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**THE ROLE OF A READING FIRST READING COACH
IN A RURAL PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL DISTRICT
AS PERCEIVED BY THE TEACHERS AND THE ADMINISTRATORS**

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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Abstract

Reading First, a six-year, \$184 billion, federally funded grant program, under the No Child Left Behind Act, was available to school districts with the highest percentage of low-income families, with more than 30% of students scoring below basic on the fifth-grade state reading assessment, or who were identified for school improvement through the state empowerment list. Funding per district was allocated based on student enrollment figures: \$400 per student in grades k-3 and \$2,000 per classroom teacher. The goal of Reading First was to enable every child to read by the third grade, through a scientifically research-based program of instruction and assessment.

My school district, which was the subject of this dissertation study, was one of the 43 in Pennsylvania that qualified for and was awarded a Reading First grant. As a local grant recipient, we were required to set up scientifically research-based reading programs and methods to test and track student achievement and progress and to provide professional development for kindergarten through third-grade teachers as well as to special education teachers. We were also mandated to hire one reading coach based on the number of teachers in our grant schools, who would implement the grant and provide the professional development. Although the roles of the coach were not articulated, they were expected to work directly with the teachers as a peer coach in their classrooms to help them improve reading instruction.

This dissertation study examined my role as a Reading First reading coach in a rural Pennsylvania elementary school during the first year of the program's grant implementation in 2003-2004. In order to holistically investigate my role as a reading

coach and its meaning for those involved, I used a qualitative case study research design to systematically explore the phenomenon of the reading coach. Using systematic interviewing, as well data collected through my daily written log, I focused on discovering and interpreting my role as the reading coach in the classroom. I used a descriptive case study methodology that allowed for an examination of the program and the individuals involved. The bounded system selected for description and explanation included those directly responsible for implementing the Reading First grant in my school district. These included the three primary teachers (kindergarten, second, and third grade) in the elementary school along with the building administrator (the principal, curriculum coordinator, and the superintendent of schools).

The specific aim of this research was to examine my role as a Reading First coach during the first year of the program's grant implementation. The interviews allowed me to analyze the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers and the district administrators with respect to the Reading First policy implementation. My daily written log enabled me to compare the time I spent in certain roles and activities as a coach with their perceptions. The following were the research questions in the study:

1. What were the perceptions of the district's teachers concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach?
2. What were the perceptions of the district's administrators concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach?
3. Were there differences in the ways the district's teachers and administrators perceived the role of the reading coach?
4. Which roles of the teachers did the reading coach take responsibility for?

5. Which roles of the administrations did the reading coach take responsibility for?
6. What professional development opportunities did the reading coach provide to the Reading First teachers?
7. How much time did the reading coach spend in each of the coaching roles?

For the data collection in this study, I interviewed the six participants throughout the year of grant implementation (at the beginning, middle, and end), using open-ended questions. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to over an hour. The data analysis consisted of three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Through this process, I identified six specific themes that revealed the perceptions of the district's administrators and teachers regarding the roles of the reading coach. At the same time, in my daily written log I documented the amount of time (in minutes) that I spent each day on specific tasks as the reading coach. I broke down these tasks into 18 categories and reformulated them into graphic documents to represent the information derived from my daily coaching log.

Six themes emerged from my analysis of the interview data, which indicated that the study participants perceived the coach's role to include: ensuring fidelity to the grant, coordinating assessments required for the grant, modeling instruction for the Reading First teachers, and being a voice, mentor/encourager for them as well. The administrators and teachers strongly agreed that my role was to ensure fidelity to the Reading First grant initiative, including the core reading instruction and assessments. In addition, the teachers viewed my roles as being a resource and a voice. The administrators viewed my role

differently, identifying my roles as voice, assessment coordinator, and model for instruction. The transcribed interviews confirmed that the teachers and administrators agreed that the coach's role did not take responsibility away from the teachers. In fact, the administrators thought that my role as coach empowered the teachers. My daily written logs did document the time I spent in roles that had previously been the responsibility of the teachers: parent trainings, meetings with parents, assessment of students, and data analysis. The three administrators believed that as the Reading First coach, I took on some of their responsibilities, including the coordination of assessment, informing the administrators about the grant status, and serving as a "pseudo-administrator" in the outlying buildings. The data from my coaching logs documented the administrative duties I assumed as the reading coach, i.e., taking on general administrative duties, planning professional development for teachers, performing grant writing and doing outreach.

The perceptions of the teachers and administrators that I gathered from my interviews were that all of the professional development opportunities that I provided for the teachers centered on the newly adopted reading series (Open Court) and the use of the mandatory Reading First assessments (DIBELS). My coaching logs documented that my time spent providing professional development included the planning, preparation, presentation, and organization of trainings provided by the Open Court consultant and myself.

My analysis of the data from my daily written log indicated that I spent the majority of my time during the year of the grant implementation in coordinating and administering student assessments, and providing and planning professional development

for the teachers. I spent the least amount of my time engaged in peer coaching activities, i.e., co-teaching, observing, and modeling in the classroom.

One of the main conclusions from my findings in this study is that the reading coach cannot be solely responsible for grant implementation, i.e., predominantly administrative tasks and assessment, and still support classroom teachers in developing their practices to carry out the goals of Reading First and the No Child Left Behind Act. To be effective in facilitating the students' improvement in reading that Reading First promotes, the reading coach must spend the majority of her time working with teachers in their classrooms ensuring the transfer of learning.

It was vital to explore the six participants' perceptions since the roles of the reading coach in each district were largely defined by the way in which the administrators interpreted them. Additionally, how the classroom teachers perceived the role of the reading coach was important in regard to eliminating barriers to our driving forces for school reform, as well as for improving students' reading and academic achievement generally. Potentially, similar studies examining the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the role of the coach and identification of the reading coach's specific roles can help other school districts make informed decisions about how to incorporate the use of reading coaches into their school improvement plans. With this information, school districts can better integrate the coaching model into their existing structures.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 No Child Left Behind.....	1
The Effects of the No Child Left Behind Act.....	4
The Role of the National Reading Panel.....	6
Reading First.....	9
No Child Left Behind in Pennsylvania	10
The Open Court Reading Program	12
Reading Assessment for Reading First.....	14
The Role of the Reading First Coach.....	15
Educational Policy Making.....	16
Purpose of the Study	20
Research Questions.....	20
Significance of the Study	21
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature.....	23
Staff Development for Educators.....	24
Changing Professional Development.....	27
Transfer of Learning and Professional Development	30
Models of Professional Development.....	37
Coaching as a Vehicle for Staff Development.....	42
Defining Coaching	48
Coaching Training Centers	52
Studies on Coaching	58
Peer Coaching	61

The Purpose of Peer Coaching.....	62
The Characteristics of Peer Coaching.....	63
Research Studies That Support Peer Coaching.....	65
Time and Commitment to Change.....	71
Other Forms of Coaching.....	73
Technical Coaching	74
Team Coaching.....	75
Cognitive Coaching	76
Collegial Coaching.....	77
Challenge Coaching.....	77
Definitions for the Role of Reading Coach.....	77
Reading First Implementation.....	80
Chapter 3 Methods.....	89
Design.....	89
Site Selected.....	91
The Researcher’s Role	92
Purposeful Sampling Strategy.....	94
The Participants	94
The Administrators	95
The Teachers.....	98
Data Collection	99
Data Analysis.....	101
Limitations of the Research Design.....	102

Reliability.....	102
Internal Validity	104
External Validity.....	106
Chapter 4 Results and Discussion.....	107
Section 1: The Teachers and Administrators' Perceptions of the Role	109
The Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of the Coach	109
Fidelity	109
Resource.....	111
Voice.....	113
Assessment Help.....	115
Encourager/Mentor	117
Model	118
The Administrators' Perceptions of the Roles of the Coach.....	118
Fidelity	118
Modeling.....	120
Encourager/Mentor	122
Voice.....	124
Assessment Help.....	126
The Similarities and Differences in the Perceptions	129
Section 2. Roles of the Administrators and Teachers.....	130
Roles of the Teachers for Which the Coach Took Responsibility.....	130
The Teachers' Perceptions.....	130
The Administrators' Perceptions	131

Roles of the Administrators for Which the Coach Took Responsibility	134
The Teachers' Perceptions	134
The Administrators' Perceptions	134
Section 3. Professional Development That the Coach Provided	136
The Administrators' Perceptions	137
The Teachers' Perceptions	139
Section 4. How Much Time the Coach Spent in Various Coaching Roles.....	143
Section 5. Conflict and Concerns of the Administrators and Teachers	144
The Administrators' Perceptions	144
The Teachers' Perceptions	146
Summary	148
Chapter 5 Conclusions and Implications	150
Grant Implementation Predominant Coaching Role.....	151
Coordinating and Administering Assessments	152
Planning and Providing Professional Development	143
Modeling Teaching as a Reading Coach	154
Ensuring Fidelity as a Reading Coach	156
The Coach and Fidelity	157
The Administrators and Fidelity	159
The Teachers and Fidelity	160
Specific Roles of the Coach	162
Voice	162
Resource.....	163

Mentor/Encourager	164
Implications.....	165
References	170
Appendix A The Cycle of the SITTI Model.....	190
Appendix B Cooter’s Capacity Building Model.....	192
Appendix C Interview Questions.....	194
Appendix D Coaching Time Spent in Role/Activities by Hours.....	206
Appendix E Coaching Time Spent in Role/Activities by Percentages	208
Appendix F Administrators and Teachers’ Perceptions of Roles of the Coach	210

For my husband Doug and my three children, Emily, Evan and Kate. Your endless love and support made this possible. You are my world!

Chapter 1

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Three days after taking office in January 2001, as the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush announced his plans for No Child Left Behind, his framework for bipartisan education reforms that he called the cornerstone of his administration. President Bush emphasized his concern that too many of our neediest children were being left behind academically despite other evidence. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data had indicated that reading achievement had remained relatively stable for the past 30 years (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Kibby, 1995), although the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 reported evidence of an actual increase in the reading achievement of fourth grade students since 1988 (Snow, Burns, & Griffen, 1998; The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). However, President Bush referred to reading problems among students as a national emergency and proposed to end what he saw as the educational recession that had occurred under the Clinton administration despite President Clinton's efforts at school reform.

President Clinton, like Bush, had claimed that there was a literacy crisis in education. During Clinton's first term, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the Improving America's School Act, originally passed in 1965, which envisioned all children being taught the same content based on performance standards (Smith & Scoll, 1995). Under Clinton, Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, which provided financial support to communities and states to improve education in their schools. However, since there was little evidence

of significant change in the education by the end of his first term, during his second campaign Clinton began to focus on literacy with the America Reads Challenge, a four-year national grassroots campaign that focused on early childhood literacy, specifically university or college and community volunteers tutoring young readers through federal work-study funds (Edmondson, 2000).

The NCLB Act, under Bush, again reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The NCLB Act affects all public schools receiving federal Title 1, Part A, funding (Overview of No Child Left Behind 2003). This legislation redefines and expands the federal government's role in education, grades k-12 and charges the local school districts with new obligations and accountability. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's web site, the NCLB Act is based on four principles: stronger accountability results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that are research based and "proven to work" (The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Executive Summary, 2001). Bush identified the purpose of the NCLB Act as to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain high quality education and to reach, at a minimum, proficiency relating to state standards and assessment, while ensuring that no child is trapped in a failing school. (The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Executive Summary, 2001).

Under the provisions of NCLB, each state and school is expected to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in improving academic achievement. AYP is defined as the annual performance levels that schools must reach in order to avoid being identified as needing improvement. This progress is measured by only *one* criterion, the state test.

AYP, as defined in Pennsylvania, means reaching annual measurable objectives on state assessments, increasing graduation rates in secondary schools, and improving attendance in elementary schools. By 2014, every student in America is expected to reach state-defined proficiency (Overview of No Child Left Behind, 2003). Therefore, Pennsylvania's baseline would be the 2002 PSSA test results. The starting point for proficiency is 45% in reading and 35% in math. In Pennsylvania, for all students to achieve proficiency by the year 2014, they must increase their reading scores by 4.6% and their math by 5.6% (The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Executive Summary, 2003).

If the district or school continually fails to make adequate yearly progress toward statewide proficiency goals, they will be subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures (The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Executive Summary, 2003). If the school or district fails to make AYP for two consecutive years it will be "identified for improvement." Students in the identified school will be given school choice, having the option to transfer to another public school or public charter school in the district. The district must develop and submit a board-approved improvement plan, ensure technical assistance to the school, and notify parents of the school's status, explaining the improvement plan, options for parental involvement, school choice options, and remedial attempts. (The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Executive Summary, 2003).

States have been particularly concerned about the NCLB law's detailed formula for determining what constitutes adequate yearly progress. The fear is that hundreds of schools will fail to meet their targets and be designated as needing improvement after a

few years, including many that the public perceives to be doing well. Such projections occur because schools must meet their targets for the student population as a whole and for individual subgroups, such as racial/ethnic minority students and those from poor families. The projections also reflect the fact that the law requires substantial, even *extraordinary*, growth each year to reach 100% proficiency by 2013-2014.

The Effects of the NCLB Act

Such federally-legislated academic performance standards and uniform content and testing to achieve them have raised concerns among some educators. Bracey (2003) believes that the grand scheme of the federal government is to privatize schools, and that privatization is being achieved through the control of the public school curriculum (Bracey, 2002). Pattan (1980) predicts that our current system of free education may be replaced with private state education. This control has come into place through vouchers, testing, and more explicit policies about teacher qualifications (Bracey 2003).

In 2001, President Bush proposed distributing vouchers to let children attend private schools at taxpayer expense. In his 2004 budget, he proposed \$75 million for vouchers for the District of Columbia, and some congressional members want to extend their use to schools in other cities as well (Bracey, 2003). It is believed, however, that if American private schools begin receiving substantially greater funding through federal vouchers and school choice programs, the federal and state governments would also increase the amount of private school regulation (Center for Education Policy, 1999).

While the federal government cannot force NCLB requirements on the states, they can require standardized student testing in states that want to be federally funded. Funded

schools are required to test children in grades three through eight every year in math and reading and every two years in science as well. Bracey (2003) believes that districts are being asked to meet the impossible expectation of having all children attain a proficiency level by 2014. Schools must show adequate yearly progress overall by disaggregating data into separate groups, i.e., ethnic, socioeconomic, special education, and English Language Learners. Researchers (Kane; Staiger, 2002) have found that test scores in schools are quite volatile from year to year. They attribute most of the volatility to outside factors such as student mobility from school to school and summer loss. Nationally, 20% of American students change schools each year; in urban areas this figure is near 50%. One study showed that disadvantaged students show substantial summer loss. Poor students fell farther and farther behind their middle-class peers as they moved from first through fifth grade (Alexander, Entwistle, & Olson, 2001).

In schools receiving NCLB funds, all current teachers are expected to be highly qualified by 2005-2006. This is also true for anyone hired after the 2002-2003 school year. According to NCLB, highly qualified means that a teacher must hold at least a bachelor's degree, have full state certification, and not have had any certification requirements waived on an emergency or temporary basis (Bracey 2003). Across the nation there is a shortage of teachers with such qualifications in mathematics, science and special education, particularly in cities. Studies by Walsh (2001) and Gerwertz (2002) showed that in Chicago, 25% of the teachers in low-performing schools had not met these requirements, and in Baltimore the figure was higher at 31%. Even paraprofessionals must complete two years of college and have an associate's degree or have passed a state

test on content and teaching skills. While the teacher qualification problem has been known for some time, the legislation does not seem to address it (Bracey).

The Role of the National Reading Panel

Reading First, a provision of the NCLB Act of 2001, is part of President Bush's educational reform blueprint to ensure that every child will be able read at grade level by the end of third grade, through the use of only scientifically based programs and teaching methods identified by the National Reading Panel (NRP) (Coles, 2003). These reading programs systematically and explicitly teach the five essential components of reading instruction identified by the NRP findings; they are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Reading First, 2003).

The members of the NRP panel were selected by the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) as requested by the United States Congress in 1997. This 14-member panel was composed of a certified public accountant, a physic professor, a neuroscientist, an assistant director of the National Science Foundation, a director of urban education, and seven cognitive psychologist/scientists. Only two members were teachers: one a reading teacher and one an award-winning teacher and principal.

The mission of the NRP was to review the literature on reading instruction, analyze it, and present to the public a strategy to improve reading instruction in our classrooms based on scientific research. Since the panelists believed that reading was comprised of discrete skills, they thought that they could draw legitimate research parallels between reading and experiments used in the field of medicine (Garan, 2002).

