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A Manual for Improving the Working Relationship of Teachers through the Implementation of a Peer Coaching Model

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A MANUAL FOR IMPROVING THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS OF TEACHERS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PEER COACHING MODEL

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ABSTRACT

A MANUAL FOR IMPROVING THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS OF TEACHERS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PEER COACHING MODEL

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The challenges that teachers face today with educational standards are daunting. Many teaching practices have evolved over the last several years due to the constraints of standardized testing. These constraints require students and teachers to be held accountable for their performance. Teachers are now required to do more than simply educate students based on their beliefs of best practices. Teacher professional development is paramount to provide teachers with the tools needed to face the challenges in education today. This project presents a peer coaching model to foster teacher development, reviews the related research in the field of peer coaching, and measures the effects of the program using survey data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Shane Backlund and Mike Olsen have been my administrators for the past two years. They have mentored me throughout this process. Shane and Mike have provided me support and guidance that have allowed me to see the principalship through different lenses, thus continuing my growth as a potential administrator.

Thanks to all the teachers at John Campbell Elementary who participated in the John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort. These teachers gave up planning time to observe their peers, provided each other with feedback on their pedagogy, met regularly and contributed as willing participants to make themselves and others better through the peer coaching process.

Thanks to Dr. Stein for helping me to understand the complex nature of statistics. Dr. Stein made statistics interesting and comprehendible. Through these understandings we were able to conclude with valuable certainty the quantitative work of this project was not done in vain.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

> ...Collaborative cultures create and sustain more satisfying and productive work environments. A collaborative culture can raise student achievement and facilitate commitment to change and improvement (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Robbins, 1991).

It has been said many times before that teacher growth in the instructional process is vital to increase student learning (Foster, 1989). School districts, principals, teachers, and other educational professionals have invested time and money into the development of teachers. Activities undertaken as part of a peer coaching experience have shown to clearly trigger different aspects of teachers' professional development (Zwart, 2008). Recent studies have shown that teachers learn from their individual experiences they share from their collective experiences, thus teachers can build collegial relationships through clinical supervision by observing and conferencing with each other (Smyth, 1985). Peer coaching results in an environment that decreases teacher isolation thus resulting in increased job satisfaction. Job satisfaction by teachers results in better teaching, thus better teaching impacts student achievement (Hall & McKeen, 1989).

Administrators can provide meaningful feedback for teachers through in-services and observations; however, adults work harder to change the behavior if they are involved in the process (Mello, 1984). When new skills are shared with teachers during in-services or though instruction by administrators the applications of the newly learned skills are often untried in the classroom. Also, teachers view in-service training as the least "effective" source of job-related training, where as they view peer interactions as the

most "effective" source of growth and development (Hall & McKeen, 1989). This negative view of in-service training is due to the insufficient amount of training beyond the initial in-service (Gingiss, 1993). Teachers cannot apply newly learned techniques in the classroom without significant follow-up and support by others. Showers and Joyce (1996) have revealed that as few as 10 percent of the participants implement what they learned from staff development.

Teacher collaboration can seem like a daunting task given the diverse culture of our Nation's schools. Teacher isolation can be considered the greatest irony — and perhaps the greatest tragedy of teaching (Liberman and Miller, 1984). There are many reasons for the isolation inside our schools such as architecture supports, teacher overload, and the history of education (Ellis, 1996). Teacher isolation is one of the key reasons why many new teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years (Smith & Scott, 1990). Isolation isn't only a problem for new teachers. Teachers with many years of teaching experience isolation. This isolation doesn't allow teachers to learn from each other; rather instruction forces them to use the trial and error approach (Smith & Scott, 1990).

Peer coaching is not the only solution to fight teachers' isolation and to improve the working environment; it is the mechanism for change and improvement in working conditions in our schools. Teachers must sense that their work is valuable and worthwhile, they must feel accountable for their results inside the classroom, and teachers must know how they are performing in their daily duties (Hall & McKeen, 1989). If teachers are given opportunities to demonstrate these psychological states listed above

through the process of collaboration and peer coaching, they can raise their level of efficacy and satisfaction of their working environment.

Statement of Problem

Does peer coaching improve the working environment of teachers? Additionally, will the teachers who participate in a peer coaching model show higher levels of collaboration with their colleagues as compared to teachers who don't participate in a peer coaching model?

Statement of Hypothesis

Teachers who participate in the peer coaching model will have a more positive view of their working environment as perceived through their collaborations will their colleagues than the teachers who didn't participate in the peer coaching model.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to design and implement a peer coaching model in the Selah School District. The goal for this peer coaching model will be to measure how teachers' work together to achieve teaching and school goals, how much teachers socialize with their colleagues, how isolated and cohesiveness teachers are, how often teachers collaborate, how often teachers team teach, how certain teachers are about the technical culture and instructional practice of their school, how involved teachers are in the decision making process, how many learning opportunities are available for teachers, how often teachers and administrators give positive feedback, how committed teachers are to their jobs, and how autonomous are the teachers. Also, teachers will be completing

the goals as mentioned above by implementing the "Student Learning Protocol" (SLP) document into their daily instruction. Teachers will be using a classroom observation tool called the Student Learning Protocol, which assesses student learning through six indicators.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration: The extent to which teachers engage in help related exchanges or offers of collegial advice (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Cognitive Coaching: Teachers engaging in ongoing dialogue about their classroom practices in an effort to explore their meanings (Rhodes & Strokes, 2004).

Collegiality: An environment where staff members work together to establish cooperative and supportive relationships that focus on professionalism (Costa & Gramston, 1994).

External Validity: The degree to which results are generalizable, or applicable, to groups and environments outside the research setting (Franken & Wallen, 2009).

Hawthorn Effect: A positive effect, resulting from increased attention and recognition of subjects due to their involvement in a study (Franken & Wallen, 2009).

Mentoring: The interaction between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise (Carruthers, 1993).

Motivation: The level of effort a person is willing to exhibit towards achievement of a goal (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977).

Observation: The process by which an observer attempts to develop a description of the behavior of students and teachers in a classroom environment (Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

Peer Coaching: A process where two or more colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas, teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace (Robbins, 1991).

Reciprocal Coaching: The act of teachers observing and coaching each other so that improvement in teaching practices can occur (Rhodes & Strokes, 2004).

Scaffold: Assistance that allows one to complete tasks they cannot complete independently (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Student Learning Protocol: An observation tool that assesses student learning in the areas of behavior, instruction, engagement, centered instruction, assessment for learning, and assessment of learning (Leadership Innovations Team, 2008).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the last 30 years of educational research there has been much to be said regarding the benefits and downfalls of a peer coaching model. Several terms have been used to describe coaching between teachers: cognitive coaching, peer coaching, collaborative coaching, challenge coaching, technical coaching, team coaching, or collegial coaching (Garmston, 1987). No matter the name of the coaching program the same relative definition proposed by Robbins (1991) can sum up peer coaching:

> "Peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace" (p.25).

This chapter will focus on the research that has been conducted regarding peer coaching. Different peer coaching models will be examined to determine coaching methods, processes, and effects of peer coaching on teaching and learning. This chapter will also focus on the negative implications of implementing peer coaching.

Peer Coaching Process and Methods

Sparks (1986) investigated relationships between teachers though examining in-service training activities. Junior High teachers of low achieving students in the San Francisco Bay Area were organized into three distinct test groups: Group I received no extra activities, Group II participated in peer observations, and Group III was coached by a trainer. Data was collected through pre and post training observations, questionnaires,

and interviews to access attitudes and behavior change. The Stallings Secondary Observation Instrument (SSOI) was used to measure teaching behavior, as well as, a Five-Minute Interaction section of the (SSOI). Reliability of 85% or better was established for the observers in this study. The study concluded that teachers in Group II received the largest amount of gain when compared to the other two groups of teachers. The researchers pointed out that teachers in Group III might have not received a larger amount of growth due to the fact that they were predominantly male and older than the other subjects (Sparks, 1986). This research suggests that teachers can make relatively quick gains from observing their peers. Much research suggests that peer coaching is a more powerful training activity than peer observation (Joyce and Showers, 1981, 1982); however, there was no indication which type of peer coaching model was more beneficial.

