning with an instructional coach, what suggestions would you offer?
23. Do you have anything else to include in our discussion today relative to your experiences and work with an instructional coach?

APPENDIX E

Document Analysis Form for Coaches

Reflective Journal from _____

1. Evidence of the coach's perception of what roles influenced teachers' practices the most.

2. Evidence of the coach's perception of what roles influenced teachers' practices the least.

3. Evidence of the coach's perception that her work with the teachers in analyzing and using data influenced the teachers' subsequent lessons.

4. Evidence of the coach's perception that her modeling of lessons impacted the teachers' instructional practices.

APPENDIX F

Document Analysis Form for Teachers

Reflective Journal from _____

1.   Evidence of the teacher's perception of what roles influenced his/her practices the most.

2.   Evidence of the teacher's perception of what roles influenced his/her practices the least.

3.   Evidence of the teacher's perception that the coach's work with him/her in analyzing and using data influenced his/her subsequent lessons.

4.   Evidence of the teacher's perception that the coach's modeling of a lesson impacted his/her instructional practices.

Informed Consent Form
Spring 2010

Please carefully read the following Informed Consent information and sign the Informed Consent if you freely give your permission to participate in this study.

Researcher: Donna Morgan
Student, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University
423-262-8073

Purpose of Study: To understand the impact of job-embedded professional development coaches on teacher practice.

Request for Participation: The researcher requests your voluntary participation in this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you do have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without impunity. In addition, you have the right to withdraw your words from this study at any time without impunity.

Research Method: The researcher will interview coaches and teachers from the six Title I schools in Upper East Tennessee. The researcher will ask the interviewee questions concerning job-embedded coaching. Interviewees will electronically submit their reflective journals to me. Data collected from the interviews and reflective journals will be used to develop a theoretical framework explaining the impact of job-embedded professional development on teacher practice.

Duration of Research Participation: You will participate in one interview during the Spring of 2010 and email your reflective e-journal from school year 2009-10 to the researcher for analysis.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be used on the audiotape, on the final printed transcript, and in the final research report. You will be given a pseudonym for all resources. Only the researcher will know of your participation in this study. The audiotape and transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at my home and destroyed 10 years after the publication of the dissertation.

Method of Recording Interview: The researcher will digitally record your interview to ensure complete recall of the interview. The recording will be destroyed on completion of the data analysis phase.

Right of Refusal: You may refuse to participate in this study without impunity.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from this study at any time without impunity. You may withdraw your words from this study at any time without impunity.

Feedback and Benefits: You will receive a copy of the final research report to review. The benefit of your participation in this study is to share with scholars and policymakers your opinion about inclusion.

Copy of Consent: You will receive a copy of this Informed Consent for your records.

Permission to Quote: Your words may be used in the final research report to clarify or further explain a component of the theoretical framework. The researcher will not identify the source of the quote. In addition, the researcher will take precautions to ensure that there are no identifiers in the body of the quote.

_____   _____
Signature of Voluntary Participant   Date

APPENDIX H

An Example of the Coaching Process

One teacher and one coach exemplified the model of the coaching process. Below are excerpts from the teacher's journal and the coach's journal. Both were reflective in their writing about the work they did together.

Teacher's Journal Entries:

It was a thought-provoking discussion, and [coach's name] helped to expand my thinking about how these elements of writing come together….[Coach's name] offers other perspectives to me that make me stop and think about a different viewpoint. One thing I gleaned from this discussion is that I need to find ways that the prompt can help with instruction without giving up my belief that writing workshop is the best way to teach. It's affirming to me that [coach's name] believes the same regarding teaching writing through the workshop format. We have read a lot of research together that supports this view….I like working with [coach's name] because we can have deep, theoretical, research based discussions about instruction as well as deal with a practical, specific instructional need….She is as excited to learn and talk about literacy instruction as I am, and I feel she respects what I have to share as well….[Coach's name] helps keep me motivated to learn new techniques and to figure out hard problems. I feel safe in sharing with her my frustrations with anything that appears to get in the way of teaching. I know she'll keep my confidence, console me, yet find ways to work through or around the obstacles….[Coach's name] reflections about her own teaching continually encourages me to do the same when she is not in the room. I guess what I am saying is that with all the knowledge she has, she continues to reflect on her teaching and what the children are learning. I never want to get to the point where I think I don't have to do that, and [coach's name] example of reflecting will motivate me to remember that….[Coach's name] taught me that sharing my own thoughts about how a lesson goes with the students can be beneficial as well. I'd never thought to do that before and because of her reflection with the students, I think I'll try that next time. I even wonder if this type of discussion could evolve into the children becoming problem solvers and helping me understand more in depth of how they think and learn….Again, this week, my discussions and teaching with [coach's name] has taken me to a deeper level of understanding of my students and how they think and just what they are capable of. They are really teaching me how to teach them! I just need to pay attention to what they are saying through words and performance!!...I do feel confident in offering my own suggestions to [coach's name] when they are contrary to what she may have advised. We have a mutually respectful relationship. While she has far greater knowledge of teaching literacy, I know my students and in this case, felt that with more practice they would be successful in using the graphic organizer as it was. [Coach's name] displays openness to observations I make and honestly, I feel like we are learning together. She displays a respect for my knowledge, which I greatly appreciate.

175

Coach's Journal Entries:

        After the lesson [teacher's name] and I discussed her perceptions that I taught for "depth" and that she needed to do that more often. She provided the example of the word "specialist." She stated she would have just told them [students] the word. She also noted that she needs to get students to explain their thinking behind the answers they provide….Then it hit me that the Text-to-Self connections helps students to visualize what the story is about. I always knew that Text-to-Self connections helped students to use background knowledge to infer what was going to happen next, but I had never thought about how Text-to-Self connections help students to visualize. This takes the phrase "learning from the students" to heart. I felt like I was truly learning something from this student….We discussed how Vygotsky taught us that children use signs in their external environment to serve as reminders for internal processes and that overtime these signs become internalized by the learner and deepen and enhance the learning….In working with [teacher's name] I have observed that what she does in teaching is fabulous, but she needs a better understanding about why it serves learning. This will take her knowledge from having an "intuitive" understanding about why it works to truly understanding why it works….As I am writing this I am thinking about how much I love working with [teacher's name]. I do so because she is a risk taker. She doesn't hold back on what she believes students can do and helps them through the rough spots.

VITA

DONNA T. HAMBLIN MORGAN

Personal Data:	Date of Birth: January 31, 1962
	Place of Birth: Bluefield, West Virginia
	Marital Status: Single
Education:	Ed. D. in Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2010
	Ed. S. in Teacher Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2003
	M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota 1990
	B.A. in Elementary Self-Contained, Concord College, Athens, West Virginia 1986
Professional Experience:	Curriculum Coach, Science Hill High School 8/9 Campus, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2008 - Present
	Middle School Teacher, Indian Trail Middle School, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1997 – 2008
	Middle School Teacher, University School, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1992 – 1997
	Day Care Assistant Director, Kinder-Care Learning Center, Cordova, Tennessee, 1991-1992
	Elementary Teacher, Campbell County School District, Gillette, Wyoming, 1988 – 1991
	Preschool Instructor, Campbell County Children's Center, Gillette, Wyoming, 1987 - 1988
Honors and Awards:	Johnson City Schools Teacher of the Year, 2005 and 2000
	University School Teacher of the Year, 1997
	Washington County Teacher of the Year, 1997