The NRP's meta-analysis of the research on reading was based on a medical model of research that compares performance criteria before and after treatment. The NRP claimed that it included only studies that used treatment and control groups in the meta-analysis. However, Garan (2002) and Coles (2003) pointed out that the panel made arbitrary decisions to include findings from other methods. Garan believes that the NRP deliberately excluded a large body of widely respected reading research because the studies did not conform to their scientific, medical model of thinking. Strauss (2003) criticized the NRP report because it did not mention how the studies were scrutinized for internal consistency and mutual compatibility.

The NRP findings have been criticized as having unreliable evidence (Allington 2002; Garan, 2002). Garan challenged the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings in the NRP report. She believes that the panel's study was not reliable based on the type of assessments it used and the fact that so few studies were used in the meta-analysis. Garan refers to the segment of the NRP report that states that eight of the studies for older readers were flawed and therefore not reliable, and that there were too few studies of low-achieving readers to draw firm conclusions. According to Garan, the studies used by the panel typically targeted children identified as dyslexic, learning disabled, or with phonological processing problems. Garan also questioned the validity of the study. She did not believe the report assessed what it said it did. Reading growth for example was a misnomer referring to isolated sub-skills rather than application to authentic reading and writing. Garan felt the generalizability was also flawed because the studies were directed towards limited populations of students and cannot be applied to all

students. Allington (2005) described the NRP as being rushed because it was underfunded, understaffed and given a time line that was too short.

Joanne Yatvin, the principal on the panel, criticized the NRP in her minority report (2002). She believed that all of the scientists on the panel held the same general view of the reading process. According to Yatvin (2002), the panel accepted as the basis for reading investigations a model composed of a three-part hierarchy: decoding, fluency, and comprehension. This skill model is based on the belief that learners begin to read by separating out the individual sounds of language and matching them to written letters and combinations of letters. Learners then move on to decoding words and stringing them together into sentences. Understanding ultimately comes from correct pronunciation. Yatvin stated that the panel excluded research that was not a part of this model, including oral language, literature, and its conventions. It also excluded any investigation of the interdependence between reading and writing. Because of the NRP panel's exclusion of other studies, Yatvin (2002) believes that the panel did not have the right to reject any instructional practices that makes use of any of these components just because the research studies on them were never investigated.

Yatvin (2002) also had concerns about the phonics section of the panel's report. Yatvin noted that Barbara Foorman, a NICHD-funded researcher was the sole reviewer of the phonics section of for the NRP, which means she reviewed her own work, which accounted for 10% of the articles in the phonics segment of the meta-analysis. Yatvin also stated that the phonics report in its completed form was not seen by the whole subcommittee and was put into print uncorrected, undeliberated, and unapproved.

In addition, Yatvin (2002) believes that the NRP report has been misinterpreted on a grand scale and attributes this to the government agencies that are calling for changes in school instruction and teacher education. NICHD has done its part to misinform the public by disseminating a summary report which inaccurately represents the findings (Yatvin, 2002; Garan 2002; Allington, 2002). Strauss (2003) also believes that the findings in the NRP short summary have been falsified and do not reflect the conclusions in the full report. One falsification of the findings in the summary report is that phonics instruction correlates with improved reading ability. In the full report there is scant evidence to support this claim (Strauss). Allington fears that the misrepresented findings of the NRP are having a harmful influence on classroom instructional practices.

Reading First

Reading First is a six-year, \$184 billion, federal program that provides grants to the states to help school districts improve the reading achievement of their low-performing students in kindergarten through third grade, using the scientifically based reading programs that contain the components of reading that were identified by the NRP. Under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, beginning in 2002 each state was eligible to apply for a portion of the federal grant money, which was to be allocated based on student enrollment and the percentage of poor children in each state (Whaley, 2002). The states were required to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), outlining a proposed plan for comprehensive reading programs that fit the strict requirements of the law. This plan included how the grant money would be distributed to schools with the highest numbers of disadvantaged or

low-performing students and how recipients would track compliance with the Reading First grant program rules and report their progress in raising the levels of student achievement. Panels of reading researchers and educators reviewed the applications at the USDE to determine if the states adequately addressed the criteria and if they contained sufficient accountability measures. Grants ranging from \$2.2 to \$133 million were awarded to states that met Reading First program requirements and ensured local compliance by school districts (www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtm?src=pb).

No Child Left Behind in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania was awarded more than \$28 million in grants in 2002 to implement Reading First in 2003-2004. A total of \$900 million in grants to states were awarded for Reading First during the first year of the program. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's web site (www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb), the purpose of Reading First is to assist state and local educational agencies in five specific areas: scientifically based reading programs, professional development, assessment, instructional materials, and coordination among programs.

Each state receiving the Reading First grants was required to formulate a leadership team composed of high-level government and education officials and representatives from the community. The teams serve as advisory boards for implementation and evaluation of state plans. The new accountability requirement of the NCLB Act mandated that the state education department contract with an independent organization for five years to complete a quantitative evaluation of the Reading First state grant program in order to identify the effects of the state and district plans on improving

reading instruction (Whaley, 2002). An annual report from each state had to be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Education, identifying the schools and local educational agencies (LEA's) that had the largest gains in reading achievement, describing how the state and local educational agencies (SEA's and LEA's) were reducing the number of students in kindergarten through third grade who were reading below grade level, and providing evidence of SEA and LEA's progress toward significantly increasing the number of students (including racial/ethnic, low-income, and limited English proficient) reading on or above grade level. LEA's then applied to the state for competitive subgrants (Whaley).

In Pennsylvania, the NCLB Act is estimated to impact the education of 1.8 million children attending public schools as well as 114,700 teachers. In 2002, overall federal funding for education in Pennsylvania increased \$1.6 billion, including more than \$459.2 million for Title I, and more than \$28 million for Reading First in Pennsylvania. (www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb).

Forty-three LEA's in Pennsylvania were eligible to apply for a Reading First grant based on student poverty levels and fifth grade PSSA scores. These schools had the highest percentage of low-income families, with more than 30% of students scoring below basic on the fifth-grade reading assessment, or they were schools identified for school improvement through the state empowerment list. Local grant recipients were required to set up scientifically research-based reading programs and methods to test and track student achievement progress and to provide professional development for kindergarten through third grade teachers as well as to special education teachers K-12 (www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb/lib/ReadingFirst). LEA's were also mandated to hire one or more reading coaches contingent on the number of students in the qualifying schools.

My school district, which is the subject of this dissertation study, was one of the 43 in Pennsylvania that qualified for and was awarded a federal Reading First grant in 2002. The amount of funding per district was allocated based on student enrollment figures: \$400 per student in grades k-3 and \$2,000 per classroom teacher k-3 (www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb/lib/ReadingFirst). These grant monies were allocated to purchase Open Court, a scientifically based reading program, and to hire reading coaches for each of the two schools in the district that would participate in the Reading First Program. Reading First schools were also required to adopt the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment to track the reading progress of all children.

The Open Court Reading Program

While the NRP report warned against the use of scripted programs and did not recommend any commercial reading program, the Reading First panel of experts and the federal government named Open Court as their favored approved reading program (Garan, 2004). Open Court, published by McGraw Hill, has been described as a heavily scripted phonics program that presents a fixed sequence of lessons scheduled from the beginning to the end of the school year. This means that the teacher reads directly from the manual to present the reading lesson. Pacing of the lessons is also critical when teaching Open Court. Pacing requires all teachers at a given grade level to be on the same page at the same time on any given day. Teachers must adhere to the time lines given and requirements provided for the lessons (Garan 2004).

The effectiveness of the Open Court program has been challenged. One of the studies included in the NRP related to the program showed its ill effects. The performance of the children who were trained with Open Court for an entire year dropped from first to second grade in every skill that was tested (Garan, 2004). The research data of Foorman, Fletcher and Schatschneider (1998) on Open Court showed that after one year of intensive instruction, children in the program did significantly worse in tasks requiring the authentic application of skills for spelling and comprehension compared to children who did not receive training at all. But Open Court has been widely used across the country because it is government approved.

Open Court also made it easy for districts to select their program to meet the Reading First requirements by providing a grant template. My district used the Open Court authored template to write our grant, filling in the blanks to personalize it for our district. Our grant was accepted by the state with no revisions required. Districts that chose not to adopt a scientifically approved reading program did not receive federal monies (Garan, 2004).

Much of my district's grant monies (40%) during the first year of Reading First, were spent on the purchase of the Open Court reading program, despite the many current controversies concerning its use. Garan (2002) believes that heavily scripted programs such as Open Court fail to allow for the varied learning styles and needs of children from diverse backgrounds. Researchers have also warned that a one-size-fits-all phonics program ignores the individual and motivational needs of children and teachers (Allington, 2002; Garan, 2002; Goodman, 1998; Ohanian, 1999).

The lack of attention to motivational factors in the design of scripted reading programs and the emphasis on routine drill and skill, may interfere with the learner's and teacher's motivation (NRP, 2000). According to Dewey (1902a), skills, concepts and facts should not be taught in isolation but within content, and should build on the children's background knowledge and interests. Children should be provided with choice and ownership and not be required to follow along. Motivation is achieved when children are provided with purposeful and meaningful learning opportunities and are active participants in the learning process (Dewey 1902).

Reading Assessment for Reading First

The use of the DIBELS as the assessment tool to track the reading progress of children in grades k-3 was mandated for Reading First schools. DIBELS focuses on phonemic awareness (PA), the alphabetic principle, and oral reading fluency. PA is the ability to hear or say a word and break it into its individual components and or blend the sounds together. This skill does not involve seeing or actually reading a word (Garan, 2004). According to the Reading First requirements, if a young child fails one of these tests, he/she is labeled as intensive or strategic (depending on the score) and treated as if he/she has a problem. Intensive and strategic children are provided with additional small group instruction as outlined in the Reading First grant. Garan (2004) believes that it is a false claim to use children's PA ability as a prediction of how well they will be able to read in the future. Krashen (2001) warns us about the dangers of labeling and sorting children based on their ability to perform PA tasks. Nowhere in the DIBELS evaluation is

there an assessment of comprehension or writing. According to the grant application, comprehension waits until children have mastered decoding fluency (Garan).

The Role of the Reading First Coach

My district was mandated to hire two half-time coaches to fulfill the Reading First requirements in our two targeted elementary schools. I was hired as one of the coaches. During the first year of grant implementation, I served half time as a Title 1 reading specialist in a non-grant school and the other half time as a coach in one of our grant schools. According to the grant written by our district, I was to provide stable and consistent support to the classroom teachers implementing instruction. I was to work collaboratively with the building administrator in implementing and revising the school-based action plan. I was expected to be an “expert” in the core reading program, Open Court. My duty was to ensure fidelity of its implementation among all the teachers. I was responsible for all on-site instructional support for staff, such as running in-class guided practice, leading study groups, demonstrating effective instruction, and providing targeted and more intensive support to struggling teachers. In addition I was to assist in screening, diagnosing, and monitoring student assessment and progress in order to ensure that the instruction was being matched to student needs. I was expected to work with the regional staff in planning specific building and local education agency (LEA) professional development and technical assistance. I was to meet with the technical assistant at least monthly to address the needs and to analyze teacher and student data. I was required to participate in all building, district, regional, and state-wide training

sessions, and was furthermore responsible for assisting staff in translating research into practice in the school building.

Although my district was required to hire a reading coach to fulfill the Reading First initiative, neither the requirements nor the role responsibilities of the coach were defined by the state, or by the federal government. There were no written job requirements or description, and no prescribed qualifications for the reading coach position. Therefore, the responsibility for deciding who should be the reading coach and what constitutes the role of the coach in the Reading First Program falls to the school districts. Previous research shows that it is important to define the components of the coach's job and to communicate this information clearly to staff (Leggett & Hoyle, 1987), particularly in districts where a new concept such as Reading First is being implemented.

Educational Policy Making

Although educators often view themselves as nonpolitical, what they may not realize is that they are policy makers when they actively engage in both the construction and interpretation of policy in their schools and classrooms. Ball (1994) has argued that what individuals and groups actually do in response to policy can be interpreted as policy. That is, policy is evident through individuals' actions, words, and deeds; policy is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Through their role in the implementation of the Reading First grant and their perceptions of the coach's role centered on fidelity, the teachers and administrators in this study were and are policy makers in today's NCLB

movement, which has developed out of national policy making and the political discourse on the teaching of reading.

While there are many definitions of politics, it is the activity through which people make, preserve, and amend the general rules under which they live. Through this activity, human beings attempt to improve their lives and create a good society. Politics is essentially a social activity that involves diversity, conflict, and cooperation, and usually debate and disagreement. But Easton (1979, 1981), Kogan (1975), and Ball (1990) have all defined politics as the “authoritative allocation of values”. Kogan referred to policies as “statements of prescriptive intent”. The term politics refers to the various processes through which the government responds to pressures from the larger society, particularly by allocating benefits, rewards, and penalties. Authoritative values are those most widely accepted by society. Politics, therefore, is associated with policy, or in other words, with the establishing of a plan of action for the community. Ball’s theoretical approaches have drawn heavily on the work of Michel Foucault. Ball (1990a) has identified key “Foucauldian” concepts as applicable to education. Discourse is central.

Discourse is about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations. Discourse is practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... In so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationship to other discourses. (Ball, 1990a, p. 2)

Reading First has brought an authoritative allocation of values through its mandates of the use of scripted lessons and mandatory assessments based on the NRP findings. The values most evident in the legislated policies on the teaching of reading, at least in the context in which I studied them, include fidelity to the grant mandates and

scripted reading programs. Its power is also evident in certain publisher-created “Reading First templates,” which are distributed inequitably to school districts for ease in filling out grant applications. As Ball (1990) points out, any discourse constructs certain possibilities for thought, and by its ordering and combining of words in particular ways, it excludes or displaces other combinations and ideas. A good example is the rhetoric disguised in the term “scientifically based,” which is used to describe the NRP findings and the Reading First-approved curriculum and assessments, and which carries with it the bogus claim that early reading instruction is composed of a three-part hierarchy: decoding, fluency, and comprehension. This rendition of educational research excludes the traditional and widely accepted broader view of reading that includes oral language, literature, and its conventions. As Ball (1990) states, a discourse is constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions—or by what cannot as well as what can be said.

Not surprisingly, the politics of reading educational research mimics the methodology of natural science as seen in the National Reading Panel’s meta-analysis of reading research. The connection between science and politics was the federal government’s attempt to persuade Americans that the NRP findings were impartial and reliable, claiming that they were distinguishing facts (that can be proven) from values (ethical beliefs or opinions), thereby providing objective knowledge for educational policymaking and political decisions in regard to the teaching of reading in this country. On the contrary, however, one of the difficulties with determining what constitutes reading skills and achievement by imitating a natural science methodology is that we cannot get inside a human being or carry out repeatable experiments on thinking subjects. Another difficulty is that models and theories of politics are not value-free. Theories are

constructed on the basis of assumptions about human nature, human society, and most assuredly, the role of the state in its having hidden political and ideological agendas. Moreover, medical research differs from educational research in two important ways: experimental subjects are randomly selected from homogeneous populations, and most treatments are given under a double-blind protocol (in which neither the subject nor the experimenters know who is getting the treatment or the placebo). These conditions are impossible to re-create in educational settings. The NRP panel's adoption of evidence-based methodological standards used in research studies of the efficacy of interventions of psychological and medical research as used in relation to the teaching of reading has reduced reading education to a series of low or non-interacting interventions (Allington, 2002).

Perhaps unbeknownst to the teachers and administrators in this study, their perceptions of the coach's role as primarily one of ensuring fidelity to "scientifically based reading research" and the Reading First grant are acts of constructing policy at the local level. The role performance of the coach is also an act of policy making, but even more so. Policies can become 'regimes of truth' (after Foucault) in which, after a while, sadly, only certain voices (dominant discourse) are heard as authoritative (Ball, 1993b). Interestingly enough, not all schools chose to implement Reading First in the same way that my district did. Because of this, there were different Reading First policies at the local level, with different possibilities for teachers, children, and schools (Edmondson & Shannon, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

Although there were two half-time reading coaches in our district for Reading First, this dissertation study examined only my role as one of the coaches during the first year of the program's grant implementation in 2003-2004. During that year, I documented the time I spent in various coaching roles, and using in-depth interviews, I examined the perceptions of district administrators and teachers who participated in program as to how they viewed my role as the Reading First coach. I felt that it was vital to explore these individuals' perceptions since the roles of the reading coach in each district were largely defined by the way the administrators interpreted them. Additionally, how the classroom teachers perceived the role of the reading coach was important in regard to barriers to, or driving forces for, school reform, as well as for improving students' reading and academic achievement generally.

The interviews allowed me to analyze the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers and district administrators with respect to the Reading First policy implementation in our schools. My daily written log enabled me to compare the time I spent in certain roles and activities as a reading coach, with the interviewees' perceptions of my roles.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions in the study:

1. What were the perceptions of the district's teachers concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach?
2. What were the perceptions of the district's administrators concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach?