"Teacher growth in the instructional process is vital to increased student learning." (Foster, 1989, p. 3). This quote preludes to the benefits of cognitive coaching. Foster's study examined the impact of what teachers do intellectually to make an impact on teachers' behaviors and decision making. Her definition of decision making included: planning, teaching, analyzing and evaluating, and applying (Foster, 1989). In her study she used a questionnaire to measure teachers' perceptions to which cognitive coaching affected their decision making. Her dissertation found that teachers who had seven or more conferences regarding cognitive coaching had a high impact on the thought process as compared to the teachers who had less than seven conferences perceived cognitive coaching as having an average or low impact on their thought process (Foster, 1989). Also, the research concluded that when teachers are cognitive coached they will perform

the inner thought processes of supervision voluntarily without the intervention of a supervisor, thus, allowing the teacher to become intellectually autonomous (Foster, 1989).

Bowman and McCormick (2000) investigated the differences in 32 undergraduate teacher education students who were trained using peer coaching as compared to students in a controlled group using techniques of a traditional university supervisor. The students of both groups were compared in their clarity of skills, pedagogical reasoning and actions, and attitudes towards aspects of the field experience (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). Both groups of students received the initial orientation at the beginning of the training to introduce the clarity skills representing desired teacher behaviors. Students in the experimental group received peer feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement at the end of each teaching lesson. Students in the controlled group used the traditional supervisory model in which a person of authority would ask questions and the pre-service teacher would respond (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). The Clarity Observation Instrument (Metcalf, 1989) was used to evaluate development of the seven clarity skills resulting in frequency of occurrence, quality, and overall demonstration (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). Overall, students in the control group and the experimental group exhibited the same frequency (1.62 for control group v. 1.71 for experimental group) regarding clarity of skills before training; however, following implementation of both models students in the experimental group demonstrated a mean for frequency of occurrence at 9.88, while the controlled group had an overall mean score of 5.62 (Bowman & McCormick, 2000). This research study demonstrates that pre-service teachers were able to scaffold their peers and to help each

other integrate specific teaching strategies into their lessons. Due to the limitations of this study, one can't assume that all university supervisory programs are the same. This research supports the fact that collaboration and feedback through the usage of a peer coaching provides in-service teachers with effective instructional strategies that can be integrated into teaching lessons. This research project also suggests the value of strengthening pre-service teachers through a peer coaching model, as well as, the financial savings of novice coaching in lieu of using a university supervisor.

Hall and McKeen (1989) used survey research to gauge teachers' perceptions on the usefulness of peer coaching, the trust that exists in schools, the frequency of sharing of resources between teachers, and overall job satisfaction (Hall & McKeen, 1989). Five hundred and sixty five teachers in the Virginia public school system participated in a two-year peer coaching model. 73% of the teachers responded to the survey. Teacher responses were calculated using the mean score. Peer coaching and trust were measured from (1) Strongly Disagree to (4) Strongly Agree, Sharing of Resources: (1) Infrequently to (5) Frequently, and Job Satisfaction: (1) Extremely Dissatisfied to (4) Extremely Satisfied. Overall, peer coaching had a mean score of 2.8 with a standard deviation of .37, trust 2.9 mean score with a standard deviation of .34, sharing of resources 2.4 mean score with a standard deviation of .75, and teacher job satisfaction 3.2 mean score with a standard deviation of .45 (Hall & McKeen, 1989). This peer coaching model indicates that teachers had high levels of job satisfaction as a result of less isolation.

"Analysis of the data suggests that peer coaching may be one viable means by which to reduce teacher isolation and create opportunities for teachers to interact with one another in ways that are likely to improve their instructional skills" (Hall & McKeen, 1989, p. 316).

Slater and Simmons (2001) studied a peer coaching model involving 17 high school teachers. This model came to fruition due to the responses on a survey from a prior year indicating teacher isolation and dissatisfaction with current staff development (Slater & Simmons, 2001). Three instruments were used to measure the extent to which teachers implemented new teaching practices and overcame isolation. In regards to developing new teaching strategies, there was high agreement that teachers gained new professional ideas, as well as, acquired knowledge and ideas regarding practice, and demonstrated positive attitude and behavior changes (Slater & Simmons, 2001). Teachers also commented that the peer coaching program helped overcome teacher isolation and encouraged many teachers to meet to collaborate more in the future. Overall, this research demonstrated an increase in the number of new teaching practices adopted, as well as, encouraged the development of effective collegial relationships with peers. One downfall of this study was there was no control group and the instruments weren't tested for validity or reliability.

Teachers and administrators in the Shiloh High School sought to improve instruction through a peer coaching program focusing on increasing the conversations about teaching and learning between faculty members. Shiloh High School examined the findings on school improvement and concluded that a peer coaching program would

provide an atmosphere where there is continual growth, and provide opportunities for staff to work together to share their expertise with each other (Burke, 2000). Participants in this study included 14 veteran teachers with 20 or more years of experience. Data was collected through audio recordings and field notes were kept. The interviews revealed 10 common themes: five addressing motivation and five addressing the meanings of peer coaching. Teachers reported that they received meaningful feedback and affirmation of their skills. Because of these gains teachers were motivated to take control of their own learning. Morale also increased due to the new ideas that were gained by teachers (Arnau, Kahrs, & Kruskamp). Overall, this program provided veteran high school teachers with an opportunity to work as a professional community, thus reduce teacher isolation and creating a sense of ownership in the program.

At Foster View High School (1984) in Arlington Heights, Illinois, 41 teachers participated in a peer coaching program. Prior to the implementation of the program teachers received an in-service training reviewing effective teaching practices, how to assess their own current strengths and weaknesses, and instruction on observation and feedback skills (Munro & Elliott, 1985). This study differed from many other coaching models in the fact that teachers were allowed to determine and implement their own effective teaching goals and strategies into their instruction. It was assumed that these effective teaching strategies would increase student learning. The instructional goals were measured through two questionnaires as well as interviews with the principal (Munro & Elliott, 1985). Data showed that teachers developed effective teaching goals 86% of the time as measured by behavior research. Teachers commented that a higher rate of instructional goal achievement was accomplished due to the regularity of observations

(Munro & Elliott, 1985). Teachers who participated in the program were observed on average of 12.6 times a year. This average was six times as much as the teachers not participating in the peer coaching program (Munro & Elliott, 1985). Teachers also commented that working with peers led to a much higher rate of instructional growth than when working with supervisors (Munro & Elliott, 1985). Many teachers commented that one or two visits by their administrator a year had no impact on their teaching. Also, teachers saw observations by their supervisors as being evaluative, thus not a method for improving instruction (Munro & Elliott, 1985). Peer coaching allowed teachers to break down the privacy door. Many teachers experienced anxiety at first; however, after several observations the anxiety quickly diminished. In the end, teachers saw the experience as a wonderful opportunity for growth and a source of regeneration (Munro & Elliott, 1985).

Ellis' (1996) dissertation examined the effects peer coaching had on developing a collaborative environment in schools. The results of the study determined that teachers in six out of the nine schools reported a more collaborative environment in school due to the implementation of a coaching model (Ellis, 1996). Ellis describes a collaborative environment as, "isolation versus cohesiveness, certainty about instructional practice, and participation in collaborative activities" (Ellis, 1996, pg. 188). Schools that exhibited the largest amount of collaborative growth demonstrated the largest gains in student achievement. The schools that had the weakest collaboration environment had the largest loss in student growth. Schools that had a weak or average amount of collaboration had students who had average achievement gains or loss in achievement (Ellis, 1996).

Research by Goker (2006) sought to test whether students trained using a peer coaching model in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) program would demonstrate greater improvement in the measure of instructional skills and self-efficacy as compared to their peers who received the traditional supervisory model (Goker, 2006). The 32 student teachers were split in half and randomly assigned to the controlled and experimental group. Both groups of students were exposed to a 15 hour training related to: peer observation skills, researching best teaching practices, and information on how to get the most learning out of the peer coaching experience. Experimental, student teachers were assigned to pairs and a cooperating teacher in the same classroom where they observed each other and maintained notes for demonstrations of clarity skills (Goker, 2007). The experimental students had 12 observations and post-conferences. Student teachers in the controlled group worked individually with the help of a cooperating teacher. The controlled group students were observed 12 times; however, post-observations occurred only half of the time, and the university faculty only observed four times. Teaching lessons of both groups were analyzed. Students in the controlled group demonstrated a mean score of 8.30 and students in the experimental group had a mean score of 12.61 in the area of clarity of instructional skills. Through this study one can assume that the students in the peer coached group experienced greater implementation of strategies into lessons because they received constant feedback from their peer coach (Goker, 2007).