3. Were there differences in the ways the district's teachers and administrators perceived the role of the reading coach?
4. Which roles of the teachers did the reading coach take responsibility for?
5. Which roles of the administration did the reading coach take responsibility for?
6. What professional development opportunities did the reading coach provide to the Reading First teachers?
7. How much time did the reading coach spend in each of the coaching roles?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could be used to identify the issues of concern related to the role of the Reading First reading coach in this school district and to suggest ways to modify, if not improve it.

Reading First has mandated that districts with low-performing schools adopt coaching as a vehicle for professional development for teachers. But school districts have hired coaches to fulfill the grant requirements without considering the complexities of the coaching model. All professional development models have their strengths and weaknesses, and the coaching model is no exception. Because coaches occupy a position somewhere between a teaching colleague and an administrator, the boundaries of their roles are ill defined. This study examines the perceptions of administrators and teachers whose expectations often formulate the role of the reading coach.

This study identifies one reading coach's responsibilities during the first year of the Reading First grant implementation in a school district in Pennsylvania. Potentially,

similar studies could help other school districts better integrate the coaching model into their existing structures. The ambiguity of the coaching role and the uncertainty of what the coach's relationship should be to teachers, the principal, and the leadership team can also impinge on the reading coach's effectiveness.

An examination of the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the role, or specific roles, of the coach could help school districts make informed decisions about how to incorporate the use of reading coaches into their school improvement plans.

With the inception of NCLB in 2002, the reading coach has become a key person in each school district's implementation of the Reading First Program. The reading coach can therefore play a significant role in providing professional development to teachers in order to help them change and improve their teaching practices in order to bring about the desired achievement of their students in reading. Understanding the overall role of the reading coach could be a significant part of meeting the Reading First assessments that will determine if students have indeed learned to read, which will lead to their academic improvement in all areas.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review begins with a brief history of traditional staff development models for educators, identifying reasons for the failure of these models to bring about change in our educational system. I discuss modifications that are required in staff development to bring about long-term substantive change. Among these are methods to ensure transfer of learning for teachers as part of their staff development. Thus, I summarize the principles that are important when considering this transfer of learning. These principles include follow-up in the classroom, which a coach can provide to teachers to help them develop their teaching practices or methods. For the purposes of this study, staff development is referred to as professional development, although the two terms are interchangeable. Professional development was an important component of the Reading First Program implemented in our school district beginning in 2003. The reading coach was responsible for the professional development that would both ground the teachers in the Reading First Program materials and assessments and give them better instructional tools with which to teach children to read.

Because coaching is the centerpiece of this study, I review the research literature that supports coaching as a vehicle for professional development, along with information on training centers available to support school districts interested in implementing coaching as a model of professional development. This literature review also emphasizes peer coaching—the kind that is used in this study, including its definition, purpose, and characteristics. I present research studies that support peer coaching and identify other forms of coaching.

Finally, as background for my examination of the administrators and teachers' perceptions of the role of the reading coach in the implementation of Reading First in my school district, I provide an overview of this program that was established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Staff Development for Educators

During the latter half of the twentieth century, many and various changes took place in education. From the late 1950's through the early 1970's, curricular and organizational changes occurred, including such innovations as team teaching, alternative curricula (e.g., new science and math approaches), and open classrooms (Joyce, 1996). However, by the end of the 1970's, it was apparent that these changes—even those that were well executed—had eroded (Goodlad & Klein, 1970; Milbrey & McLaughlin, 1978; Weiss, 1978). In the 1970's, the fact that the school organization did not support the implementation of teacher in-service trainings was accepted as a matter of course. In the 1980's, it was believed that changes in the school organization and in training design could solve implementation problems (Joyce). However, neither of these approaches provided what was necessary for effective staff development.

Although it is well recognized that change of any kind in education is often difficult and involves the restructuring of rules, roles, and relationships, teachers like other professionals require high quality, ongoing professional development to remain effective (Cooter, 2003). Given the history of educational innovations and the disappointing role that in-service has played in implementing change, it is important to

evaluate current methods of professional development to determine the reasons for this ineffectiveness and to avoid these pitfalls.

As defined by Joyce (1986), professional staff development is a “broad endeavor aimed at generating a rich environment, in which every educator becomes a student of education and works continuously to improve his or her skills” (p. 79). Traditionally, professional development for teachers has been provided through in-service training held prior to the start of the academic school year and/or during scheduled in-service days throughout the year that teachers are contractually mandated to attend. Administrators typically hire a consultant to present educational techniques or strategies supposedly needed by teachers to improve their classroom instruction. Unfortunately, teachers are rarely asked for input relative to their instructional needs, yet are responsible for implementing the information presented, after their initial exposure to it at in-service training. The professional development agenda rarely incorporates the teachers’ agenda. Consultants come and go, but there is no support system to facilitate teachers with turning theory into practice (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996).

Thus, Fullan (1982) identified the following reasons for the failure of traditional methods of staff development to bring about desired classroom changes:

1. *The prevalence of one-shot workshops.* Teachers are often not included in the selection of topics presented. Presentations are generally sit-and-get sessions with teacher attendance mandatory, but with no follow-up provisions.

2. *Failure to provide follow-up for individual teachers.* There is no ongoing support for teachers who are implementing new strategies in the classroom.
3. *In-service programs rarely address individual needs and concerns.*
Because most in-service addresses macro rather than individually specific challenges, teacher issues may never be addressed at a particular workshop (Hall & Loucks, 1977).
4. *Failure to provide support at the school level for the new skill.* Oftentimes available resources for helping teachers deal with the challenges of implementing new strategies are non-existent.

Teacher criticism concerning in-service education was that most of it is “too theoretical.” Incomplete presentations of theory provided no basis for teacher action (Joyce & Showers, 1981). For instance, Downey (1975) reported a low degree of implementation of a well-conceived and rationalized social studies curriculum in the province of Alberta, Canada, because the in-service work was essentially a “theory-only” treatment, that is, the theory was discussed and materials distributed, leaving teachers to implement the curriculum on their own. Practice, feedback, and coaching were virtually absent in this situation. Similarly, Joyce (1983) found that in-service training with presentation alone guarantees that only 5 to 10% of the teachers will apply the newly learned skills in their classroom. But, in order to transfer new skills into their teaching styles, teachers need companionship, support, and instruction, which on-site coaching can provide, thus fostering change. On the other hand, Joyce found that presentation of

content, followed by demonstration, practice, and individual coaching, resulted in a 90% application of new skills.

Changing Professional Development

A review of the literature supports the belief that emphasis should shift from the haphazard and theoretical in-service teacher training programs, generally used by school districts, to a comprehensive professional development program with a lifelong, constructivist approach for meeting teachers' real needs, as well as administrative goals. Such a unified vision and commitment are the necessary components for creating long-term, effective educational change. Teachers and administrators must share this vision, one in which teachers have a vested interest. Teachers must be willing agents of change (Jones, 1993). The following six axioms, presented by Darling-Hammond (1999), are associated with the kind of professional development that results in long-term substantive changes:

1. Professional development that results in improved practice should be generated on an individual school basis (Goodlad, 1984; Wood, 1989).
2. A school culture supportive of improved practice and professional growth is basic to successful professional development (Caldwell, 1989; Crandall, 1983).
3. Long-term change in educational practice takes considerable time and is the result of long-term professional development (Deal & Kennedy, 1984; Saphier & King, 1985; Sizer, 1984).

4. Teacher ownership is critical to maintenance of the reform momentum (Merenbloom, 1984; Sly, 1992; Wood, 1989).
5. Professional development that does not improve student outcomes is not important (Caldwell, 1989; Merenbloom, 1984; Sly, 1992).
6. Professional development should be designed in such a way that the outcomes of the program can be clearly stated and measured to give direction to improvement efforts (Sparks, 1992).

Henderson (1993), in her evaluation of professional development with staff who work with children in mental health facilities, concluded that the lecture format of instruction has contributed to lack of teacher effectiveness. She reported that individualized instruction and the modeling of appropriate techniques might be more appropriate ways for changing staff knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Most in-service training sessions do not provide adequate opportunities for practice that would ensure initial learning. Fullan (1991) warned that traditional one-shot attempts at professional development, with no follow-up, do not provide support for professional growth. Fullan contends, “One of the great problems in educational reform is that there is too much well-intentioned ‘ad hocism’—the use of single, segmented solutions unconnected or unintegrated with systemic realities” (p. 84).

Weikart (1978) suggested a *less-is-more* training approach whereby different perspectives are gradually integrated over time. He suggested that an appropriate environment for staff development would include consideration of proximity. Weikart (1978) found that on-site learning opportunities for staff made it possible for participants to immediately apply what is learned with a group of familiar children. The focus of

training is to provide opportunities for application of principles on a daily basis. On-site training permits transfer directly to daily practice and elicits questions drawn from personal experiences (Johnson & McCracken, 1994).

Paula Jorde-Bloom and Marilyn Sheerer (1992) indicated that staff development efforts should facilitate interaction between colleagues. Training content should be problem-centered and site-specific and should address real issues and concerns that participants face on a daily basis. Fullan (1991) contended that even if staff development programs are carefully selected, based on positive research findings, and presented in a thoughtful and convincing manner, they are often *not* implemented over the long run.

Heitmuller (1993) maintained that teachers would assume leadership in their development when they were aware of the rationales underlying the use of particular teaching practices. It was also determined that staff development programs with collaborative, teacher-initiated models that support leadership are more successful than other approaches. Staff development requires focused school effort, particularly when initiated to improve the effectiveness of educational leaders who, in turn, can facilitate the development of individual teachers (Heitmuller, 1993). Fullan (1982) proposed the following guidelines for the development of effective professional development programs:

1. Programs should focus on job-related tasks and problems that are specific to the school.
2. Professional development should include the components identified by Joyce and Showers (1982): theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and application with coaching.

3. A series of several follow-through sessions should be provided so that teachers can try strategies with access to the help of others or additional resources.
4. The coordination of a variety of training sessions including training sessions and sharing sessions, teacher-to-teacher interaction, one-to-one assistance, and meetings.

According to Fullan (1982), the greatest problem in professional development is the absence of follow-up after initial training. However, peer coaching, the practice of teachers observing and conferring with each other on the use of new teaching strategies, can provide the essential follow-up that is needed for teacher professional development.

Transfer of Learning and Professional Development

Without follow-up to in-service training or staff development, teachers often do not implement what they have learned. However, trainers often operate as though the achievement of skill mastery is the natural outcome of their in-service training sessions. The assumption that teachers will automatically transfer their learning to new settings is not strongly supported by the research on training, however (Joyce & Showers, 1981).

In the literature of psychology, transfer usually refers to “the influence of prior learning upon later learning” (Klausmeier & Davis, 1969, p. 1483). They also made a distinction between lateral and vertical transfer. Transfer is lateral when a person generalizes learning to a new task of the same complexity. Vertical or cumulative transfer is the condition in which “knowledge and abilities acquired in performing one task facilitate the learning of higher-order tasks” (Klausmeier & Davis, p. 1483). A primary

goal of teacher education is the positive, cumulative transfer of skills, learned in training sessions and then applied in the classroom. The study of learning transfer has typically followed a research paradigm in which an experimental group receives training, then both the experimental and the control groups are tested on a transfer task that is dissimilar in some way to the training task (Johnson & Sloat, 1980; Moore & Schaut, 1979; Perkins & Atkinson, 1973). An examination of the studies by Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein (1971), Crowther (1972), Downey (1975), Lukas and Wohlleb (1973), Nauman-Etienne (1974), and Fullan and Pomfret (1977) suggest that the less explicit the characteristics and rationale of the innovation, the more likely there will be user confusion and frustration and therefore a low degree of implementation.

Joyce and Showers (1980) indicated that two purposes of in-service programs are (a) to encouraging teachers to “fine tune” existing skills and (b) to learn new skills. Since each of these involves a transfer of training, Joyce and Showers (1983) focused attention on two types of transfer: “horizontal . . . in which a skill can be shifted directly from the training situation; and vertical . . . in which the new skill cannot be used to solve problems unless it is adapted to fit the conditions of the workplace” (p. 5). Peer coaching is particularly well suited to facilitating transfer types.

Fine-tuning the *existing* approaches is easier than mastering and implementing new ones because the magnitude of change is smaller and less complex. Whether we teach ourselves, or we learn from a training agent, the outcomes of training can be classified into several levels of impact. Joyce and Showers (1980) developed the following typology of “levels of impact” of training for analyzing studies of training components:

1. Awareness: At this level, the importance of an area is realized and becomes a focus. Teachers begin to think inductively about probable uses and how they fit into the curriculum.
2. Concepts and organized knowledge: Concepts provide intellectual control over relevant content. Essential to inductive teaching is knowledge of inductive processes. In other words how learners at various levels of cognitive development respond to inductive teaching, and knowledge about concept formation.
3. Principles and skills: At this level, the skills of inductive teaching are learned: how to help students collect data, organize it, and build concepts, and test them. Skills for adapting to students, who display varying levels of ability to think inductively, and for teaching students the skills they lack. At this level there is potential for action. There is awareness of the area to be targeted, effective teaching strategies, and possession of the skills to act.
4. Application and problem solving: At this level, concepts, principles, and skills are transferred to the classroom. Teaching strategies that have been learned are used, integrated into the skill repertoire, and combined with other strategies in use.

Only after the application level has been reached can we expect an impact on the education of children. Organized knowledge that is not supported by the acquisition of principles and skills and the ability to use the skills in practice is likely to have little effect (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

After reviewing, research on the transfer of learning, Ellis (1965) summarized these major principles that are significant when we consider the transfer of skills to classroom practice (pp. 72-74):

1. *Overall Task Similarity*: Transfer of training is greatest when the training conditions are highly similar to those of the ultimate testing conditions. Joyce and Showers (1981) would expect from this finding that greater transfer of learning from in-service programs should include opportunities to practice skills in peer teaching, micro-teaching, and simulations, and less transfer for training to include only theory or rationales, presentation of materials, and demonstration or modeling.
2. *Practice and Transfer*: (a) Learning to learn. Cumulative practice of learning a series of related tasks or problems leads to increased facility in learning how to learn. Research conducted by Joyce, Brown, and Peck (1981) found that teachers' ability to acquire models of teaching which are new and who have mastered two or more models have learned even newer ones, with greater ease than the first ones studied. (b) Early task learning. Transfer is maximized if greater effort is spent in mastering the early tasks of a series of tasks. Joyce, Brown, and Peck (1981) supported this principle in teacher training. Findings indicate that prior mastery of "model relevant" skills facilitates the acquisition of specific teaching models. (c) Amount of practice on the original task. The greater the amount of practice on the original task, the greater the likelihood of positive transfer. Joyce and Showers (1981) believed that very few teacher-training programs provide the amount of practice necessary to apply new skills in the classroom.

3. *Task or Stimulus Variety*: Variety of tasks or of stimulus components, during original learning, increases the amount of positive transfer obtained. Joyce and Showers (1981) believed that implementers need many opportunities to use and apply new behaviors. They suggested numerous demonstrations of new strategies for different subject areas and grade levels.
4. *Understanding and Transfer*: Transfer is greater if the learner understands the general rules or principles that are appropriate for solving new problems. The curriculum literature also provided support for the provision of materials, coaching, and psychological support from consultants as important contributors to implementation (Joyce & Showers, 1981). The analysis of curriculum implementation literature recommends that demonstration lessons be provided, opportunities to learn skills be included, and coaching for skill development and psychological support be provided. The recent National Science Foundation studies affirmed the need for consultants who can provide coaching during the implementation period (Joyce & Showers).

Lukas and Wohlleb (1973), in the implementation of a planned variation of Head Start, found evidence of a high degree of implementation in many sites where the developers worked directly with staff, explaining the rationale, providing materials, demonstrating, and providing coaching and moral support. Similarly, evaluation of the Humanities Curriculum Project in England (Hamingston, 1973; McDonald & Walker, 1974) compared implementation in two sample schools. One school received training that was substantial and included many elements of training identified in the training literature, the other received no direct training. In the first sample there was not only

greater implementation, but the implementation resulted in pupil learning changes (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

Between 1968 and 1983, a series of investigators examined teachers' abilities to acquire the skills necessary to enable them to use a wide array of teaching strategies (Joyce, Brown, & Peck, 1981; Joyce & Showers, 1981). Teachers could acquire skills by studying the theories, seeing the theories demonstrated 15 to 20 times, and practicing them at least a dozen times, with carefully articulated feedback. Only 5 to 10% of the teachers who had learned new teaching strategies were able to implement these practices in the classroom. Most teachers require about 20 to 30 trials with a new method or strategy in order for successful transfer to occur (Joyce & Showers, 1983; Showers, 1985). However, the transfer process is facilitated when peer coaching relationships develop and peers help each other make refinements to the new strategy until it becomes part of the teacher's repertoire.

Joyce and Showers (1980) analyzed more than 200 studies in which researchers investigated the effectiveness of various kinds of training methods. These studies addressed the issue of whether skills were acquired and demonstrated after training. The question of transfer at the classroom level was addressed in relatively few studies. The studies were analyzed regarding expected levels of impact from the various training strategies. While no single study used all training components and measured effects at all levels of impact, the literature provided information on many of the possible combinations. Simulated practice was examined for its impact on skills development (Cruickshank, 1968; Vlcek, 1966). Structured feedback has been compared to open-ended feedback and self-observation (Tuckman, McCall & Hyman 1969). Studies

combining modeling, practice, and feedback (Orme, 1966); presentation, practice, and feedback (Edwards, 1975); presentation, modeling, practice, and feedback (Borg, 1975), and presentation, modeling, and feedback (Friebel & Kallenbach, 1969) have been heavily investigated with respect to skill acquisition and transfer (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

Although few studies have focused on coaching alone, several studies included lengthy follow-up feedback after initial training that seemed to result in greater transfer at the classroom level. Feldon and Duncan (1978) demonstrated the power of observation, feedback, and goal-setting to boost the effects of training, and Borg, Langer, and Kelley (1971) found permanence of fine-tuning skills after an initial training that included presentation, modeling, practice, and feedback (Joyce & Showers, 1980). Koran, Snow, and McDonald (1971) demonstrated the efficacy of modeling for redirecting teacher behavior, and Good and Brophy (1974) illustrated the effectiveness of feedback in a four-month classroom observation. The results of these studies were extremely consistent. Teachers learned the knowledge and concepts that they were taught and applied these skills in the classroom if provided opportunities for any combination of modeling, practice, or feedback.

According to Showers (1985), coaching appeared to contribute to transfer of training in five ways. Generally teachers who were coached,

1. Practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill in the actual moves of a new teaching strategy than do teachers who have not been coached, yet have experienced identical initial training.

2. Use the new strategies more appropriately in terms of their own instructional objectives and theories of specific models of teaching (Showers, 1982, 1984).
3. Exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge about and skill with strategies in which they have been coached and, as a group, increase the appropriateness and use of new teaching models over time (Baker, 1983).
4. Are much more likely than uncoached teachers to teach the new strategy to their students, ensuring that students understand the purpose of the strategy and the behaviors expected of them when using the strategy (Showers, 1984).
5. Exhibit clearer cognitions with regard to the purposes and uses of the new strategies, as revealed through interviews, lesson plans, and classroom performance than do uncoached teachers (Showers 1982, 1984).

Models of Professional Development

What is clearly needed is a different way of accomplishing professional development so that teachers are not passive recipients of information but rather an integral part of their own change process. The School Innovation Through Teacher Interaction (SITTI) is one such program designed to specifically empower teachers to be involved in identifying and creating needed changes (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1995). The SITTI model envisions professional development for the teacher, of the teacher, and by the teacher. This model begins with a common vision, identifies the needs of the faculty, and targets experts among the faculty who will support change efforts through peer coaching and monitoring of the achievement levels of students (Pierce & Hunsaker,

1996). There are six axioms in this model, which can result in long-term, substantive change (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996): (See Appendix A)

1. Professional development that results in improved practice should be generated on an individual school basis (Goodlad, 1984; Wood, 1989).
2. A school culture supportive of improved practice and professional growth is basic to successful professional development (Caldwell, 1989; Crandall, 1983).
3. Long-term change in educational practice takes considerable time and is the result of long-term professional development (Deal & Kennedy, 1984; Saphier & King, 1985; Sizer, 1984).
4. Teacher ownership is critical to maintenance of the reform momentum (Merenbloom, 1984; Sly, 1992; Wood, 1989).
5. Professional development that does not improve student outcomes is not important (Caldwell, 1989; Merenbloom 1984; Sly, 1992).
6. Professional development should be designed in such a way that the outcomes of the program can be clearly stated and measured to give direction to improvement efforts (Sparks, 1992).

The *first step* of the SITTI model is agreement on what the faculty wants the school to look like, i.e., “the vision.” This step should describe the mission of the school. It is not important that everyone agree exactly, but it is important that the majority are willing to support the vision. The vision is related to student outcomes. The *next step* in the model is a needs assessment among faculty and administration. This procedure should identify what the teachers and administrators believe is necessary to develop the school’s

vision. Elements identified are prioritized. *Step three* has two components. One component concern is deciding who will serve as the experts for the school. The second is choosing the members of the team who will train the faculty in peer coaching. The expert teams will work best with two to five members. Teachers should be allowed to choose the area in which they want to work rather than be assigned to a team. Those who participate as peer coaches should be compensated for their time and efforts from the normal professional development allocation each school receives. During *step four*, the expert team will develop a module that contains the information base and skill development needed for the change. Each module should be based on current research and include implementation strategies for teachers to use in their classrooms (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996).

While the first expert team is developing the module, the teachers who have decided to work on a peer coaching training team are developing the training protocols for peer coaching. Peer coaching is an integral part of the SITTI model. Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) outline the steps in the peer coaching component of the SITTI model:

1. Training n observational and feedback skills
2. Building of team cohesiveness
3. Developing action plans for each team member
4. Establishing a peer observation cycle
5. Providing formative feedback after each observation
6. Evaluation of personal performance against previously set goals

All of the teachers in the school are assigned to peer coaching teams containing three or four members. Everyone on the team is observed by a teammate at least three

times a year. Each teacher develops an action plan containing his or her own personal goals as they relate to the development of new skills and strategies (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996).

Many benefits are derived from using peer coaching as a support system: increasing collegiality, enhancing the teachers' understanding of concepts and strategies, and sustaining the restructuring effort by strengthening ownership in the change (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996). Non-evaluative peer coaching encourages the school to make innovations by providing opportunities for teachers to take risks and to explore new strategies in a safe environment.

The last step in the SITTI cycle is to measure student outcomes in line with the school vision to determine if the goals have been accomplished. The cycle then begins again.

Cooter (2003) presented a capacity building model (See Appendix B) for teacher development that reflects the fundamental stages of learning that are drawn from the work of Vygotsky (1962) and Bloom (1976). This model has specifically proven to be successful in reading instruction. (See Appendix B).

One of the key factors of this capacity-building model is that learning is distributed over time. New learning developed over time combines practice and coaching as one of the most effective staff development tools.

The first level, *first exposure*, indicates that while first exposure training is critical, it is never sufficient. In-service workshops do little more than create an awareness level about a topic. The next level of teacher capacity-building is *deep learning with limited capacity*. This level involves the study of the teaching strategy

beyond the awareness level in combination with classroom application. At this level teachers deepen their understanding about a strategy but have only begun implementing it with students.

Practice with coaching is the essential next step in teacher capacity-building. This level requires extensive classroom practice over time, with guidance from an expert coach. Coaching sessions involve conversation with teachers concerning quality of implementation and problem solving. Coaches typically model a new strategy in the teacher's classroom. Coaches then observe novice teachers trying out the strategy with the children, with a follow-up coaching session. This stage is powerful and ensures implementation of new strategies because the novice teacher knows that the coach will visit the classroom and will expect to see new strategies demonstrated (Southeast Center, 2002).

The remaining two stages deepen teacher capacity. *Refined and expanded capacity* occurs as the teacher fully understands most elements of new teaching methods and regularly uses them as part of regular instruction. Strategies begin to feel natural and student performance can improve dramatically (Cooter, 2003).

Expertise and ability to coach others is the achievement of the relative mastery of the new teaching method. The term "relative mastery" was used by Vygotsky (1962), who believed that with any complicated task, all individuals are continually at some stage of learning; and that individuals reside in what Vygotsky calls the zone of proximal development (Cooter, 2003).

Cooter (2003) recommended the capacity-building model for districts having extreme difficulties with literacy education. This two-stage model has proven to be

effective in a Dallas, Texas, school district. Most importantly, student reading achievement levels improved significantly on all measures (Denson, 2003). Teacher capacity-building has been found to be the most productive investment for schools and far exceeds the effects of teacher experience or class size (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996).

Coaching as a Vehicle for Staff Development

Vander Ven (1984), in her extensive research on staff development, believed that professional development programs should facilitate constructivism and the articulation of theory into practice. Vander Ven proposed the idea of the practitioner scientist who reviews job tasks, conceptualizes theories, tests theories, and applies them. Staff must be able to apply what they have learned.

Vander Ven (1984) identified the following variables that enhance and support the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice:

1. The overall culture of the professional development setting supports new learning and application to practice.
2. The activities address the participants' values about learning and various practices
3. Faculty shows a personal interest in the learners as appropriate to the situation.
4. Appropriate practice is positively demonstrated.
5. Concurrent (accompanying cognitive content) and amassed (following formal classroom instruction) fieldwork are both included.

6. A person is experienced in the same field supervises practice.
7. Skills are practiced (with supervision) to the point of over training.
8. Participants are encouraged to consider applications of skills in different contexts and to anticipate both barriers and supports to applications.
9. Participants are involved, as appropriate, in selecting content and teaching strategies.
10. Teaching strategies relate to learning preferences and styles.
11. Cooperative, collaborative, and peer teaching methods are included in the instructional methods.
12. Teaching methods closely approximate the application and include guided imagery, case studies, and simulation.
13. Follow-up and maintenance activities (peer coaching, mentoring, regular feedback) occur over an extended time period. (Vander Ven, 1993, pp. 265-266)

The variables examined by Vander Ven (1984) are roles that would be facilitated by a peer coach. Vander Ven suggested that skills are practiced and supervised by a person experienced in the same field. She also specifically referred to cooperative, collaborative, peer teaching methods as the instructional methods.

In a study conducted in 1987, the Stoles County School System explored the relationship between coaching and teachers' strategy use. Teachers received training in the use of mathematics manipulatives. After the initial training, teachers were randomly selected to participate in a peer coaching project. The peer coaching model implemented included the components used by Joyce and Showers (1988). The project was evaluated

by using pre and posttests and questionnaires. The results of pre and posttest reports showed that the coached teachers use of manipulatives showed significant increases in their classroom, compared to the control group, which received no coaching after initial training. Instead the questionnaires showed a decrease from September to May relative to teacher concerns about using new materials.

Downey (1975) reported a low degree of implementation of a social studies curriculum in the province of Alberta, Canada, after in-service. The in-service work was essentially a “theory-only” treatment, that is, the theory was discussed and the materials were distributed in short workshops. Practice, feedback, and coaching were virtually absent.

A review of the literature on staff development and professional development training conducted by Joyce and Showers (1988) and Joyce and Weil (1980) revealed that the training components that were productive for transfer included theory presentation, modeling or demonstration, practice, structured and open-ended feedback, and in-class assistance with transfer. Therefore, consideration must be given not only to how to help teachers acquire and improve their skills but also to how to make these skills a part of their existing repertoire. The following is a breakdown of Joyce, Showers, and Weil’s findings:

1. *Presentation of Theory*: The substance of the theory component is the rationale, theoretical base, and verbal description of an approach to teaching, or a skill or instructional technique. Readings, lectures, films, and discussions are used to describe the approach, its conceptual base and potential uses.

Presentation of theory can raise awareness and increase conceptual control of

an area to some extent for fine tuning or mastery of new approaches. While not effective alone, the presentation of theory combined with the other components is important (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

Joyce and Showers underscore this contention and indicate that understanding a theory behind the teaching approach contributes to the development of skill and ultimately to its use. In both cases, it can be argued that a common sense approach is best; the more thoroughly one understands something; the more likely one is able to learn how it develops a commitment to using it.

2. *Modeling or Demonstration*: Modeling involves enactment of the teaching skill or strategy either through a live demonstration with children or adults, or through television, film or other media. Modeling appears to have a considerable effect on awareness and knowledge. Demonstration also increases the mastery of theory; however, modeling alone for most teachers is unlikely to result in the acquisition and transfer of skills.
3. *Practice Under Simulated Conditions*: Practice involves trying out a new skill or strategy. Simulated conditions are usually achieved by carrying out the practice either with peers or with small groups of children. When awareness and knowledge are achieved, practice is a very efficient way of acquiring skills and strategies, whether fine tuning existing skills or mastering new approaches.
4. *Structured Feedback*: Structured feedback involves learning a system for observing teaching behavior and providing an opportunity to reflect on

teaching by using the system. Feedback can be self administered, provided by observers, or given by peers and coaches. It can be regular or occasional.

Feedback alone does not provide permanent changes, but regular and consistent feedback is probably necessary if people are to make changes in very many areas of behavior and maintain those changes.

5. *Open-Ended Feedback*: Open-ended feedback consists of an informal discussion following observation. Teachers may observe one another informally and engage in general discussion. Modeling followed by practice and feedback can be very powerful in achieving skill development and transfer.
6. *Coaching for Application*: While transfer can be made with a combination of the previous components discussed, it is apparent that for many, direct coaching on how to apply the new skills and models appears to be necessary. Coaching can be provided by peers, supervisors, professors, curriculum consultants, or others familiar with the approaches. Coaching for application can involve helping teachers analyze the content to be taught and the approach to be taken, and making very specific plans to help students adapt to the new teaching approach.

The combination of these components enabled most teachers to effectively learn and implement a new model of teaching. The coaching component of this model was critical to ensure transfer (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Successful transfer as defined by Joyce and Showers is the integration of new skills into the existing repertoire and the

appropriate use of skills. Successful transfer required a period of practice of the new skill in the classroom.

Joyce and Showers (1988) and Joyce and Weil (1980) recommended a coaching environment in which all personnel, including teachers and administrators, see themselves as one another's coaches. The coaching component has three major functions:

1. Provision of companionship.
2. Analysis of application (extending executive control and attaining "deep" meaning).
3. Adaptation to the students.

The first function of coaching is to provide interchange with another individual throughout the change process. This relationship provides for mutual reflection, the sharing of perceptions, frustrations and successes. The companionship that the coaching model brings provides reassurance and enhances the quality of the experience. Analysis of the application is important during the transfer period. Teachers must have considerable time to examine materials, to make plans, and to practice the model for later use. Teachers need to be certain about when to use this model and how to adapt it to meet the needs of the students. The adaptation of a model is difficult and may require a lot of assistance. It is the principal job of the coach to help the teacher feel good about his or her accomplishments (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992).

Defining Coaching

Although the terms “coaching” and “peer coaching” are used interchangeably in the research literature, Ackland (1991) distinguished between the two based on how the coaching is done and by whom. He determined that programs can be divided into two basic forms: (a) *Coaching by Experts*: Specially trained teachers with an acknowledged expertise who observe other teachers to give them support, feedback, and suggestions, and (b) *Reciprocal Coaching*: Teachers observe and coach each other to jointly improve instruction

For the purpose of this study, I used Cafferella’s (1994) and Baker and Showers’ (1984) definitions of coaching and peer coaching to further differentiate the two terms. “Coaching,” as defined by Cafferella (1994), is based on the expert model; a mentor or trained peer develops individualized learning plans, starts self-help or support groups, and offers organizational development intervention. The tasks of the coach are to decide when the transfer of learning should be employed and to determine who needs to take part in the transfer of the learning process, and to choose the transfer strategy that will be the most useful in assisting participants to apply what they have learned.

Many coaching programs are based on the premise that teachers who possess a certain level of expertise can provide assistance to other teachers through coaching. Sometimes veteran teachers serve as mentors to coach novice teachers (Moffett, St. John, & Isken, 1987). At other times, key teachers are encouraged to attend workshops focusing on the development of effective coaching methods or on specific instructional techniques. These trained teachers then return to their school to share their expertise.

Joyce and Showers (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983) were the first to focus on coaching as an aspect of staff development. They suggest that traditional methods of improving teacher instruction, such as classroom supervision and teacher in-service, are not necessarily effective for bringing about permanent change in teacher instruction, because they do not provide regular feedback. Joyce and Showers (1981) identified the major problem in teacher training designs as the assumption that a skill, once learned, can be automatically transferred. Research on teacher training (Joyce & Showers, 1983), curriculum implementation (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977), and curriculum reform (Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1978; Weiss, 1978) agreed that the transfer of skills and strategies foreign to the teacher's existing repertoire requires more substantial training than that typically allotted to such enterprises. While Servatius and Young (1985) believed that typical training programs neglected the coaching component because it was perceived as logistically impractical, expensive, or threatening to the participant. However, Joyce and Showers' research (1981) on coaching supported the notion that with on-going collegial support, teachers' ability to transfer new skills into the classroom would increase.