Problems with Peer Coaching

There has been much success with teachers attributed with peer coaching; however, with every model there are limitations. This section of the project will investigate the possible challenges and problems that can arise from implementing a peer coaching model.

The most commonly heard complaint regarding adopting a peer coaching model is the amount of time it takes to implement a program (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Teachers need to find time in their daily schedule to observe each other, and reflect and discuss their practice. This can be problematic because the teaching day is already scheduled for teachers (Hall & McKeen, 1989). Many teachers report; however, that the benefits of observing their peers outweighed the time scheduling conflicts (Hall & McKeen, 1989). Facilitation of peer coaching activities may require administrators to help restructure the school day. Administrators can support teachers through implementing a set number of release days or providing a substitute for teachers so that they can leave their classroom without missing their planning time (Ellis, 1996).

Lack of trust can be a downfall of the coaching process (Slater & Simmons). If there is no trust between coaches an atmosphere where suggestions are shared won't be established (Koballa et. al. 1992). Peer coaching needs to be a voluntary process where teachers have a voice in selecting their coaching partner (Ellis, 1996). Giving teachers a voice in the selection of their partner alleviates strife between coaching partners. Teachers placed together who share drastically different perspectives on education and the best ways to meet the needs of the students will face tension and won't function

properly (Pounder, 1998). Destructive relationships between coaches can lead to making coaches more reluctant to continue working with others (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

Programs can't function properly without proper training. Initial training followed up with additional support for all participants is necessary (Ellis, 1996). Peer coaching requires skill development, as well as, knowledge into content and process (Hall & McKeen, 1989). Hall and McKeen (1989) in their study of peer coaching revealed that teachers needed further training on observation and feedback skills, as well as, practice expressing feelings. Even the strongest teachers may be clueless on how to effectively coach their partner (Ellis, 1996).

Evaluation should be separated from the coaching process (Ellis, 1996). Teachers have a hard enough time opening up their classroom doors to outsiders due to the increase in anxiety and the extended period of isolation. Peer coaching models that were based on evaluation were not successful because no collaboration between teachers was exercised (Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis, 1993). "The critical element for using peer coaching to create collaborative norms is to select a model of coaching that is informal, non-threatening, and non-judgmental." (Ellis, 1996, pg. 200). The peer coaching environment is less threatening when the process focuses around collaboration.

Administrative Support of Peer Coaching

If administrators did not support peer coaching, and teachers aren't given a clear focus and proper training, ineffective coaching techniques would develop (Garmston 1987). To support peer coaching, administrators can employ several strategies that will allow their teachers to have a successful coaching experience. Garmston (1987) in his

writing of "how administrators support peer coaching", provides a simple guide that administrators can follow to help the peer coaching process.

Effective training for teachers who are going to participate in a peer coaching model is key. Initial staff training based such as Showers (1984) model and follow-up sessions for all participants (Ellis, 1996). Trainings will allow teachers to develop needed skills as well as refine coaching techniques through practice. Administrators need to be selective in which peer coaching program they would like to adopt by examining the current social readiness of the school. The model used must meet the needs of the staff and the staff must be involved in the selection process. Administrators can lay the foundation for the program by providing staff with a structure and observational focus for gathering and reporting data (Showers, 1984). With time administrators should allow the teachers to design the program to meet their instructional needs, allowing the teacher to have control of the observation. Administrators can group teachers by grade level or academic area to help teachers improve certain teaching skills (Garmston, 1987). Administrators need to draw a solid line between work with teachers as coaches and their work as evaluators (Garmston, 1987). Teachers in effective peer coaching programs know the difference when their administrators are observing them from when they are being supervised (Garmston, 1987).

Summary

The review of the literature in Chapter II focused on looking at the relevant research that has been completed to support the theory of the effectiveness of peer coaching. Additional literature discussed the problems associated with implementing a

peer coaching model, as well as, administrator support for a peer coaching model. The literature supports that peer coaching can reduce teacher isolation, improve collegial relationships between teachers, improve teacher retention on newly learned teaching strategies, and result in student academic achievement. Foster (1989) states that the importance of teachers' growth in the instructional process is vital to increased student learning. The research shows that a properly implemented peer coaching model supported by the teaching staff, as well as, administrators outperforms a traditional staff development program.

Chapter III

PROJECT PROCEDURES

Purpose

The purpose of the project and study is to develop a peer coaching model that can guide teachers in the Selah School District. Also, this project is an examination of the effectiveness a peer coaching program has on improving the collaboration between teachers. An instrument will be used to measure classroom teachers' attitudes towards their job to measure the effectiveness of the working environment through the results of the survey. This project has the potential to add to the research on the effectiveness of peer coaching.

Need

Ever since the publication of A Nation at Risk, school personnel have sought to make changes to explore different methods for improving teacher excellence in ways that could improve instruction and promote collegiality (Rosenholtz, 1989). These added pressures, as well as, educational reform through standardized testing have raised the educational bar. Many of these new teaching and learning programs have come and gone. Due to this ever changing field of education, teachers and administrators in the Selah School District saw a need for implementing a program to bolster teachers' pedagogy as well improve student achievement (Ellis, 1996).

Jorde-Bloom (1988) found that the quality of the relationships between teachers and the work itself were related to job satisfaction. As stated previously, a positive work environment leads to high work performance on the behalf of teachers (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). This project attempted to improve the work environment for teachers by

establishing collaboration between teachers. Teachers in John Campbell Elementary, a Kindergarten through Fourth grade elementary school, in the Selah School District were given the option of participating in the peer coaching model. The teachers in the Selah School District have had relatively little experience with a peer coaching model prior to the implementation of this model. During the 2004-2005 school year, teachers on the writing committee participated in a peer coaching model. The program received positive feedback from all teachers who participated. The administration supported the peer coaching model by allowing teachers to observe each other during the regular school day.

During the 2007-2008 school year about half the teachers of John Campbell Elementary visited various schools in the Yakima Valley to observe classroom teaching practices. After observing the instructional practice of several teachers, the teachers had the opportunity to converse about what was observed. Teachers commented that they gained valuable insight on their own teaching and learning styles. Many of the teachers who participated in the visits were in favor of observing each other within their own school environment and wished to implement a peer coaching/teacher observation format within the school. The teachers held a discussion on the next steps to improve the learning of teachers through implementation into classroom practices, which would be to implement a peer coaching model.

Implementation

The peer coaching program was implemented at John Campbell Elementary during the 2008-2009 school year through several phases. The first phase involved notifying all elementary teachers in Selah School District of the possibility for them to

participate in a peer coaching model action research study. Surveys were provided to all teachers and were completed prior to implementation of the peer coaching program, as well as, at the conclusion of the program.

During the second phase teachers were informed of an upcoming professional development learning opportunity through a flyer detailing the possibilities of the peer coaching program. The flyer included goals of the program, as well as, an introductory meeting time and date. The introductory meeting provided teachers, who were interested in the professional development opportunity, the facts and details about the peer coaching process. Teachers were also encouraged to ask any questions or address any concerns they may have. This preliminary meeting provided the researcher a list of participants for the peer coaching cohort known as the John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort (JCILC).

In the third phase, each participant was assigned a partner and each partner was provided the opportunity to observe the other one teaching. The partners met with each other on a routine basis, as well as, all the participants of the JCILC meet regularly to identify the areas addressed in the Student Learning Protocol. There were a total of seven bi-weekly meetings to go through these protocols. 40% of the certified teachers at John Campbell participated in the JCILC.

Phase four was an opportunity for the JCILC to share their learning experiences with the entire John Campbell teaching staff. JCILC teachers were each grouped into one of the six indicators presented in the Student Learning Protocol. Teachers then rotated every five minutes to learn about another indicator.

Description of the Research Design

Two groups of teachers participated in this research project. One group of teachers received the treatment which included participating in peer coaching. The other group of teachers continued with the model that was used previously. This second group of teachers participated in the research; however, they did not participate in the peer coaching model. This project is an "Action Research Model", thus it focuses on district improvement as opposed to a strict quantitative research design. The researcher is not as interested in the ability to generalize to other populations as in understanding the situation surrounding his school and district.

Description of the Sample

The study was conducted in kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms in the Selah School District. Fifteen teachers from John Campbell Elementary participated in the peer coaching program. The other teachers at both Elementary Schools who are not participating in the program continued with their regular instructional practices. Teachers in both groups were surveyed. Teachers in the sample volunteered for the program.

Description of the Instruments

Teachers completed a teacher questionnaire developed by Susan J. Rosenholtz. This scale was originally developed and implemented in 78 elementary schools in Tennessee (1984) with the intent to measure teachers' perceptions of the workplace environment. There are several measures included in this 164 item scale: shared teaching goals, school goal-setting, teacher recruitment, teacher evaluation, teacher socialization, isolation/cohesiveness, managing student behavior, collaboration, team teaching,

technical culture and instructional practice, decision-making, teacher learning opportunities, positive feedback, teacher commitment, and task autonomy and discretion. This survey was adapted to fit the study performed; therefore, certain questions were eliminated. The survey was trimmed to 82 questions, which there are several reasons why the survey was trimmed. First, some of the categories and questions on the original 164 question survey didn't pertain to my project. For instance, categories such as "parent involvement in children's learning" and "teacher recruitment" didn't relate to the significantly valid categories, thus were not needed to be measured. Another determining factor in reduction of some of the survey questions was simply the size of the survey. Since teachers were not contractually obligated to complete the survey for this project, my conclusion was the teachers would be more willing to participate in the project if the survey was shorter. The scale used for this survey mostly consisted of five-point Likert responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Shared school goals measure several characteristics of a school setting. School goals can be assessed through investigating the instructional goals of the entire school, as well as, the ability of the administrator to encourage teachers in the achievement of school goals. Teacher socialization is measured by the way new teachers come to acquire and internalize the perspectives of those within the organization (Rosenholtz, 1989). School goals also measure teacher isolation and cohesiveness. Teachers who function autonomously are less concerned with the needs of their colleagues. As teachers talk less, the lower the staff cohesion, which effects the goals of the organization (Rosenholtz, 1989). The second set of measurements involves staff collaboration. Collaboration focuses on the involvement of decision-making on behalf of teachers. When teachers

work together they can sense the relevance and usefulness of each other (Rosenholtz, 1989). During this study teachers team taught, shared responsibilities, and challenged each others' ideas. Thirdly, the teacher learning opportunities section asks survey questions that focus on the instruction that teachers receive from their peers as well as administrators. Instruction is monitored toward teacher improvement through evaluations. Teachers shape their improvement and learn in new ways (Rosenholtz, 1989). Teacher certainty looks at how teachers receive feedback on their instruction. Teachers are asked questions on how they perceive themselves through the eyes of their colleagues, parents, principals, and students. Teacher commitment seeks to investigate the motivation of teachers in effort and involvement. Teachers are asked questions regarding their enjoyment of daily duties of their job. Teachers are surveyed on how well they follow the school rules.

Description of the Procedures

Teachers in both groups completed the teachers' questionnaire prior to the implementation of the peer coaching model. Teachers completed one questionnaire prior to implementation of the peer coaching model, and another was completed after the completion of the peer coaching program. Data was tabulated and a mean analysis was used to compare the two groups of teachers. Various dimensions on the survey were compared between the groups who participate in the study. All participant data was kept confidential through a systematic process to keep the validity of the research project. Also, the surveys were coded to keep participant anonymity.

Post assessment data was collected through the same process as pre- assessment. Teachers in both groups completed the teacher questionnaire. After completion of the surveys the data between the two groups was compared using a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The MANOVA measured the correlation between the means in each category.

Teachers were able to conveniently complete the questionnaires during a two week window. Teachers also completed a demographic survey prior to the completion of the questionnaire survey. The demographic survey contained information regarding teachers' experience, gender, ethnic origin, and was coded to keep teacher anonymity. Teachers were briefed with the purpose of the questionnaire, as well as, the possible negative implications that this survey could cause to its' participants. Participants were trained on how to complete the survey. Teachers were given an opportunity to ask questions or to refrain from completing the survey prior to taking the survey. It took teachers approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey.

Discussion of Internal Validity

Many safeguards were put into place to maintain the internal validity of the study. First, test subject information was kept anonymous. Participants who completed the survey used a coding system. The coding system allowed the participant to remain anonymous while at the same time allowed the researcher to track the results for each individual participant from the beginning of the study to the end. Also, teachers in the study participated on a volunteer basis. There was no selection process on the part of the researcher. Groups and individuals differed from one another. All subjects who began

the program finished the program. The only mortality that occurred was on the behalf of teachers who chose not to complete the survey at the end of the program. Instrumentation was consistent throughout the study. The same instrument was administered each time, as well as, the time frame for participants to complete the study was kept at approximately two weeks.

One challenge to the internal validity of the project was the location the survey was administered. Participants in the study were given liberty to complete the survey on their own time. The location in which the data was collected could have resulted in alternative explanations for any results that were obtained. The Hawthorne Effect could have also affected the responses of participants in the study. Teachers who participated in the program were given increased attention and recognition due to their participation in the study. Also, the attitudes of the teachers who received the treatment and their participation in the project could have created a threat to the internal validity of the study.

Discussion of External Validity

The external validity of the project was strong; however, there are several conclusions that can be reached that pose possible threats to the external validity of the study. First, teachers who participated in the study were similar to the entire population of teachers in the Selah School District. All the teachers who participated in the program identified their ethnicity as white. The ethnic breakdown is not representative of many of districts in the Yakima Valley or across the state of Washington. Secondly, out of the sixty teachers who completed the survey; four were male and the remaining stated that they were female. This representation is common in most elementary school settings, but

at the same time the varying gender differences aren't representative of the entire teaching profession. Another issue with the external validity of the project was that teachers from two different schools were surveyed. While the teachers surveyed from both schools taught in the Selah School District, there could be major differences in beliefs between the two schools.

Reliability with Previous Tests

The survey used in this study was developed my Susan J. Rosenholtz with the intent to randomly sample eight Tennessee school districts. In return for participating in the research principals within each district were offered an in-service on the findings of the survey data, as well as, school improvement goals. Overall, 78 elementary schools were surveyed and 1,213 teachers completed the survey; response rates averaged 70% per school.

Assessment and Evaluation of Statistics

This project was designed as an Action Research project within the Selah School District. The emphasis of this project has been on improving student learning by improving the teaching environment. As Action Research statistical analyses have been included as a means to provide a quantitative examination of the influence of the program implementation. Focus is on the changes in specific categories more so that on the overall change.

Since the Susan J. Rosenholtz instrument is broken into 12 categories and provides 12 scores, one for each category, a multivariate analysis of variance

(MANOVA) was conducted to determine differences in teacher perception of the workplace environment. A MANOVA was selected due to the fact that 12 categories would be compared with the intention to find a significant difference between the means of more than two groups. MANOVA results revealed significant differences among the 12 categories between the two groups; Hotteling's T = 2.968, F (12, 15) = 3.710, p= .009, multivariate h2= .748. An ANOVA was also used as a follow up to the MANOVA to test more dependent variables in the same analysis. This provided the researcher with a more powerful test of differences among means. Univriate ANOVA results reveal that six of the categories differed significantly: Category 2 (School Goal Setting) (F(1)= 6.177, p= .020, partial h2= .192); Category 8 (Involvement in Decision Making) (F(1)= 4.680, p= .040, partial h2= .153); Category 9 (Teachers' Learning Opportunities) (F(1)= 22.843, p= .000, partial h2= .468); Category 10 (Positive Feedback) (F(1)= 5.513, p= .027, partial h2= .175); Category 11 (Teacher Commitment) (F(1) = 7.190, p= .006, partial h2= .250); Category 12 (Task Autonomy) (F(1)= 6.342, p= .018, partial h2= .196). Results of the MANOVA and follow-up ANOVA reveal an overall difference between the control and experimental groups as well as the specific categories with significant differences. A further analysis of effect size reveals additional information in regards to the impact of the treatment.