Joyce and Showers (1982) defined coaching as an in-class follow-up by a supportive advisor who helps teachers correctly apply skills learned in training. Coaching differs from training for skill acquisition on several dimensions. Practice and feedback are important to emphasize fidelity to a skill or model and to stress the appropriateness of specific strategies to certain goals. Together the teacher and coach examine appropriate places in the curriculum for the use of specific strategies, evaluate the effectiveness of observed lessons, and plan for future trials. The purpose of this instruction is to ensure vertical transfer.

After Joyce and Showers (1980) identified “coaching for application” as one of the five major components of staff development programs, they determined that coaching is characterized by an observation and feedback cycle in an ongoing instructional or clinical situation. “Coaching usually involves a collegial approach to the analysis of teaching for the purpose of integrating mastered skills and strategies into: (a) a curriculum, (b) a set of instructional goals, (c) a time span, and (d) a personal teaching style” (Joyce & Showers, 1981, p. 170).

According to Joyce and Showers (1995), coaching has several purposes. The first is to “build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft” (p. 43). Second, coaching develops the shared language and the set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills. Third, coaching provides a structure for the follow-up to training that is essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies.

The process of coaching involves five major functions (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992):

1. *Provision of Companionship*: Coaching’s first function is to provide interchange over a difficult process. This interchange provides for the possibility of mutual reflection, and a sharing of perceptions, frustrations and successes. The companionship increases the quality of the experience by making it a shared one. Companionship provides reassurance and helps persons overcome the tendency to avoid the practice. Practice must begin right after training.

2. *Giving of Technical Feedback:* As team members practice new models of teaching, they learn to provide feedback to one another. This type of feedback helps teachers polish the skill and work through the problem areas. Technical feedback should not be confused with general evaluation. Feedback implies no judgment about the overall quality of teaching but is confined to information about the execution of model-relevant skills. Feedback must be accurate, specific, and non-evaluative. Ackland (1991), in his review of coaching programs during the 1980s, found that every program examined was non-evaluative, based on classroom observation followed by feedback, and intended to improve instructional techniques.
3. *Analysis of Application: Extending Executive Control:* In the transfer period it is important to figure out when to use a new model and what will be achieved by doing so. During training, coaching teams need to spend a considerable amount of time examining curriculum materials, and planning and practicing the application of the model. Attention is then focused on the appropriate use of the strategy with students in the classroom.
4. *Adaptation to the Students:* Successful teaching requires successful student responses. Students and teachers need to become familiar with the new skill and become aware of what is expected. The model also needs to be adapted to fit the particular needs of the students. One of the functions of the coach, during this process, is to read the responses of the students and make decisions about skill implementation.

5. *Personal Facilitation*: The successful use of a new teaching method takes practice. A major job of the coach is to support team members and celebrate their accomplishments.

Garmston (1990) asserted that coaching should take on a supervisory rather than an evaluative role. Garmston distinguished between these two roles by determining who makes the judgments of degrees of success. "In evaluation, the administrator determines the quality of the instruction and gives advice. The evaluation of teachers typically implies judgment about the facilitation of teacher reflection, self evaluation and self-prescription, adequacy of the person, whereas coaching implies assistance in a learning process" (Garmston, 1990, p.14). Garmston noted that evaluation is done primarily for quality control. In supervision, the administrator's job is to facilitate teacher reflection, self-evaluation, and self-prescription (Garmston). In coaching, it is important to create a climate conducive to learning. The elimination of evaluation and power allows for a safe environment and a climate that is conducive to learning. A change in policy is necessary because most districts emphasize teacher evaluation, not coaching. Garmston believed that this flies in the face of appropriate practice and ignores the research that supports this methodology.

Coaching Training Centers

Regional training centers are available to support school districts with professional staff development. Many centers such as the Educational Development Center (EDC) in Santa Clara County, California, can provide coaching to experienced teachers. EDC provides coaching to experienced teachers who have completed one of the

EDC training programs designed to strengthen current skills and add one or two new skills for each participant. The local teachers association as well as the school district's administration support the project and encourage teacher participation. The program's first year evaluation was extremely positive from both advisees and advisors. EDC attributes the overwhelming success of this program to the element of coaching, and concludes that it will not offer future trainings without the coaching component. EDC is convinced that coaching has the power to effect change (Servatius & Young, 1985).

The Reading Success Network (RSN), funded by the U.S. Department of Education since 1998, has set up comprehensive centers across the country to help strengthen K-3 reading programs by providing teachers with ongoing professional development in early literacy. One key component to this instructional model is coaching. RSN works with experienced reading teachers helping them become peer reading coaches. The coach initially sets up voluntary study groups and organizes meetings and facilitates discussions. As a result of the collaborative study, the teacher invites the coach into the classroom to model and observe teaching (Powers, 2000).

Powers (2000) reported on the Reading III Comprehensive Center Reading Success Network (RSN) training and implementation in three schools districts. The three schools used RSN training to support pre-existing literacy and school improvement initiatives. Teams of teachers attended the RSN training to learn how to use the framework for meetings. Coaches were trained and given a stipend for leading meetings, providing training in the use of assessments and instructional strategies, modeling, and acting as teacher resources. Teachers were encouraged in their districts to voluntarily participate in RSN study groups held before or after school, once or twice a month. Some

incentives were given to the teachers for participation, including books and release time to do cross-grade classroom observations. Topics of discussion included the use of assessment tools, analyzing results of assessments, and ways to modify instruction.

Based on information gathered through site visits, conversations with participants, and the district's evaluation of RSN, there were a number of positive outcomes. It was reported that there were changes in the instructional behavior of individual teachers. Teachers felt that their participation in RSN increased their sense of collegiality, increased their sharing of ideas and information, and increased their knowledge of assessment measures. They also reported an improved understanding of the continuum of literacy instruction from kindergarten through third grade. Teachers and coaches reported a need for more meeting time. Teachers also expressed a need for increased time to plan for modifications in instruction and additional time in the instructional day to teach modified lessons. Coaches identified a need for more direction and support in planning meetings and providing assistance to classroom teachers (Powers, 2000).

A study of RSN by researchers at the University of Oklahoma showed that students in RSN had more reading gains in the key reading areas than students in comparison sites (Powers, 2000). One school reported a 23% to 41% increase in the number of students reading on or above grade level as measured by the state standardized test. In a regional evaluation, 36% of the second graders entered on or above grade level and by the end of the year, this percentage had risen to 77% (Powers).

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) is a foundation-funded, non-profit organization that provides grants and professional development support to schools in the Bay Area. The BASRC report (Symonds, n.d.), *Literacy Coaching: How*

School Districts Can Support a Long-Term Strategy in a Short-Term World, focuses on coaching as a strategy for professional development. Three districts profiled (of the 18 that implemented district-supported literacy coaching) were selected for a study based on implementing coaching initiatives at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The study collected data from observations, interviews, and/or focus groups with teachers, literacy coaches, principals, and district administrators. Data were collected over the course of one school year. The research report indicated that there was growth in the collaborative teacher culture. Teachers working with coaches showed an increased willingness and ability to collaborate and implement new instructional strategies. Additional benefits included the teachers' increased receptivity to change, increased focus on equity, improved communication between teachers and district leaders, and increased leadership capacity. These elements are the leading indicators of change in teacher capacity relating to the goal of raising student achievement (Symonds, n.d.).

The BASRC report recommends that state and district funds support the professional development efforts required to improve schools. The state needs to invest in innovative school-based professional development such as coaching, collaborative time, and mentoring rather than more traditional forms of professional development such as workshops and conferences. The BASRC calls on the state to revise current rules to ensure that professional development funding can be used for effective, long-term improvement strategies such as literacy coaching (Symonds, n.d.).

Powers (2000) recommended numerous strategies that districts can use for coaching:

1. *Prioritize and Align Funding*: In the absence of explicit state funding for literacy coaches, districts must take the initiative to make coaching a priority over other strategies and align all possible sources of funding accordingly.
2. *Develop a Clear Job Definition*: The role of the literacy coach is a new one for many. Districts must define the job components and communicate the job description clearly.
3. *Communicate Why*: The district must have a cogent understanding of the rationale behind literacy coaching (i.e., how coaches are linked to the district's overall improvement plan and how they contribute to the district's goal of improving instruction) and ensure that this is effectively communicated to key stakeholders such as teacher and principals.
4. *Structure Coordination with Principals*: The district needs to provide time and incentives for principals and literacy coaches to communicate to enable the development of a mutual understanding of how coaching meets site-based needs.
5. *Focus on Literacy Coaching in the Strategic Plan*: Literacy coaching must be a central strategy in the strategic plan, well integrated into a comprehensive district-wide, research-based literacy program.
6. *Provide Professional Development for Coaches on Research-Based Strategies*: Districts must provide coaches with continual professional

development on a core set of research-based literacy strategies. Structured time to meet with other coaches to build professional skills and community must also be provided.

7. *Structure Collaboration Time During the School Day:* Districts must structure time during the school day for coaches to discuss instructional practice with individual teachers or grade-level teams.
8. *Keep Coaches Closely Connected to the Classroom:* Districts should keep coaches closely connected to the classroom by requiring turnover and limiting the number of years a teacher can serve as a literacy coach.
9. *Continually Assess and Communicate Effectiveness:* Districts must continually assess effectiveness both to identify successes that can be shared with stakeholders and to identify challenges that can then be quickly addressed.

In 2002, Arkansas received Reading First funds to implement the No Child Left Behind Act. The Arkansas Model, a partnership between the University of Arkansas, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Arkansas elementary schools is a comprehensive model for school-wide improvements in literacy. A component of this model was to fund and train school-based literacy coaches to work in schools with high poverty rates. School-based literacy coaches received specialized training and worked in an apprenticeship relationship with classroom teachers, implementing changes in literacy assessment and instruction. Literacy coaches conducted on-site professional development and demonstrated research-based practices and techniques in the classroom.

Data on student progress in these model sites were collected and analyzed. The findings illustrated a significant gain in each proficiency level with a dramatic decrease in the number of students falling below the standard. The data show that after implementation, 100% of all students from high poverty schools scored above the national average on the end-of-the-year standardized tests. This model has spread to Utah, Texas, Michigan, and Missouri (Arkansas Comprehensive School Reform Model, 2002).

Studies on Coaching

Methods for facilitating powerful changes in classroom practice are few. One-time workshops presentations are not generally effective for creating the changes that result in student success. Coaching and mentoring initiatives, however, employ site-specific strategies that yield highly productive professional development outcomes.

Race (2000) in her study of 265 elementary school teachers in the Chicago public school system, examined the impact of professional development programs, including the effects that classroom coaching and mentoring had on the use of best practices in the classroom. The program was implemented in high-risk schools, where the proportion of students who were not meeting the grade-level standards in math and science was high. A two-year intensive professional development program was designed to provide 60 hours per year, of professional development based on state mathematics and science standards. In addition to the professional development sessions, at least 15 contacts were made per year, which involved coaching and reflective instructional support. The goal of the program was to facilitate transfer of professional development content into classroom

instruction to improve student achievement levels. Teachers implementing new instructional methods were supported in their classrooms by the coach. The coach modeled, co-taught, and observed lessons. These practices were then followed up by a teacher-coach conference. Through the course of the project, the support moved from a high level of intervention (modeling, co-teaching) to less involvement (observation only). This approach allowed for the transfer from program instruction to classroom teaching (Race).

Using the qualitative data obtained from over 1,700 standardized, descriptive implementation logs in this study, Race looked at changes in the instructional sessions conducted over time. Her findings suggested that there was frequent use of specific best practices and instructional strategies in the classroom by participating teachers through the implementation phase. The standardized logs and the protocol support the feasibility of these methods (Race 2000).

The Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project funded veteran teachers to work as literacy coaches. Through journal entries these coaches reflected on their experiences. The teachers' journal excerpts described the coaching model they used, the challenges they faced, and the lessons they learned.

These coaches worked primarily with teachers rather than with students, since the grant emphasized teacher practice. The coaches worked both one-on-one and with groups of teachers in grade-level meetings. They also led inquiry groups that provided opportunities for the teachers to study particular topics. In addition to their daily journaling, the coaches kept records of the time they spent in different instructional roles. The coaches spent most of the first year building trust with the staff and developing

relationships. Teacher colleagues initially did not see coaching as a relationship between themselves as colleagues learning with and from each other. After two years of implementing the coaching model, these coaches believed that they had influenced the teaching practices and student achievement in the district. An analysis of the coaching journals provides positive proof that the funding of literacy coaching is worthwhile (Kiddoo & Lim, n.d.).

In 1987, Superintendent Kenneth Moffett (Lennox School District, California) reported on his school district's staff development program for new teachers, which included individualized coaching (Moffett, 1987). Each beginning teacher was paired with an experienced teacher "coach." The coach visited new teachers at least twice a month. During these visits, the coach observed lessons, demonstrated lessons, or provided constructive feedback and suggestions. In coaching dyads, all efforts are made to keep the coach/teacher relationship confidential. Coaches do not supervise teachers; rather their primary function is to help teachers assimilate and use what they have learned in training sessions.

In this district's coaching program, monthly follow-up sessions provided ongoing support. Coaches also engaged in continuous training to improve their coaching skills. Response to this training has been overwhelming. The teachers perceive their coaches as sympathetic colleagues who are helpful and understanding. Moffett (1987) described his training program as an effective way to help new teachers ease into their professional roles, removing their feelings of isolation while increasing their competence (Moffett).

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is a positive response to some of the problems of traditional in-service offerings. Instead of one-time workshops with no follow-up, peer coaching is a method of improving teacher effectiveness in which teachers voluntarily work with one or more colleagues to achieve specific instructional goals through a process of regular observation and feedback. “Peer coaching” as defined by Baker and Showers (1984) is a collaborative model involving two classroom teachers or “peers.” Two teachers, who have received the same in-service training, develop lessons collaboratively; they observe each other’s teaching and provide helpful evaluation of the lesson (Baker & Showers).

Hall and McKeen (1989) defined peer coaching as a strategy that improves upon teaching skills by enabling teachers to work with one or more colleagues to achieve specific instructional goals through regular observation and feedback. Joyce and Showers (1980, 1982, 1988) and Showers (1985) characterized peer coaching as a community of learners engaged in the study of teaching, a component of training that enhances the transfer of training to the classroom, and a support system that creates and sustains a community of learners. Peer coaching has been shown to facilitate implementation of in-service training content into classroom practice, to promote reflective thinking processes and self-analysis, and to enhance teacher problem solving through teaming (Garmston, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1988).

The Purpose of Peer Coaching

Staff developers must have an understanding of the purpose, characteristics, and applications of peer coaching to appropriately design effective coaching programs.

Peer coaching is viewed as one of the more viable means of bringing changes to the working environments of teachers. According to Hall and McKeen (1989), the purpose of peer coaching is to create conditions that make the school organization more effective in accomplishing tasks and to improve the quality of life for those who work in the school (p. 554).

Joyce and Showers (1988) identified four principles that must be considered when implementing peer coaching in school environments. The first is agreement, i.e., all teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching study teams. Teams must collectively agree to practice teaching methods that the faculty have decided to implement, and to support one another in the change process. Support is defined as the sharing of instructional objectives and the developing of materials and lessons. Teams also support one another by collecting data about the implementation process and recording the effects that coaching has on students relative to school goals. The second principle, feedback, states that verbal feedback should not be a component of coaching. The primary activity of peer coaching is planning and developing curriculum and instruction in pursuit of shared goals. When teachers give one another feedback, collaborative activities tend to disintegrate. Verbal feedback has a tendency to become or to be perceived as evaluative. Omitting feedback in the coaching process has not affected implementation of teaching practices or student growth (Joyce & Showers, 1995). The third principle is that the term “coach” must be defined. When pairs of teachers are working together, the individual who is *teaching* is the coach, and the *individual* observing is the coached. The teacher who is observing is doing so in order to gain information from a colleague. Discussion of the observation in the technical feedback

sense is not part of the feedback loop. Lastly, the principle of collaboration emphasizes that the collaborative work of peer coaching dyads is much broader than observations and conferences. Many believe that the coaching transaction depends on offering advice to teachers following observation, which is not true. Rather, teachers learn from one another by planning instruction, developing support materials, observing each other work with students, and thinking together about the impact of their behavior on their students' learning.

The Characteristics of Peer Coaching

Peer coaching programs have a number of distinct characteristics that have surfaced over the past 10 years, which differentiate this professional development tool from others (Showers, 1985):

1. *Peer coaching is not evaluation.* Perhaps the most important reason for emphasizing “peer” is to ensure that peer coaching will not be used to evaluate a teacher’s classroom performance. According to Showers (1985), “In divorcing itself from evaluation, coaching provides a safe environment in which to learn and perfect new teaching behaviors, experiment with variations of strategies, teach students new skills and expectations inherent in new strategies, and thoughtfully examine the results. By placing the major responsibility for coaching with peers, status and power differentials are minimized” (p. 47).

2. *Peer coaching includes observation followed by non-evaluative feedback.* All peer coaching programs include observation of classroom teaching followed by feedback. As Showers (1985) purports that “. . . the teacher experiments with a new lesson while the coach observes, and the experimentation continues with a new cycle of analysis, study, hypothesis-forming, and testing” (p. 44). At other times, peer observations are used to examine current instructional practices before attempting new ones (Sparks & Bruder, 1987). After observation, it is important for feedback to be accurate, specific, and non-evaluative (Showers). Three ways in which coaches give feedback have been identified in an Association for Supervision and Curriculum (ASCD) video tape series designed to help staff developers initiate peer coaching programs (Wolfe & Robbins, 1989). These include: (a) mirroring - the coach records data and gives it to the teacher to analyze, (b) collaborative coaching - the teacher and the coach work together to find ways to improve teaching, and (c) expert coaching - the coach acts as a mentor who gives specific suggestions to the teacher. Mello (1984) asserted that feedback pays. He has three steps that he believes change teacher behavior. The first step in making change is awareness by the individual that the new *knowledge, practice, or skill* will satisfy a need or desire the individual has. The second step is the use of the feedback to help the individual find the starting point to move toward the new behavior. Third, support from others concerning the new behaviors is needed to reinforce that behavior and then motivate the individual to continue to move in the direction of the new behavior.

3. *Peer coaching focuses on improving instructional techniques.* Some peer coaching programs seek to familiarize teachers with specific instructional techniques (LeBlanc & Zide, 1987; Swan, Carnes, & Gilman, 1988). Joyce and Showers believed that we should “teach teachers different models because we’re trying to widen their repertoires” (cited in Brandt, 1987, p. 15). Enhancing skills and deepening understanding about a variety of instructional models serves to improved instructional strategies.

Research Studies That Support Peer Coaching

In “Instructional Growth Through Peer Coaching,” Munro and Elliott (1987) described a voluntary peer coaching program implemented at Forest View High School in 1985. This program enabled teachers to serve as their own staff developers. Peer coaching was separated from the contractual evaluation process. During the school year, teachers were encouraged to make two observations per month and to fill out monthly goal sheets, which would help them focus on a part of their action plan. This coaching plan differed from other studies in that the teachers at Forest View High School chose their coach from among their colleagues rather than being assigned an “expert” (Alfonsok, 1977; Showers, 1985). Another difference was that Forest View did not focus on a particular instructional method.

Program evaluation was determined by data collected though participant interviews and questionnaires. Success was determined by the accomplishment of instructional goals. The goals were cross-referenced with effective teacher research reviewed by Brophy (1983) and Rosenshine (1983). Evaluation data illustrated that 97%

of the participants had accomplished their goals and that 88% of the participants indicated that peer coaching made a significant difference in their instruction. For 94% of the participants, peer coaching was more helpful in promoting instructional growth than traditional supervision.

The teacher participants in the Forest View study reported that observations by their supervisors were solely for evaluation, not as a means of improving instruction. Coaching also provided teachers with positive reinforcement—validating what teachers were doing *right* in the classroom, not what they were doing *wrong*. The most common concern of this program was the shortage of time for observations and conferences. Participant recommendations included providing opportunities to change partners mid-year as well as to establish interdisciplinary teams (Munro & Elliott, 1987).

The implementation of a peer coaching model in a Fort Worth (Texas) school district in 1984 identified several factors as having an effect on coaching (Leggett & Hoyle, 1987). These factors included the need to have a clear statement about the purpose for coaching. Decisions need to be made as to whether coaching should implement specific training protocols or allow teachers to set their own objectives. A decision needs to be made about *who* should coach: a master teacher (expert) or a peer colleague. Consistent training needs to be provided across the district to ensure that all participants have the same foundation of knowledge. Coaching needs to be on a voluntary basis.

In a report from the Suphur Springs School District in Los Angeles on its Teacher-Directed Peer Coaching Program, Desrocher and Klein (1990) described the design and implementation of a voluntary peer coaching program that eventually involved 80% of the district teachers. Initially, the assistant superintendent of schools led

the coaching model, but by the third year, it was teacher directed. This model included a group pre-conference, lesson observation and data collection, group post-conference, and analysis. Peer coaching in Suphur Springs was a process in which teachers voluntarily engaged in observation and discussion of each other's instruction. The main purpose of the initiative was to strengthen the application of this decision-making model through self-analysis. It was found that the most appropriate time to begin peer coaching is after a group of teachers attend the same staff development program.

Feedback gained through teacher surveys offers seven suggestions for peer coaching programs (Desrocher & Klein, 1990). First, a school district should aim for a completely teacher-directed peer coaching program. It should recognize that principals play a key role in helping peer coaching to flourish. Peer coaching should be kept voluntary but provide incentives and encouragement for teachers to get involved. Teachers should be encouraged to select their own coaching pairs or teams. Options should be provided for data collection. The observed teachers should be encouraged to initiate problem-solving discussions in the post-conference. Most importantly, confidentiality must be assured to the teachers.

Hall and McKeen (1990) described two cases in which a peer coaching model was used as an organizational development intervention. In the District of Columbia public school system, peer coaching was used as an intervention. A clinical supervision model was implemented that included extensive peer supervision and coaching. The model involved 26 schools, 65 administrators, and 323 teachers. Following four years of implementation, Freeman, Palmer, and Ferren (1980) attributed the success of the peer

coaching to the openness with which the program was designed, the immediacy of the training to known needs, and the team approach to solving problems.

Hall (1988) conducted a survey research study involving 565 teachers from a large, suburban Virginia public school system who were trained in peer coaching and who participated in a staff development program. Peer coaching strategies were taught over a two-year period and were coupled with in-service training to increase the likelihood of improving instructional skills. The results of the surveys as summarized by Hall and McKeen (1989) revealed positive outcomes of peer coaching. The survey results strongly indicated that peer coaching can increase teachers' opportunities to utilize each other as sources of job-related skills and knowledge. The value of peer coaching identified by teachers centered on the opportunities to dialogue, observe, and obtain feedback from each other. Peer coaching can contribute to the development of a shared culture and technical language. Peer coaching resulted in professional relationships based on trust, which provided constructive teacher communication.

Raney and Robbins (1989) reported that 11 teachers volunteered to become peer coaches in Sonoma County, California. The teachers collaboratively defined what coaching would look like in their school. Participants received training in cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1985). In the follow-up meetings, the teachers identified several factors that were critical to the success of peer coaching. The first was that participation was voluntary, and that the ongoing coaching training supported and equipped teachers with an expanded repertoire of coaching skills. Beyond the training itself, financial and logistical support from the district was beneficial. Funds were allocated for training, and release time was given. The administration also provided

redirection for the program by attending workshops with the coaches and responding to the coaches' concerns.

Coaching in Sonoma County continued and gave teachers new and experienced support when implementing new strategies. Teachers and coaches now have the opportunity to observe other classrooms. Communication has been facilitated between teachers at different grade levels and at different schools, while the teachers' feelings of isolation have given way to a renewed sense of collaboration and community (Raney & Robbins, 1989).

Anastos and Ancowitz (1987) reported on the work of four veteran teachers at Central School in Larchmont, New York. The teachers developed the Collegial Interaction Process based on the work of Joyce and Weil (1980). This process assisted these teachers in their professional development by giving them the opportunity to learn new teaching models while supporting each other in the process. Peer observation and videotaping of lessons were the formats for self-analysis. A two-hour round table discussion with all the participants as well as personal interviews generated data to evaluate the process. Two common themes emerged from these discussions: the professional and personal needs of teachers. All participants indicated that the program met their needs for professional growth in a way that other in-services programs had not. Peer observation motivated the participants to examine their teaching in considerable depth and detail. Observations of the teaching of others were identified as important learning experiences. Many teachers made reference to personal needs related to burnout, fatigue, and feelings of inadequacy. They reported that they enjoyed being in charge of the observation process, a feeling they had not experienced during administrative

evaluations. Interview data also strongly underscored that the fact that the Collegial Interaction Process alleviated some of the isolation that the teachers experience in their daily work environments.

For one year, Wineburg (1995) investigated the process of peer coaching as a vehicle for facilitating teachers' implementation of a new approach to teaching. Twenty-two elementary and middle school teachers were observed as they implemented cooperative learning structures in their classrooms. Twelve of the teachers used peer coaching but ten did not. The teachers participated in two days of staff development to learn six specific cooperative structures and to learn and practice a method of peer coaching. The results indicated that the process of peer coaching affected the implementation of cooperative learning structures. Teachers who participated in peer coaching focused their use of cooperative learning structures on the students to a greater degree than did those who did not participate in the peer coaching. One possible explanation for this difference is that teachers who peer coached had an opportunity to prepare and rehearse their lessons.

Baker and Showers (1984) showed that teachers in peer coaching groups exhibited greater long-term retention of new strategies and more appropriate use of new teaching models over time. Teachers who had coaching relationships, who shared aspects of teaching, planned together, and shared experiences, practiced skills and strategies more frequently, and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked alone to expand their repertoires (Baker & Showers).

Joyce and Showers (1980) proposed that weekly seminars enabled teachers to practice and implement content that they were learning. The seminars or coaching

sessions focused on classroom implementation of teaching practices and the analysis of teaching and student responses. The results of these coaching sessions were positive. With seminar-taught content, implementation rose dramatically. Joyce and Showers recommended that teachers in the process of studying teaching and curriculum should form small peer coaching groups for sharing and supporting each other in the learning process.

Time and Commitment to Change

Before attempting to institute peer coaching programs on a large-scale basis, evidence-based research should be examined to identify the preconditions for change and to develop a culture within the school that is conducive to change (Ackland, 1991). Adding peer coaching as an on-site follow up to training requires that schools depart from traditional staff development programs. The isolated nature of teaching can be transformed when staff development is embedded into the daily life of teaching. Such innovation, however, requires drastic changes in the relationships that usually exist between teachers and administrators.

Time is an issue that must be addressed when considering implementation of peer coaching. Schools involved in reform identify their most essential ingredient as time. Research concurs that collaborative time for teachers to undertake and sustain school improvement may be more important than equipment or facilities or even staff development (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Louis 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989). We have long known that for schools to change, teachers must be collectively involved in its implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975; McLaughlin, 1991). But unless the

demands for time and collaboration are met, change is not likely to occur (Fullan & Miles).

Successful schools are distinguishable from unsuccessful schools by the frequency and extent to which teachers discuss practice, collaboratively design materials, and inform and critique one another (Little, 1982). These interactions appear necessary for continuing growth and improvement in the individual as well as for sustaining a good school (Wildman & Niles, 1987).

Joyce and Showers (1987) believed that it is a worthwhile goal to make available approximately one hour per teacher each week for observing instruction, being observed, and participating in follow-up discussion. In “Low-Cost Arrangements for Peer-Coaching,” Joyce and Showers recommend the following strategies to support peer coaching:

1. *Free teachers to observe other classes by providing substitute staff.*

Administrators could teach one class period each day, which would provide approximately one-fourth of the release time required.

2. *Provide opportunities for large group instruction to increase the likelihood that teachers would have the time to visit one another.* Teachers would take two classroom groups of students to teach a content area while the teacher relieved of classroom teaching would engage in collaborative work.
3. *Arrange for independent study and research.* Librarians or classroom volunteers can provide activities for students, including helping them with book selection, information searching, and check out of materials.

4. *Enlist volunteer aides.* Teachers might staff the classroom with several aides for half a day each week. Classroom aides can perform a number of functions in addition to freeing teachers for peer coaching.
5. *Seek out student teachers.* Student teachers can be paired to work in teams and take over one period of instruction per day (state requirements permitting).
6. *Organize team teaching.* Teachers can be paired for team teaching instruction; such teaming would free one of the other teachers to engage in peer coaching.

The videotaping of lessons might also be an option, although Joyce and Showers (1987) suggest that this mechanism should not replace observation. Ultimately, Joyce and Showers think that schools can find the time for coaching if they have the inclination, motivation, and appropriate planning.

The organization of peer coaching systems must be made cooperatively between administration and school site personnel. In schools where teachers already have preparation periods scheduled into their work days, coaching teams can be organized for observation, feedback, and planning within existing structures. Substitutes can also be provided during conferences and observations. Creative problem solving by teachers and principals results in solutions. Without the active support and involvement of building principals, few teachers are able to establish well-developed peer coaching systems (Joyce & Showers, 1987).

Other Forms of Coaching

Numerous other and varied staff development practices are also called coaching, although these are distinct from *peer* coaching. Technical coaching, team coaching,

cognitive coaching, collegial coaching, and challenge coaching are but a few. None of these should be used for evaluation of teachers. Similar to Joyce and Showers' approach to peer coaching, technical coaching and team coaching focus on innovations in curriculum and instruction (Kent, 1985; Neubert & Bratton, 1987; Rogers, 1987), whereas collegial coaching and cognitive coaching aim more at improving existing practices (Garmston et al., 1993). With the exception of team coaching, all of the coaching varieties differ from the practices of Joyce and Showers in that the primary vehicle for improving or changing classroom instruction is in providing verbal feedback. Each is described below.

Technical Coaching. Technical coaching was based on the work of Joyce and Showers (1984). According to Showers (1985), teachers given technical coaching generally will (a) practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill, (b) use new strategies more appropriately, (c) retain knowledge about and skills in new strategies for longer periods of time, (d) teach the new strategies to students, and (e) understand the purposes for and use more frequently the knowledge gained (Showers, 1985).

With a moderately difficult teaching strategy, teachers may require from 20 to 30 hours of instruction in theory, 15 to 20 hours of demonstrations using it with different students and subjects, and an additional 10 to 25 hours of coaching sessions to attain higher-level skills (Shalaway, 1985).

Technical coaching generally follows staff development workshops in specific teaching methods. The model pairs consultants with teachers or teachers with one another. The observer is given an evaluative function, often using clinical assessment

forms, to record specific behaviors and the degree to which they were informed (Showers, 1985). Technical coaching is most effective for transferring teacher training to classroom application (Garmston, 1987, p. 22). Technical coaching assumes that objective feedback given in a non-threatening and supportive climate can improve teaching performance.

Team Coaching. Team coaching differs from previous models (Servatuis & Young, 1985; Showers, 1985) in that the coach does not observe the teacher. Rather, the coach team teaches lessons with the teacher. The teacher and the coach collaboratively plan, teach, and evaluate.

In “Team Coaching: Staff Development Side by Side,” Neubert and Bratton (1987) described the implementation of a team coaching model in one Maryland school in 1984. In this team coaching model, the teacher and coach planned, executed, and evaluated collaboratively. This model was evaluated using qualitative and quantitative data from coaches, teachers, students, and observers. The success of this model supported the work of Joyce and Showers (1982), which indicated that regular classroom teachers can be coaches. The results also suggested four issues for consideration. First, teachers strongly opposed observation by a coach. Instead, they preferred that the coach engage in team teaching. Second, participants emphasized the importance of support and facilitation during coaching. Third, teachers and coaches stressed that the coach should be more knowledgeable than the teacher about the method being learned. Fourth, the team coaching model might be appropriately transferred to pre-service educational settings involving student teaching experiences.

Cognitive Coaching. Cognitive coaching, according to Garmston et al. (1993), “is based on the core belief that all people are capable of change; we all can grow cognitively” (p. 12). Garmston asserted that the teacher’s performance is based on decision-making skills and thought processes that drive the overt skills. Finally, he believes that an enlightened colleague can enhance a teacher’s cognitive processes. Cognitive coaching is based on the clinical supervision model (Costa & Garmston, 1985; Garmston, 1990). Cognitive coaching differs from other types of coaching in that it neither requires a teacher to follow a formula nor presents a manner of correct instruction. The goal of cognitive coaching is to support teachers to improve on existing strengths while exploring and expanding on instructional practices. Cognitive coaching is a three-phase cycle similar to evaluation through clinical supervision: pre-conference, a lesson observation, and post-conference. The pre-conference is given most importance since it involves the thinking process that identified the lesson objectives. Cognitive coaching is used solely to help the teacher improve instructional practices through reflection. In cognitive coaching, coaches are trained to facilitate thinking processes to help teachers exercise judgment concerning how and when to use specific instructional strategies. Personal journal entries report changes in teaching style, expansion of the teaching repertoire, greater power in planning lessons, greater student accountability, and greater consciousness of teacher behaviors and options. Reflection learned through cognitive coaching helps teachers to develop problem-solving skills as they examine their experiences and actions (Sparks, 1990).

Collegial Coaching. Collegial coaching suspends judgment and helps teachers establish open communication. Pairs of teachers most often conduct this type of coaching rather than in-service training. The coach observes a teaching lesson and then helps the teacher analyze student learning outcomes (Garmston, 1987). “The major goals of collegial coaching are to refine teaching practices, deepen collegiality, increase professional dialogue, and help teachers to think more deeply about their work” (Garmston, 1987, p. 20).