Hotelling's T Test for 3 Comparisons

	Value	F	df Treatment	df Control	Sig
Control Pre vs Control Post	1.025	1.281	12	15	.321
Control Pre vs Treatment Pre	1.094	1.550	12	15	.199
Control post vs Treatment Post	2.968	3.710	12	15	.009

Currently there exists extensive debate about the use of the null hypothesis and statistical testing (NHST). There are some who suggest that NHST should always be accompanied by an examination of effect size differences of the results. Much social science research can benefit as much from an examination of trends as from a statistically significant difference. Effect sizes were calculated to measure magnitude of a difference between the groups of teachers who participated in the program and the teachers who didn't. Partial Eta Squared values demonstrate whether or not a trend might exist where change is occurring and given more time a statistical difference might occur.

In addition to the MANOVA between the control and treatment groups two additional analyses were performed. The research design used to compare groups in this study was a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group. Since the two groups were based upon a volunteer sample no randomization occurred. One of the analyses performed utilized the "pre scores" for both the control and experimental groups. The second analyses utilized the "pre scores and post scores" for the control group. Neither of these analyses resulted in a difference between groups (Hotelling's T= .826, $F(12,15) = .755$, $p= .691$, partial $\eta^2= .174$ and $T= 1.094$, $F(12,15) = 1.550$, $p= .199$, partial $\eta^2= .523$. One of the analyses performed utilized the "pre scores" for both the control and experimental.

An examination of the results for this study show differences ranging from .2 being a small change, .5 a medium change, and .8 or more a large change. Category 1—Shared Teaching Goals demonstrated a -.267 loss in effect size, Category 2—School Goal Setting demonstrated a .788 positive gain in effect size, Category 3—Teacher

Socialization demonstrated a .618 positive gain in effect size, Category 4—Isolation/Cohesiveness demonstrated a .153 positive gain in effect size, Category 5—Collaboration demonstrated a .104 positive gain in effect size, Category 6—Team Teaching demonstrated a .366 positive gain in effect size, Category 7—Teachers' Certainty about a Technical Culture and Instructional Practice demonstrated a .681 positive gain in effect size, Category 8—Involvement in Decision Making demonstrated a .881 positive gain in effect size, Category 9—Teachers' Learning Opportunities demonstrated a 2.023 gain in effect size, Category 10—Positive Feedback demonstrated a .959 gain in effect size, Category 11—Teacher Commitment demonstrated a 1.010 gain in effect size, and Category 12—Task Autonomy and Discretion demonstrated a .960 gain in effect size. Results of the survey data are displayed in the table below.

Effect Size Comparisons

Categories	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance	Effect Size
Category 1				
Control	3.583	.258		
Treatment	3.514	.279	.506	-.267
Category 2				
Control	3.792	.562		
Treatment	4.235	.289	.020	.788
Category 3				
Control	3.843	.590		
Treatment	4.208	.509	.099	.618
Category 4				
Control	4.044	.411		
Treatment	4.107	.473	.709	.153
Category 5				
Control	3.911	.507		
Treatment	3.964	.454	.778	.104
Category 6				
Control	3.875	1.024		
Treatment	4.250	1.138	.369	.366
Category 7				
Control	3.955	.433		
Treatment	4.250	.445	.090	.681
Category 8				
Control	3.625	.489		
Treatment	4.056	.564	.040	.881
Category 9				
Control	3.400	.380		
Treatment	4.169	.471	.000	2.023
Category 10				
Control	3.981	.367		
Treatment	4.333	.422	.027	.959
Category 11				
Control	3.920	.273		
Treatment	4.196	.193	.006	1.010
Category 12				
Control	3.939	.326		
Treatment	4.252	.325	.018	.960

Overall, analysis of the control group and the treatment group prior to implementation of the peer coaching program revealed that there was no difference in their perceptions of the workplace environment. Teachers who participated in the program showed a statistically significant difference after the treatment. In addition, there was no significant statistical difference in teacher perceptions of the workplace for subjects in the control group between pre and post scores. There is statistical evidence to believe that the treatment caused a difference in teacher perception of their workplace environment. Also, the data suggests that teachers who participated in the program showed various levels of growth in several categories measured in the survey.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT

THE JOHN CAMPBELL INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING COHORT (JCILC)

by

Mitchell Richards

John Campbell Elementary School

PROJECT TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 - John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort

Program Overview

This peer coaching/collaborative coaching experience uses Leadership Innovations Team "Student Learning Protocol" as a tool to meet the coaching needs of the teachers in the program. Participation in this program is voluntary. This program does not require extensive training and participants can complete observations of their peers during their normal teaching day. Teachers in this program volunteered their time to meet after school hours to conference with their peer coaching partners and collaborate collectively with the entire John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort.

Vision Statement

The goal of the John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort is to have a professional learning community where teachers can collaborate about the practice of teaching for the purpose of improving instruction and student achievement at John Campbell Elementary.

Program Description

Participation in the John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort is voluntary. Participants in the program must be allowed to conduct observations during the regular school day as well as meet after school hours. Teachers in the program support each other by voluntary attending meetings, participating in discussion with partners and groups of teachers, and presenting information to staff members.

Each participant in the program collaborates with their peer coaching partner to find a time to observe each other in a classroom setting. The teachers use their own planning time to conduct observations. Administrators offer classroom coverage for teachers if using plan time to conduct observations is not a viable option.

Teachers are randomly placed into peer coaching groups. All peer coaching groups are in pairs; however, there is one group of three. After the peer coaching groups are formed teachers work together to observe, discuss, and reflect on their own teaching practices.

Teachers will be trained on how to reflect on their own teaching practices through observing and learning from their peers. Training will be built into the program. Teachers will be trained on a separate indicator included on the Student Learning Protocol during each JCILC meeting.

Introducing…

The John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort (JCILC)!

What:

The goal of the JCILC is to have a professional learning community where teachers can collaborate about the practice of teaching for the purpose of improving instruction & student achievement at John Campbell.

How:

This can be done in a number of ways. Basically, the group will meet at agreed upon intervals to do the following:

- Discuss best practices
- Peer coach one another
- Collaborative lesson design
- Look at student work and data

Why:

Over the last two years, we have had several teachers take part in Powerful Teaching and Learning visits to other schools. The JCILC is a way for these, and any other, staff members to continue their discussions about quality instruction using some of the PTL tools as a basis for our discussions.

Who:

Any staff member interested in giving up some extra time to be a part of this group is welcome!

When?

The first meeting will be held Monday, December 15th at 3:15 in the Conference Room. We hope to get clock hours for our extended work! We hope to see you there!!

Please note:

Pages have been redacted due to copyright concerns.

This survey form has been redacted due to copyright restrictions (pages 37 – 40):

Rosenholtz, Susan J. *Teachers' Workplace: the Social Organization of Schools*, 4 page survey, Pearson Education, Allyn and Baco, 1989, Boston, MA.

The John Campbell Instructional Learning Cohort (JCILC)

Entry Activity:

Familiarize Yourself With the Student Learning Protocol (SLP)

Briefly look through the SLP and determine:

1. One indicator that I'm already having success in
2. One indicator I could focus more on

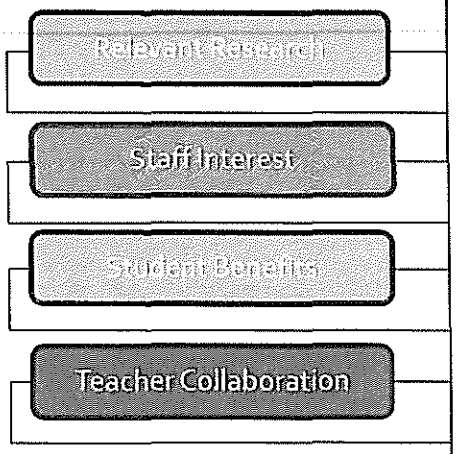
Please take a couple minutes to share what you learned at your table.

What do we stand for?

The GOAL of the JCILC is to have a professional learning community where teachers can collaborate about the practice of teaching for the purpose of improving instruction and student achievement.

Why start a PLC?