Challenge Coaching. Challenge coaching differs from technical and collegial models in its process and products. The process starts with a persistent problem or desired goal. The term “challenge refers to resolving a problematic state” (Garmston, 1987, p. 21). Challenge coaching is conducted in small groups rather than in pairs. The group is made up of staff with high interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Members might include teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and support team members. This team works together to brainstorm instructional approaches and commits to a personal plan that can be implemented by other teachers (Garmston).

Definitions for the Role of Reading Coach

At the initial training for Reading First coaches in Pennsylvania in August 2003, Moran (2003) shared the definition of the role of the coach, adapted from Symonds (n.d.). It states that:

A literacy¹ coach works with teachers individually and in grade-level collaborative teams, observes classroom instruction, demonstrates literacy strategies in classrooms, helps teachers link assessment to instruction by analyzing multiple sources of data, helps teachers access and use research-based practices, connects teachers to their peers, and offers professional development.

At the second coach's training for the state on September 18, 2003, Powers and Moran (2003) provided the job description and varying roles of the coach by which to attain the Reading First goals. The job description included six roles of the coach. The coach would: support teachers' understanding and use of the required Reading First assessment tools; increase teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in instruction; support teachers' ability to use student assessment data to inform instruction at the classroom and school level; increase teachers' understanding of the findings of scientifically based reading research and the application of these findings within a comprehensive literacy framework, and increase all participants' understanding of the process of literacy coaching as professional development. The coaching roles can include facilitator, presenter, mediator, resource person, mentor, collaborator, expert, consultant, voice, and encourager.

According to Powers and Moran (2003), the coaching roles can also include facilitator, presenter, mediator, resource person, mentor, collaborator, expert, consultant, voice, and encourager.

In response to the Reading First mandate to reading coaches and the concern about the roles of the coach, the International Reading Association (IRA)

¹ Although Moran uses the term "literacy coach," my school district used the term "reading coach," which is used throughout this dissertation.

(www.reading.org/positions/reading_coach.html) also gave their definition of the role of the coach, which is to provide support to classroom teachers for classroom reading instruction. A reading coach “supports teachers in their daily work” (Dole, 2004, p. 462). Reading coaches engage in many activities, from informal ones—such as conversing with colleagues to more formal ones—such as holding team meetings, modeling lessons, and visiting classrooms. It is critical that reading coaches understand that coaching may range from activities that help teachers develop or increase their knowledge about a specific issue to activities that focus on implementation issues (www.reading.org/positions/reading_coach.html).

Bean (2004) identified various levels of activities for the reading coach, from those that are more informal and “low risk” to those that require the coach to provide feedback about teachers’ classroom practices and are more “high risk.” Level-one coaching activities are informal and help to develop relationships between the coach and the teacher. These low-risk activities would include having conversations with colleagues identifying issues or needs, setting goals and problem solving, developing and providing materials for/with colleagues, developing curriculum with colleagues, participating in professional development activities with colleagues, such as conferences and workshops, leading or participating in study groups, assisting with assessing students, and instructing students to learn about their strengths and needs. Level-two activities are more formal and somewhat more intense. They begin to look at areas of need and focus. Level-two activities include co-planning lessons, holding team meetings, analyzing student work, interpreting assessment data to help teachers use results for instructional decision making, engage in individual discussions with colleagues about teaching and learning, and making

professional development presentations for teachers. Level-three activities are more formal, more intense and may create some anxiety on the part of the teacher or coach. Level-three activities include modeling and discussing lessons, co-teaching lessons, visiting classrooms and providing feedback to teachers, analyzing videotaped lessons of teachers, and doing lesson study with teachers.

Reading First Implementation

Reading First, a major reform section under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, is driving the reading instruction in primary classrooms around the county prescribing the reading core curriculum to be used and the type of reading instruction and assessments to be given. This school reform movement, which is based only on the research results of the National Reading Panel (NRP), mandates that schools use scientifically based research reading programs and teaching methods. These reading programs systematically and explicitly teach the five essential components of reading as identified by the National Reading Panel's 2000 findings: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (www.nochildleftbehind.gov). The expectation of the federal government is that with the use of scientifically research-based reading programs, proven to prevent reading failure, all children will be able to read on grade level by the end of third grade (<http://pde.state.pa.us/nclb>)

For each district in the United States that receives a Reading First grant, there is a prescribed reading curriculum, which uses a core reading series. This curriculum ensures a uniformity of instructional material at the primary level for the schools qualifying for this grant assistance. According to the Reading First grant program, children in

kindergarten through grade 3 are tested for their reading levels, then retested periodically to determine how well they are progressing as a result of the reading program used in Reading First. These assessments, using standardized tests, are overseen by the states, so the school districts implementing the Reading First grant must meet the assessment criteria and requirements mandated by the state.

The reading coach therefore has a significant role in helping the school district implement the Reading First grant. As was the case in the district in this study, initially, the coach, after receiving professional development in the Reading First Program, introduced the program to the district teachers and administrators, and eventually the students' parents. The coach's roles as laid out by the Reading First grant were to help the teachers through professional development to become familiar with the reading program itself and to help them implement the prescribed reading curriculum in the classroom. Additionally, the reading coach was expected to help the teachers with the initial and periodic assessments of the students, and to help them interpret this data so that they could develop their classroom teaching practices in order to help the students improve their reading and achievement in order to do well in the assessments. Thus, the reading coach interfaced the district with the state in implementing the program by facilitating the use of the Reading First Program in the district schools and by working with the Reading First teachers to meet the testing standards set down by the state. Achieving the desired results, i.e., improvement in the students' reading and academic achievement as shown by the assessments, is key to the school district's renewal of its Reading First grant under the No Child Left Behind Act.

To achieve these ends, my district as a Reading First grant recipient was responsible for purchasing the scientifically based core reading program, scheduling 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading time in each primary classroom, and adopting new reading assessments according to state requirements. The primary grade (k-3) teachers participating in Reading First were responsible for providing reading instruction using the core instructional materials as designed.

A reading committee was formed in the district to evaluate the reading programs available, and Open Court was chosen and purchased for all kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms in our five elementary buildings. Open Court served as the foundation for reading instruction and was implemented with fidelity and purpose. Then, 90 minutes of uninterrupted time was allocated for core reading instruction each day. In addition to this 90-minute period, supplemental groups met each day for 30 minutes to receive supplemental instruction by the teacher and support staff. In addition to this time, the students in greater need were provided with an additional 30 minutes of reading intervention.

A comprehensive assessment system was adopted by the district to identify students who needed more intense and explicit reading instruction. The Pennsylvania State Department of Education (PDE) mandated the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as our screening and progress-monitoring tool, and the Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) was highly recommended for use. Every child's progress was monitored three times per year (fall, winter, and spring). In addition, students who were not demonstrating sufficient progress toward the goal of reading on grade level were more frequently monitored. This was as frequent as every week or every

two weeks. This comprehensive assessment system was used to determine the students who were not making sufficient progress and were in need of supplemental and intervention instruction in addition to the 90-minute core curriculum. Supplemental and intervention materials were aligned with the students' areas of weaknesses. Placement and movement in the supplemental and intervention groups were based on ongoing assessment.

All the Reading First teachers were responsible for using the core instructional materials to provide reading instruction to the students. The teachers were trained by the reading coach in order to effectively implement the core reading curriculum and conduct the assessments. Supplemental and intervention materials were used for students needing more intensive reading instruction.

Prior to the 2003-2004 school year, my district posted the following position for reading coach to fulfill the Reading First grant requirements:

Opening for a full-time Reading Coach. This position is required as a component of our Reading First Grant and will exist as long as grant funding continues.

Candidates need a strong background and current experience in literacy instruction, assessment, and data analysis. The Reading Coach will work directly with staff to provide peer coaching and model teaching approaches to ensure fidelity of instruction in the Reading First schools. Reading Specialist Certification preferred.

No one in our district applied for the position. Therefore, at the beginning of the school year 2003-2004, a colleague and I approached the administration and proposed that we split the position of reading coach. Since our district was only required to hire

one coach to serve both of our Reading First schools, we suggested that we fill the role of half-time coach in each of the schools and spend the other half of our time continuing our role as Title I reading specialists. The administration agreed.

Our position would exist as long as grant funding continued. Reading First is a six-year grant; however, Pennsylvania limited the subgrant period to three years. After the initial three years, districts that have shown reading gains and significantly increased student achievement as measured by screening, progress monitoring, and standardized tests, would be eligible for renewal of their grant.

The purpose of Reading First is to provide assistance to local educational agencies (LEA's) in establishing reading programs for students kindergarten through 3 that are scientifically research based, to ensure that every child can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. This essentially is the goal of No Child Left Behind.

As the job posting stated, our position as reading coach was two fold, to ensure the fidelity to the prescribed instruction in the Reading First schools and to work as a peer coach with the primary grade teachers who were implementing Reading First in their classrooms. There was some ambiguity in the coaching role as early as the posting. The role of the coach evolved during the first year of Reading First implementation based on the demands of the state and the expectations of the participants.

According to our district's Reading First grant (Project # 023-03-0106), which three colleagues and I wrote, we two half-time coaches were to ensure fidelity to the Reading First Initiative by coordinating assessments, modeling instruction, providing professional development, promoting parental involvement, working with the school district team and state-provided technical assistant (TA), acting as a liaison between

teachers and principal and the TA, and attending all building, district, regional and state-wide training sessions.

As it pertained to my role as one of the reading coaches, the grant stated that I was to “mostly” protect the integrity of the assessment process and its results. I was to assist in the administration of assessments, gather, and record the results. I was to analyze the results of the assessments, and share them with the administration, teachers, and the state as required. I was to assure that all assessments were given according to the proposed timeline.

I was also to provide technical support at the classroom level by modeling good instructional practices and techniques as needed. This was part of the professional development I provided to the Reading First teachers. I would suggest materials and provide materials and techniques to meet the needs of particular groups or individual children.

As the coach I would work closely with the core curriculum publisher to develop meaningful and ongoing professional development for the teachers of kindergarten through grade 3 and for special education teachers of kindergarten through grade 12. Professional development was clearly aligned with the instructional program, including its research base, and state academic and performance standards.

The Reading First initiative also emphasized the importance of a school-parent partnership in helping children achieve success in school. I was to promote parental involvement to help each child gain the skills and confidence necessary to be successful readers.

I was also expected to work with my school district team, which was comprised of the superintendent of schools, the curriculum coordinator, the building principals, special and general education and reading specialists. As the coach, I would be expected to meet with the state-appointed technical assistant (TA) at least monthly to address specific needs and analyze data. I would serve as the liaison between teachers and principal and the TA. I would be required to attend all building, district, regional and state-wide training sessions.

In addition to fulfilling the grant requirement as the reading coaches, the district and PDE expected us to implement a peer coaching model. The state provided technical training on the peer coaching model developed by Joyce and Showers.

Joyce and Showers (1982) defined coaching as an in-class follow-up by a supportive advisor who helps teachers correctly apply skills learned in training. The role of the coach is to work with the teacher to examine appropriate places in the curriculum for the use of specific strategies, evaluate the effectiveness of observed lessons, and plan for future trials (Joyce & Showers).

A review of the literature on staff development and professional development training conducted by Joyce and Showers (1988) and Joyce and Weil (1980) revealed that the training components that were productive for transfer included theory presentation, modeling, or demonstration, practice, structured and open-ended feedback, and in-class assistance with transfer. The combination of these components enabled most teachers to effectively learn and implement a new model of teaching. The coaching component of this model was critical to ensure transfer (Joyce & Showers). Successful transfer as defined by Joyce and Showers is the integration of new skills into the teacher's existing

repertoire and the appropriate use of skills. Successful transfer required a period of practice of the new skill in the classroom.

Joyce and Showers (1980, 1982, 1988) and Showers (1985) characterized peer coaching as a community of learners engaged in the study of teaching, a component of training that enhances the transfer of training to the classroom, and a support system that creates and sustains a community of learners. Peer coaching has been shown to facilitate implementation of in-service training content into classroom practice, to promote reflective thinking processes and self-analysis, and to enhance teacher problem solving through teaming (Garmston, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1988).

The state also expected the coach to follow this peer coaching model of Joyce and Showers (1995). According to the state guidelines, this peer coaching model includes facilitating the implementation of in-service training knowledge and skills into the teachers' classroom practice, promoting the reflective thinking processes and self-analyses, and enhancing teacher problem solving through teaming (Garmston, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1988)

Joyce and Showers (1988) identified four principles that must be considered when implementing peer coaching in school environments. The first is agreement: all teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching teams. Teams must collectively agree to practice teaching methods that the faculty has decided to implement, and to support one another in the change process. The second principle, feedback, states that verbal feedback should not be a component of coaching. Verbal feedback has a tendency to become or to be perceived as evaluative. Omitting feedback in the coaching process has not affected implementation of teaching practices or student growth (Joyce & Showers, 1995). The

third principle is that the term “coach” must be defined. When pairs of teachers are working together, the individual who is *teaching* is the coach, and the *individual* observing is the coached. The teacher who is observing is doing so in order to gain information from a colleague. Lastly, the principle of collaboration emphasizes that the collaborative work of peer coaching dyads is much broader than observations and conferences. Teachers learn from one another by planning instruction, developing support materials, observing each other work with students, and thinking together about the impact of their behavior on their students’ learning.

The final part of this literature review has been presented to give an overview of the Reading First Program, the reading coach’s role and what it entails, as background to this study, which specifically addressed how I as the reading coach spent my time in this position and how the administrators and teachers in the Reading First Program perceived my role from their experience of my coaching activities.

Chapter 3

METHODS

My dissertation study investigated the perceptions of my district's teachers and administrators regarding my role as the Reading First reading coach. This methods and chapter includes the design of the study, site selected, the researcher's role, purposeful sampling, the participants, data collection, and data analysis, as well as a brief discussion of the limitations of the design, including concerns about internal and external validity.

Design

In order to holistically investigate the role of the coach and its meaning for those involved, I used a qualitative case study research design to systematically explore the phenomenon of the reading coach. (The use of coaches to help teachers to teach reading is relatively new.) Using systematic interviewing, as well as collecting data through my written daily logs, I focused on discovering and interpreting the role of the reading coach in the classroom. I used a descriptive case study methodology that allowed for an examination of the program and the individuals involved.

According to Merriam (1988), descriptive research is undertaken when description and explanation are sought when it is not possible to manipulate the potential cause or behavior, and when the variable areas are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for study. The bounded system selected for description and explanation included those directly responsible for implementing the Reading First grant in my school district. These included the three primary teachers

(kindergarten, second and third grade) in the elementary school, along with the building administrators—the principal, curriculum coordinator, and the superintendent of schools. Aldeman, Jenkins, and Kemmis (1983, p. 2) indicate that this type of study is based on “the decision to focus on inquiry around an instance,” the case in this study being the Reading First Program. Yin (1984) saw the case study as a design particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context.

Through extensive interviews, I aspired to gain an understanding of the concept of the “reading coach” from the participants’ views of their experiences with the Reading First Program in our district. I felt that this descriptive-analytical interpretation of the educational phenomenon of the reading coach would add insight to certain aspects of educational practice and to the development of knowledge about the role of the reading coach. It would also reveal the expectations of our district teachers and administrators for the Reading First reading coach, and have implications for further research on the educational practice of the coaching of reading.

Every research method has its limits and its strengths. The strength of in-depth interviewing is that through it we can understand the details of people’s first-hand experience of a phenomenon from their point of view. We can see how their individual experiences interact with powerful social and organizational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context (Seidman, 1991). Wilson (1979) conceptualized the case study as a process that attempts to analyze and describe some entity in qualitative, complex, and comprehensive terms as it unfolds over time. The

insights gained can have a direct influence on educational policy or practice. I also gathered descriptive data in my daily written logs to document the time I spent in each of the coaching roles.

Site Selected

The rural, public elementary school that implemented the Reading First grant in my district was the bounded system (Smith, 1978) I selected to describe and explain the role of the Reading First reading coach. This elementary school is one of five in the district. The district is served by five elementary schools and one junior/senior high school. The district enrollment is approximately 1500 students. The elementary schools have approximately 700 hundred students and the high school 750. The district's percentage of low-income families is near 40%. The district administration includes one superintendent, one curriculum coordinator, and two elementary principals, who serve five buildings (up to 15 miles apart), and one high school principal. Attendance in the district meets the state goal of 95% or more. The graduation rate is 86%, which is lower than required by the state. All of the teachers in the district are considered highly qualified, which means that they hold a teaching certificate in the state in which they are teaching. All Title I paraprofessionals are also highly qualified. The district has fewer than 10 students in each of the following subgroups: race, migrant status, and limited English proficiency.