Teachers over the past two year have taken part in the PTL process. The JCILC is a way for these teachers, and others to continue their discussions about quality instruction.



The Research Says!

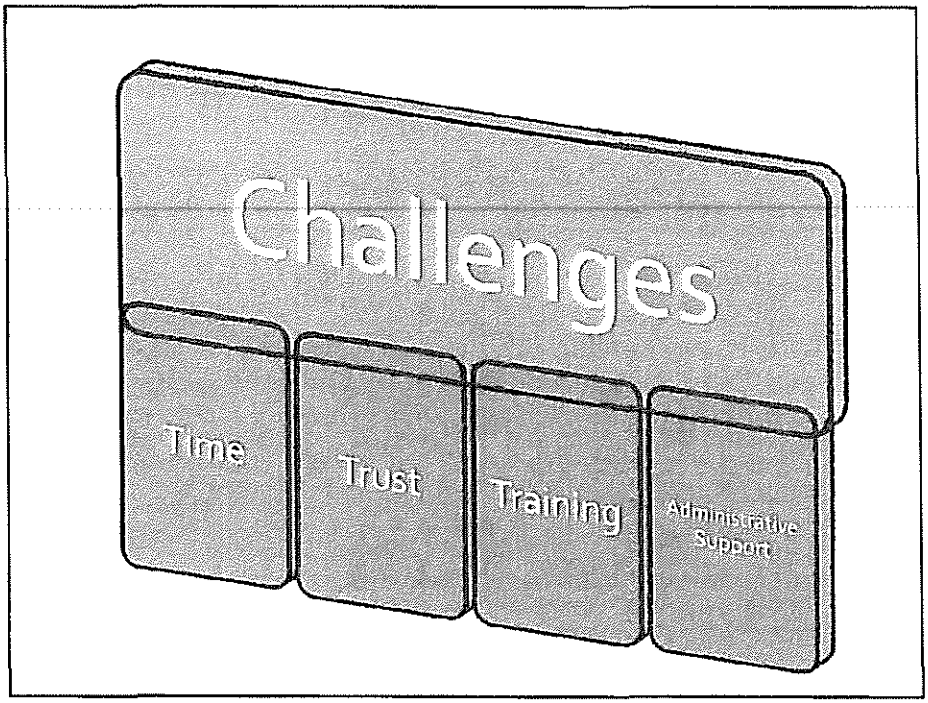
- Peer interactions are viewed as the most "effective" source of growth and development (Hall 1989).
- Peer coaching provides an atmosphere where there is continual growth, and provides opportunities for staff to work together to share their expertise with each other (Burke, 2000).

The Research Says!

- Working with peers led to a much higher rate of instructional growth that when working with supervisors (Munro and Elliott, 1985).
- Schools that exhibited the largest amount of collaborative growth demonstrated the largest gains in student achievement (Ellis, 1996).

The Research Says!

- Peer coaching results in an environment that decreases teacher isolation thus resulting in job satisfaction. Job satisfaction by teachers results in better teaching, thus better teaching impacts student achievement (Hall & McKeen, 1989).



Blair Petersen

SLT-Coach

Expert Testimony

Program Proposals

- Partners/Small Groups
- Use the PTL Student Learning Protocol to guide the program
- Observe each other once a week
- Find a time during the week to debrief with partners
- Observe during scheduled plan time

Program Proposals

- Rotate partners periodically
- The JCILC will meet weekly to discuss knowledge gained
- Evaluate program at the end of six weeks
- Clock Hours
- Incentives

Conclusion

- Find a partner to Peer Coach with
- Establish a time to observe each other
- Take a copy of the SLP protocol
- Plan to meet as a group on 1/12/09
- Questions/Comments

Section 2 – Implementation of Program

Student Learning Protocol Overview

Prior to observing each other teachers used the Student Learning Protocol tool to generate ideas of what the students should be demonstrating in a classroom setting. During the observational period teachers use the Student Learning Protocol to identify student evidence in the classroom setting. After the observation period teachers met together to reflect on their own practices using the Student Learning Protocol tool. The Student Learning Protocol was used as a tool to focus observations between teachers in the John Campbell Instruction Learning Cohort.

The Student Learning Protocol tool was developed by the Leadership Innovations Team (Leadership Innovations Team, 2008). This organization developed this tool by researching the best instructional practices for ensuring all students achieve at high levels. The major influence for fostering the development of this tool originated from the research conducted by Robert MacGregor from his research report "The Essential Practices of High Quality Teaching and Learning." MacGregor's research examines the literature and existing rubrics pertaining to the essential practices of high quality teaching and learning.

The Leadership Innovations Team recommends that this tool be used by teachers and other educators to focus on instruction; however, the tool is not recommended to be used as an evaluative tool.

Please note:

Pages have been redacted due to copyright concerns.

These worksheets have been redacted due to copyright restrictions (pages 48 – 55):

Leadership Innovations Team, LLC. *Student Learning Protocol*, Leadership Innovations Team, 2008.

Indicator 1—Positive Behavior

1.1 High standards and consistent expectations for student behavior are evident. Students demonstrate an understanding of behavior expectations.

JCILC Responses:

- Students are active in deciding class expectations
- Expectations are posted and visible inside the classroom
- A disciple ladder is posted
- Lessons are designed around creating/defining expectations
- Access students knowledge by asking students to define "what it looks like"
- Constant review of appropriate behaviors
- Observed behavior by others coming into the room
- Asking questions—What should we be doing? What are we going to do? What if, then? What's working- what's not?
- Student contracts
- Peer evaluations
- Student rubrics

1.2 Students are on task and engaged in learning

JCILC Responses:

- Students produce some good quality evidence
- Students help keep their neighbors on task by helping each other
- Students understand the learning target and achieve it by the end of the lesson
- Teacher uses developmentally appropriate and a research-based approach that is fun and engaging
- Students understanding that the learning target relates to their own life
- Students make real-world connections

1.3 Relationships with students and between students are intentionally built and nurtured

JCILC Responses:

- Allow multiple opportunities for success (success can be measured differently for each student)
- Students have an opportunity to work with their peers (partner and small groups)
- The expectations are stated and modeled
- Establish a risk taking environment
- Consistent consequences and follow through
- Praise individualism
- Intentional team building activities
- Build acceptance of differences
- Teaching others fairly, however, not equally
- Celebrate each day
- Teach respect and manners
- Have fun

1.4 Student experience positive, culturally sensitive approaches to behavior management

JCILC responses:

- Point out a student model of appropriate behavior—"Catch someone doing something good!"
- Set and post expectations—"What should it look like?"
- Practice expectations
- Consistent treatment of all students
- Recognize that behavior management is an individual endeavor
- Recognize cultural differences—and adjust teaching to meet the diverse needs of the students.

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 1—Positive Behavior

- Students are not afraid to ask questions
- Students are treated with equity
- Humor is used to add comfort and enthusiasm
- Students are encouraged to learn from each other: "Did you hear what _____ said?"
- Students working in teams and groups
- There is a comfort level visible between students and the teacher—struggling students have many opportunities to be successful
- Transitions are key to creating a successful lesson
- The teacher circulates the classroom
- Students are involved in the learning process (raising hands)
- Students voice opinions and show excitement in learning

- Words of encouragement are used by the teacher
- 90-95% of the students are engaged in the learning
- Students are on task because they are interested in their learning
- Students show they are happy through displaying of laughter
- Students are comfortable in their environment
- Lively student discussions
- Warm, nurturing environment

Indicator 2—Aligned Instruction

2.1 There are identifiable goals and objectives for the lesson and the students demonstrate understanding of those objectives and goals.

- Learning targets:
  Visible—colorful/illustrations
  Students are able to restate learning target
- Students use their fingers or thumb up for understanding after direct instruction
- Modeling
- Seeking clarification
- Examples (kid friendly)
- Connect to real world or prior knowledge
- Come back to it at the end of the lesson to review lesson objectives:
  - Sticky notes
  - Exit slips
  - Popcorn conversation
- Learning targets:
  - Visible—kids know where to find them
  - Student friendly language
  - Student can articulate what the target is and if they met the target
- Targets should build on prior knowledge so they can see how it connects with real world:
  - Exit slips
- Progression of learning (Math)

2.2 The lesson is linked to state and/or district standards

- Targets are meaningful and written in student friendly language
- Targets/objectives presented before lesson begins
- Teacher checks for understanding of targets/objectives
- Group (class) evaluates achievement of targets/objectives at end of lesson
- Familiarity with standards and how curriculum supports them
- Students comments and questions are connected to the learning target
- The targets are referred to throughout the lesson
- Modeling is continual and focuses on the learning target

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 2—Aligned Instruction

- Many teachers display learning targets differently
- Students are asked to predict the learning target
- Students are required to reflect on the learning target at the end of the lesson

- Choral reading on learning targets
- Targets are written in kid friendly language
- Targets are used to make connections and establish prior knowledge
- Students are able to answer guiding questions
- Students answer questions related to target
- Students had choice as to the writing topic that would best help them obtain the objective
- Targets are clearly written and gone over with students
- Targets are posted on pocket charts
- The document camera is used to display learning targets
- Lesson objectives/learning targets are reviewed prior to lesson and at the end of the lesson to check for understanding
- Lesson objectives are used to tap into students prior knowledge
- Lesson objectives are posted inside the classroom and referred to as needed to help guide learning and build upon previously learned information
- Lesson objectives are read and discussed by students rather than by the teacher

Indicator 3—Student Engagement

3.1 The students are engaged in rigorous and relevant learning.

- Student ask clarifying questions
- Peer discussions
- More student teacher talk than teacher talk
- Students referring to/stating targets
- Student generated ideas
- Student movement

3.2 The students demonstrate their learning through various modes of communication (e.g. speaking, writing, and producing).

- The students share their math or writing work on the document camera
- Students express their learning by participating in the "Conga Line" or "Think Pair Share"
- Students demonstrate through project based learning or paper and pencil

3.3 The lesson utilizes instructional materials and resources suitable to the goals and objectives of the lesson, and is engaging to the students.

- The learning is meaningful to the students (Real-world materials)
- Leveled materials to address different learning abilities/styles
- Active engagement (music, manipulatives, conga line)
- Expects on various educational fields are brought into the classroom to share their knowledge regarding specific subjects with students

3.4 Students connect learning to their culture, background and experiences to make learning relevant.

- Having a variety of reading materials available that are related to a student's culture
- Discussing prior knowledge and how it's similar and different
- Culture projects:
    - Posters
    - Family activities

3.5 Students have multiple opportunities to receive social support for their learning by engaging in meaningful, relevant dialog around rigorous questions and learning opportunities.

- Students receive adequate thinking time
- Students are able to ask for help

- Discussions:
    - Whole group
    - Small group
    - One on one
- Open ended questions
- Showing/sharing of student work
- Celebrate good thinking
- Model expectations

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 3—Student Engagement

- Students orally reviewed their learning from prior lessons
- Students actively discussed and wrote observations in their journals
- Having systems in place allows students to engage without spending time on management questions
- Inquiry based learning is conducive to student learning engagement—a correlation was observed
- Having targets and allowing time for questioning before kids get started sets them free to "go!"
- Demonstrated use of prior knowledge
- Introducing strong vocabulary during a song or text
- Modeling/practicing protocols= rigorous learning
- Personal choice/interests=higher engagement
- Established routines--dive into learning
- Students demonstrate learning through: songs, partner sharing, group sharing, whole class sharing and independent work
- Social support: intentional grouping/partnerships
- Teachable moments were observed
- Document camera was used as s tool to increase rigor of students in the audience
- Using materials various ways—approaching learning from different modalities to reach and engage -different types of learners

Indicator 4—Student Centered Instruction

4.1 The purpose of the lesson is stated clearly as well as the expected outcome.

- The lesson objectives focus on the student at the center of the learning and are relevant to a student's:
    - Learning needs
    - Culture
    - Interest

4.2 The structure of the lesson is clear to all students and allows for different pathways according to student needs.

- Various materials are used that assist the students in the process of understanding the learning objective as well as the materials are used to help demonstrate learning towards the objective
- Kids need to know that there is a format to all lessons that needs to be followed in order for the lesson to be a success:
    - Lesson objectives
    - Build on the students prior knowledge
    - Teacher instruction/modeling
    - Practice/review for the students
    - Informal/formative/summative assessment
- Students demonstrate learning by:
    - Speaking
    - Writing
    - Producing

4.3 A variety of questioning strategies are used high on Bloom's Taxonomy to promote critical thinking and problem solving.

- Not telling—it's asking
- Open-ended; not yes or no questions
- Getting students to look at different perspectives
- Promoting is often needed (guiding)
- Asking Why Questions
- Asking Clarifying questions
- Compare and contrast
- Getting the students to think on their own

4.4 The students have adequate time to respond to questions

- Wait time is used

- Time for the students to brainstorm
- Time for the students to process their thoughts
- Limit time for student choices
- Asking follow-up questions

4.5 Instruction is adapted to meet the proficiency levels of all students

- Small flexible grouping:
  - Science
  - Math
  - Reading partner
- Teacher observations during "dipstick"
- Anecdotal notes
- Student work samples/portfolios
- Activities that are based on student interest and experience
- All students can be successful
- Flexible group, teacher observations, anecdotal notes, and student work samples/portfolios can all be used to drive and adapt individual and group instruction

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 4—Student Centered Instruction

- Once you've assessed them (students) let them go back and have the opportunity to add just for their own selves
- Allot time for one-on-one writing instruction (any area)
- Play relaxing music during quiet writing time
- Writing workshops
- Student centered math centers
- Demonstrate appropriate learning (how it should look for the students)
- The lessons are relevant to all students (engages all students)
- Target able to be met thru student's individual levels
- Open ended questions, experiment with different outcomes
- Assessment as a lesson in front of the whole class

Indicator 5—Student Assessment for Learning

5.1 Students prior knowledge is assessed at beginning of the lesson.

- Targets are used
- The ladder of learning in multiple academic areas can be used
- Informal and formal assessment
- Lessons are adjusted to meet the needs of the student
- Various formal assessments are used to help drive instruction:
    - DIBELS
    - STAR Reading Assessment
    - District Reading Assessment
    - WASL Data in reading, writing, and math
    - Unit Math Assessments
    - Trimester Writing Assessments
- Various questioning strategies are used to option information about students' prior knowledge (KWL or Predictions)

5.2 The lesson is modified, as appropriate, based on formative assessments.

- Ability grouping
- Peer coaching
- Insert a creative element/build on student choice
- Give students a chance for ownership in their learning
- Do not modify to the lowest common denominator
- Share rubric with student with students.
- Have the students help build the rubric

5.3 Students understand the assessment

- Students take part in creating the assessment criteria by working with the teacher and the class to develop a rubric:
    - Discussion included sharing of rubicstar.com

5.4 Frequent feedback is provided to students regarding their learning

- Pair and share
- Students respond to student who shared in their small group
- Instructional conferences (teacher-student)
- Peer editing
- Post it notes from teacher to student

- Whole groups thumbs up
- Whole group responds to student model

5.5 Students are encouraged to self assess and set goals for learning

- Collaboration can be with teacher or peers
- AR Goals—Self assess, looking at their areas of growth and improvement:
    - Set own goals
    - Evaluate goals
    - Set new goals based upon growth made
    - Share goals with parents/peers/teacher
- Self assess their own writing—peer editing
- Individualized Educational Plan Process

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 5—Student Assessment for Learning

- Opportunities for student discussion and reflection of writing
- Criteria clearly understood
- Prior knowledge is used to drive the direction of the lesson
- Lesson modified as appropriate to meet Individual Education Plan (IEP) requirements
- Continual feedback given verbally
- Allow for flexibility in a lesson (instruction/activity) as glimpses of student understanding prior knowledge arise
- Built student choice into lesson by asking them to think of descriptive words to add to sentences
- Clear student friendly targets

Indicator 6—Assessment of Learning

6.1 Students work collaboratively to share their learning experiences

- Whole group
- Small groups
- Partners
- Read Around Groups (RAGs)
- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) techniques
- Reader's theater/drama
- Student led conferences
- Team competitions

6.2 There are summative assessment results that reflect student learning

- Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) data
- Exit slips
- Formal/Informal assessments
- Unit assessments
- Benchmark Assessments
    - Reading/math/writing/dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (DIBELS)
- Student conferences
- Oral discussions
- Review of lesson targets

Reflections from Observations

Indicator 6—Assessment of Learning

- Small group assessment
- Teacher/student instruction
- Providing instant feedback to students
- Conga line—used to share random information between students in a non-threatening way
- Small group WASL writing assessments by kids
- Time to process before putting anything on paper
- Putting all knowledge on a subject into a culminating project
- Expectations clear and easily followed

Section 3-Post Implementation of Program

Staff Sharing

During the school year many teachers who didn't participate in the JCILC inquired about the process, also about the SLP tool. Many teachers asked for a copy of the SLP tool. Shane Backlund principal of John Campbell Elementary and Mike Olsen assistant principal of John Campbell Elemenetary were rather reluctant to hand out the tool to teachers who didn't participate in the program for several reasons. First, teachers would not understand the tool or how it should be used unless they were involved in the peer coaching process. Also, the John Campbell Elementary administration thought it would undermine the efforts of the JCILC if teachers were simply given the tool without participating in the program.

As a JCILC we wanted to be able to share with the staff our learning experiences involved with the JCILC. It was agreed upon by administration and the JCILC that we would have time to share information about the JCILC at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. The overall goals of this staff meeting were to inform staff members about the JCILC, gain some additional interest in the process of peer coaching with intentions that more teachers would be willing to participate the following year, and familiarize non JCILC participants with the SLP tool.

During the meeting JCILC participants were split up into six groups to represent the six indicators in the SLP document. Each of the groups would have five minutes to focus on that indicator and answer any questions of the teachers at the group or share learning experiences from their participation in the JCILC. Also, teachers facilitating the

groups were provided with a document that would elicit discussion if the conversation came to a halt. After five minutes had lapsed teachers moved to another group to receive information on the next indicator. Teachers rotated to all of the six groups.

Discussion Questions Used

How should this indicator look inside a classroom setting?

What is something from this indicator that you would like to try in your own teaching?

As you reflect on this indicator I am more aware of_____as a strength in my teaching.

How will it look if I implement this indicator into my classroom?

What does this indicator mean to you?

What should you observe inside the classroom if you were focusing on this indicator?

What doesn't make sense about this indicator?

What should you see the students doing if you were focusing on this indicator?

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was to provide elementary teachers a peer coaching opportunity that would guide and assist teachers in improving their pedagogy, build collegial relationships, create a positive work environment, reduce teacher isolation, provide a positive change in school culture, and learn new and innovative teaching practices. To accomplish this purpose, a review of related current literature was conducted, tools were obtained, and survey data was utilized to measure the effectiveness of the program.

The model peer coaching guide was produced as a result of this project detailing conversations, procedures and activities utilized at John Campbell Elementary School, in Selah, Washington.

Conclusion of Survey Results

Results of the MANOVA showed that there was a statistical difference in the before and after scores of the teachers who participated in the JCILC. The results of the MANOVA also indicated that teachers in the control group and teachers receiving the treatment had the same view of the teaching environment prior to the start of the peer coaching program. Furthermore, teachers who didn't partake in the JCILC didn't show any growth in their perceptions of the teaching environment from the beginning to the end of the program. The results of the survey data indicated that teachers who

participated in the peer coaching program showed a positive change in the teachers' perception of their workplace environment. Also, the data concluded that teachers who participated in the peer coaching program showed growth in specific categories measured in the survey.

Effect sizes were calculated to examine the trends of the data. An examination of the results for this study showed differences ranging from .2 being a small change, .5 a medium change, and .8 or more a large change. Teachers participating in the program showed growth in nine out of the 12 categories indicated on the survey, while teachers participating in the program showed a negative growth in one category. Teachers participating in the program showed a small negative change in category 1—Shared Teaching Goals. No conclusions could be reached in regards to the negative change in category 1. Category 2--School Goal Setting showed medium growth. The growth in this category can be attributed to the fact that teachers now had the opportunity to talk specifically about student achievement. Teachers' conversations regarding student achievement focused on developing goals for what student achievement should look like. Also, this category allowed teachers to participate in regular discussion that focused on what teachers are to emphasize in their teaching. Category 3—Teacher Socialization showed medium growth in effect size. Category 6—Team Teaching had small growth. Category 7—Teachers' Certainty about a Technical Culture and Instructional Practice had medium growth. It can be speculated that teachers participating in the JCILC had growth in this category due to working with others, thus leading to a certainty about the technical culture of the school, as well as, their own abilities. Category 8—Involvement in Decision Making had large growth. One of the reasons for this large growth could

have been that teachers were responsible for determining the type, content, and techniques of the training, since they were directly involve in the decision making process of the program. Category 9—Teachers' Learning Opportunities had the largest growth out of all the categories. This category asked questions pertaining to trying out new ideas or learning new things and having discussions with peers in regards to their teaching. These two areas described above were the crux of the JCILC. Category 10—Positive Feedback, Category 11--Teacher Commitment, and Category 12—Task Autonomy also demonstrated a large growth when measured by their effect size.

There could be several conclusions why this survey used in this research project didn't show statistical growth in all of the 12 categories. Here are a few conclusions reached by the researcher. First, implementation of a new program such as a peer coaching model takes time to exhibit dramatic measureable results. The project lasted approximately six months from start to finish. One can only predict that the results would be different if the program continued for a longer duration; such as three years. Another conclusion that can be reached could be that teachers already demonstrated high levels of collaboration. Teachers at both elementary schools participate in collaborative meetings on a weekly basis. These grade level meetings focus on developing curricula and lessons, examining student data, scoring student work, holding book studies, examining effective teaching practices, and discussing the day to day requirements of teaching and learning. In addition to weekly meetings teachers volunteer to be part of committees. There are committees for reading, writing, mathematics, and safety. Each committee contains one representative per grade level. The goals of these committees are to develop, support, and implement obtainable goals in each of their subject areas. These

committees meet monthly and report back to the Teaching and Learning Committee. In addition to school committees and grade level meetings teachers have bi-weekly staff meetings. Staff meetings typically focus on structured professional development opportunities and are geared toward meeting the needs established by the teaching staff.

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of this project were:

1. A well developed and researched tool is essential to help in the facilitation of a peer coaching cohort.
2. Creating an effective peer coaching program requires administrative support.
3. Teachers can complete peer coaching duties during a regular school day.
4. The benefits of a peer coaching program are dependent on the willingness of its participants.
5. Teachers who participated in the JCILC showed high levels of collaboration that resulted in improvement in working relationships.

Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations for facilitators, teachers, administrators, and future areas of study are:

Facilitator of the Program Recommendations

1. Conduct an extensive review of the literature related to peer coaching.

2. Solicit the support of building and district administrators.

3. Recruit teachers for the peer coaching cohort.

4. Research an effective tool that can be used to facilitate the peer coaching cohort.

5. Find a way to measure the success of the program.

6. Identify participant expectations for all peer coaching members.

7. Create an opportunity to share program results with staff members who didn't participate in the program.

8. Create a three year plan that addresses the sustainability of the program.

Teacher Recommendations

1. Participants should attend every peer coaching meeting.

2. Participate appropriately with peer coaching partners and other members of the coaching cohort.

3. Set aside time during planning periods to observe peer coaching partners.

4. Reflect on teaching practices and provide feedback and support to peer coaching partners.

Administrator Recommendations

1. Administrators should attend all peer coaching meetings.

2. Provide opportunities for teacher release days to conduct observations outside of the building.

3. Provide clock hours for teachers who participate in the peer coaching program.

4. Support the facilitator of the peer coaching program by providing materials or additional funding for program setup if needed.

Recommendations for Future Study

1. Allow teachers participating in the JCILC more input into the design and implementation of the program.

2. Develop a two tiered approach to the program. Tier two teachers would be the teachers who participated in the program the year prior. Tier one teachers would be new to the program and would be assigned a peer coaching partner from tier two.

3. Look for new or innovative tools to help facilitate the program.

4. Allow teachers participating in the program opportunities to work with teachers inside their school district; however, outside of their school building.

5. Provide all teachers participating in the peer coaching program with one release day that could be used to further their knowledge on peer coaching.

6. Give teachers the opportunity to focus on other aspects of peer coaching such as: lesson planning, formative assessment, or looking at student work.

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