Based on low income and low reading scores, the elementary school selected for this investigation qualified and received the Reading First grant at the end of the 2002-2003 school year. The first year of implementation was in the 2003-2004 school year.

The elementary school in the study was composed of five grades with approximately 80 students enrolled. The building had a half-day kindergarten, one second grade, one third grade, one fourth grade, and one fifth grade. There was no first grade class due to a decreased enrollment. The school had five teachers: one half-time Title 1 reading specialist, and one part-time, Title 1 math paraprofessional. Each of these staff members had at least 25 years of teaching experience. The average class size was 16 students. This school had fewer than 2% of students in each of the following subgroups: race, migrant status, and limited English proficient. The building was served by a special education teacher with the exception of those on monitor status. The students on monitor status made up 1% of the population. Free and reduced lunch was provided to 39% of the children in the school. Adequate yearly progress had been based on the test scores of one fifth grade class of approximately 15 students. Test scores fluctuated dramatically year to year based on the student population. The individuals responsible for the implementation of the Reading First grant included the kindergarten, second and third grade teachers, the reading coach, the principal, the curriculum coordinator, and the district superintendent.

The Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher in this study was to record a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study (the reading coach), as the participant-observer (Junker, 1960). Thus, I was both the researcher and the reading coach, the subject of the study. However, Guba and Lincoln (1981) believe that participant observation is a superior means of first-hand data collection. When combined with interviewing and document analysis, this research role allows for holistic interpretations of attitudes, beliefs, values

and motives. While fulfilling the role of the Reading First reading coach, I was immersed in the situation and engaged in interactions with the participants. In order to counteract any chance of subjectivity, I had to adopt a stance of neutrality with regard to the phenomenon under study. But I did not set out to prove a particular perspective or to manipulate the data to arrive at any particular predisposed truths or conclusions.

I also understood that qualitative inquiry requires the researcher to carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error. Systematic data collection procedures, multiple data sources, and triangulation are aimed at producing qualitative data that are credible, accurate, and true to the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, I triangulated my research by making a comparative analysis between the perceptions of the administrators and teachers regarding the time I spent in my coaching roles (as derived from the interviews) and the actual time I spent in these roles (as derived from my documentation in my daily written log). The participants in the study knew my role as the researcher. I had no prior experience working in this building or with the participants themselves.

For this study, I also used naturalistic inquiry. Merriam (1988) stated that naturalistic inquiry focuses on meaning in context and requires data collection instruments sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. Thus, I used systematic in-depth interviewing (and open-ended questions) to discover and interpret the perceptions of teachers and administrators on my role as the reading coach. While interviewing the participants, my primary role was to be an active listener and respondent (Brown & Gulligan, 1992). Additionally, delaying follow-up questions and

providing silence or the use of wait time were significant strategies that I used during the interviews to encourage the participants to tell their perceptions.

Purposeful Sampling Strategy

Non-probability sampling is the method of choice in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1988). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that the method of sampling in analytical induction is purposeful sampling. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that “purposeful sampling can be pursued in ways that will maximize the investigator’s ability to devise grounded theory” (p. 41). Hence, I used criterion-based sampling (Geotz & LeComte, 1984), which set the standards necessary for the investigation. The criteria were that the participants (as previously listed) were directly responsible for the implementation of the Reading First grant in the school and would work closely with myself as the reading coach to assure fidelity. I chose the sample because they were knowledgeable and informed about the phenomenon of my investigation.

The Participants

All three teachers and three administrators involved in the Reading First grant in my building participated in the study. I made the initial contact in person, as the primary investigator, and received the written informed consent of the participants. Then I gave a photocopy of the original consent form to the participants for their records. I kept the original documents.

The only foreseeable risk for the participants was confidentiality. Therefore, I made every effort to maintain confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms for the

participants so that they would not be linked to the study. I did member check. All of the participants were given a copy of the original transcribed interviews and were given the option to make corrections. Only the superintendent of schools made some minor typographical corrections in his transcript. All of the participants agreed that I could use their transcribed interviews (as read) for my study. No other persons saw the interview transcripts.

The three administrators in the study included the superintendent of schools, one elementary building principal, and the curriculum coordinator. There were three teachers from the kindergarten, second, and third grades.

The Administrators

Dr. Larry Williams, superintendent of schools, is a 50-year-old married man. He is the father of two grown children. He grew up about two hours from the school district in which he works.

Larry began his career as an educator by teaching fourth through sixth grade. He taught for 12 years. He held the position of head teacher/building coordinator for 11 of those years. Larry accepted a job in another district (his current district) as elementary principal, which he served for 17 years. Larry is currently in his second year as district superintendent, totaling 30 years in education. He holds an elementary certification, principal certification, Administration I and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from local state and private universities. His professional organization memberships include The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Superintendent's Council, Intermediate Unit Superintendent's Council, and the Local

Superintendent's Council. His community involvement includes the Knights of Columbus, Little League, The American Legion, high school track coach, Jaycees, and Rotary.

Patricia Wise, the district curriculum coordinator, is a 56-year-old married woman. She grew up about two and a half hours from her current work place.

Patricia has 35 years' experience in education and holds elementary, reading specialist, reading supervisor, and elementary and secondary principal certification from local state and private universities. She has had experience teaching one year of kindergarten, one year of private nursery school, and two years of second grade. She then worked as a Title I reading specialist for 17 years in her current school district. Patricia transitioned into administration 16 years ago, beginning as an elementary vice principal for two years, an assistant high school principal for one year, and an elementary principal for seven years. She has held the position of Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction for the past six years. Currently, Patricia is a member of the Elementary and Secondary Principal's Association, The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and The Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum (PASCD). Her professional development opportunities include locally provided district and Intermediate Unit trainings as well the annual Pennsylvania Association of Federal Coordinators conference. Her community involvement relates to her personal interest in horses, including the Pennsylvania Arabian Horse Association, Ohio Pinto Horse Association, and the Pennsylvania Pinto Horse Association.

Ellen Harrington, elementary building principal, is the mother of two children, ages 31 and 26. She is 58 years old and resides 20 miles from the school, in a neighboring

district. She graduated from a high school two hours from her current workplace. When she completed high school, she earned a registered nursing degree. Ellen worked in three different hospitals in her 22 years of nursing, primarily in emergency or operating room settings. She believes she was led to a career in education when she became active conducting in-service education in the hospital. Ellen went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in education at a local university. She has taught first, second, third, fifth, seventh, and eighth grades in a neighboring district and was hired as an elementary principal after completing her principal's certification. Ellen left her position as elementary principal to teach reading education courses at a local university for one year. She then decided to apply for an elementary principal's position at our district and was offered the job. She is currently in her second year with the district. Ellen is a member of the Pennsylvania Association for Elementary and Secondary Principal (PAESP) and ASCD.

The Teachers

Judy Reynolds, third grade teacher is 54. She is married and the mother of three grown children. She is a grandmother of two. Judy resides in her hometown.

Judy is a graduate of the district in which she teaches. She has taught exclusively in the district for 32 years, taking one year off for maternity leave. She has taught kindergarten for three years, first grade for 13 years, second grade for five years, and third grade for 11 years. Judy has also taught summer school for 10 years. She holds a master's degree in education, and post baccalaureate degrees in communication education and mass media technology. Her professional organizations include The National

Education Association and the Pennsylvania School Education Association. Judy is currently elementary liaison for the district's education association. Her professional development opportunities have been primarily through district in-service trainings. Her community involvement includes The Red Hats Society and the Quilters Guild. Judy has owned and operated her own businesses.

Mary Becker, second grade teacher, is married and the mother of three grown children. She is 50 years old and resides and teaches in her hometown district.

Mary has taught second grade for the past 29 years, exclusively with the district. As a graduate of a local state school, Mary earned a bachelor of science in education and a master's degree in education. Her professional development opportunities have included district-provided in-service education and annual state conferences. Her community volunteer work is church affiliated. She was also very active in supporting sporting events that her children participated in.

Sue Miller, kindergarten teacher is 52 years of age. She is married and the mother of two children, 25 and 14. She resides in a nearby town.

Sue has taught in the district for 32 years. Her teaching experiences include kindergarten, first grade, Title I math, and Title I reading. She holds a certificate in elementary education, early childhood education, and as a reading specialist. Her undergraduate and graduate work were completed at local universities. She has had professional development opportunities through district-provided in-service trainings and state conferences.

Data Collection

For the data collection in this study, I interviewed the administrators and teachers one elementary school in my district who were responsible for implementing the Reading First grant. I conducted these interviews throughout the year of the grant implementation (2003-2004) to determine their perceptions of the role of the reading coach (Patton 1980). I recorded the interviews using a tape recorder and a transcription machine. I conducted the interviews in the participants' natural setting, the school. I interviewed the teachers in their classrooms and the administrators in their offices. I interviewed each participant three times, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, using open-ended questions (See Appendix C). The first interview sessions were in September or October, the second in January or February, and the third in May or June. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to over an hour

My transcription of the interviews was the lengthiest and most intense effort in the project, which involved six hours of transcription per hour of interview conversation. In order to preserve as much of the participants speech as possible, I recorded not only the language spoken but also the points of emphasis and pauses. I recorded words that the participants emphasized during the interviews by using italics; I represented their pauses in speech by using ellipses, each period in the ellipsis representing one second. Each participant did a member check of their interview, and I asked them to modify any misrepresentation of meaning derived from the interview data. The importance of transcribing my own interview tapes cannot be emphasized enough. The process provided me with an opportunity to reconstruct my conversations with the interviewees and to identify emerging themes for the analysis.

During the first year of the Reading First implementation, at the end of each day I recorded the amount of time (in minutes) I had spent that day in specific tasks as the reading coach. I rounded the minutes I had spent on each task to 15-minute increments and recorded them. At the end of the academic year, I entered the time I had spent on each task into a data base, adding and totaling the hours. I broke the tasks down into 18 categories and reformulated the data into a bar graph (See Appendix D), which provides a visual representation of the time I spent on each of the 18 tasks according to the hours. A pie graph was used to represent the percentage of time I spent on each task (See Appendix E). The tasks/categories included unrelated tasks, grant writing, planning, and professional development of the coach, professional development of the teacher, parent trainings, and meeting with parents, Reading First outreach, meeting with the state-appointed technical assistant, meeting with the administration, meeting with teachers, doing data analysis, assessing students, observing, modeling, co-teaching, conducting administrative duties, and attending coaching and teacher conferences. Tasks not directly related to Reading First included delivering mail, unpacking, sorting and dispersing teaching materials, creating displays in the hallways and substitute teaching. Planning involved the preparation and organization of the professional development I provided as the reading coach. My tasks in this role included creating agendas, training materials, content, handouts, visual presentation materials such as PowerPoint, and training schedules. My outreach included trainings and/or meetings with community services such as Head Start, preschools, and parochial schools to discuss Reading First. I held meetings with the Reading First state technical assistant during monthly visits to the district. My meetings with the administration included formal and informal meetings with the

principals, the superintendent, and/or the curriculum coordinator. I also observed reading instruction in the classroom. To assist the teachers, I went into the classroom and modeled a strategy with the class as the teacher observed. During co-teaching, I jointly planned and taught a lesson in the classroom with the classroom teacher. I met with teachers formally and informally to discuss curriculum, assessments, and teaching strategies. The one-to-one coach-teacher conferences differed from the meetings I held with the teachers. The coach -teacher conferences were scheduled before and after observation, modeling, and co-teaching to identify specific instructional goals. My administrative duties included phone calls, emails, paperwork, and the writing of meeting minutes and agendas to insure that there was communication between the teachers, coaches, and the administration.

Data Analysis

I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) model of data analysis to answer the research questions for this study. This process consisted of three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data in the interview transcripts. I reduced the transcribed interview data through many readings and re-readings. During the first reading, I tried to get a general sense of how the participants perceived the role of the reading coach and listened for their voice. I identified significant segments in the second reading. Then I identified broad categories that were thematic and coded these sections. To maintain the original source, I copied and pasted sections of the transcript documents that best summarized the themes into a Word document file. It is

important to note that during this stage I exercised judgment about what was significant in the transcripts. In the final reading of the transcripts, I identified specific themes that revealed the perceptions of the administrators and teachers regarding the roles of the reading coach. Following this, I analyzed these themes to provide a comprehensive integration of my findings. I found my verbatim accounts of the interview conversations in the transcripts and the direct quotes from my computer documents to be highly valuable for illustrating the study participants' meanings. Throughout this process, I returned to the original audiotapes repeatedly.

During the second part of the data analysis, I created graphic documents, or data displays, to represent the information I derived from my daily coaching log. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), organizing information into charts and graphs puts it into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening and draw justifiable conclusions. Thus, I assembled this considerable information into bar graphs and pie graphs to help make meaning of the data I had collected from my daily log. These visual representations also confirmed the time I had spent in various coaching roles during the first year of the grant implementation. In the final step, I drew conclusions and made verifications based on the data I had collected, noting regularities, patterns, and explanations, as suggested by Miles and Huberman.

Limitations of the Research Design

As this was a case study, there would be limitations to the generalizability of its results, although I tried, as the researcher, to ensure its reliability, internal and external validity in several ways as described in the following.

Reliability

Reliability, the extent to which one's finding can be replicated, was difficult to achieve in this case study design that investigated the unique phenomenon of the role of the Reading First reading coach. I was not seeking to make generalizations but to describe and explain my role as viewed by those who were interpreting it, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). No researcher observes, interviews, or studies documents in the same way. For these reasons, I assured reliability by obtaining what Guba and Lincoln refer to as "dependability" or "consistency." Rather than expecting outsiders to get the same results, I agreed that the data would make different sense to another person. Stake (1978) indicates that case study knowledge is more concrete, more contextual, more developed by reader interpretation, and based more on reference populations determined by the reader. Reliability is enhanced by explaining the theory, using triangulation and an audit trail (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Thus, to provide reliability, I made explicit my role as the researcher, the basis on which I selected the informants, and gave a description of the social context from which the data were collected and how they were analyzed. I have also left an audit trail (Guba & Lincoln) by describing how I collected my data, how I derived my categories, and how I made decisions throughout the inquiry. I also used triangulation, or multiple methods of data collection and analysis, to strengthen the reliability as well as the internal validity of the study.

Researcher bias is a concern in all research undertakings. Bias can limit the objectivity when determining the research design, methodology, data collection, and analysis. Researcher bias is particularly noteworthy in this study since I co-authored the school district's Reading First grant and acted as both the reading coach and the

researcher investigating my own role as a coach. As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggest, I was aware of the subjective perceptions and biases of both the participants and myself since I served in dual roles. When answering the interview questions, the participants' perceptions may also have been affected and biased by my dual roles. As I interviewed them about my role as the reading coach, I was fully aware of how bias may have shaped what I heard and how it interfaced with my representation of the interviewees' reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In order to be aware of this subjectivity during my data collection, I kept a daily log. Self monitoring, as Erickson (1973) calls it, disciplines subjectivity and helps the researcher become aware of their biases. Throughout all phases of the first year of Reading First grant implementation, I kept a daily log and engaged in rigorous questioning and reevaluation. Although I used reliable and valid instruments for the data collection, my personal involvement in the Reading First implementation, while studying the same, could be viewed as a limitation of the reliability of this study.

Internal Validity

Internal validity, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as truth-value, deals with the question of how the research findings actually match the reality under study. Goetz and LeCompte (1984, p. 95) observed that case study research is "one of the few modes of scientific study that admit the subjective perception and biases of both participant and researcher into the research frame." Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 148) stated that the best way to deal with bias is to be aware "of how [we] slant and shape

what [we] hear, how [we] interface with our reproduction of the speaker's reality, and how [we] transfigure truth into falsity.”

Merriam (1988) suggested six strategies that the researcher could use to ensure internal validity. They include triangulation, member checks, long-term observations, peer examination, participatory modes, and the researcher's bias. The first strategy, triangulation, is the use of multiple methods and multiple sources to confirm research findings. In this case study, I used data from the interviews and daily logs as multiple methods to interpret the role of the reading coach in a rural Reading First school. I also triangulated the perceptions of three teachers and three administrators through a number of ethnographic interviews on the role of the Reading First reading coach, to confirm the findings. The research data were member checked throughout the study as Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested. I gave the interview data and interpretations to the participants from whom they were derived and asked them to verify the information and/or make any changes. The extended nine-month study allowed me to correlate the data and identify any data that might produce bias. This extended time for the study increased the validity of the findings. I also used the strategy of peer examination through ongoing conversations with other Reading First coaches across the state, asking for comments as the findings emerged. The participatory mode of the research encouraged the participants' reactions and confirmation at all stages of the research process. Merriam (1988) believes that this is probably the most effective technique for identifying researcher bias. I became aware of my subjectivity during the data collection and keeping of a daily log.

External Validity

External validity or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call transferability is the extent to which the research can be generalized. Findings from a case study design such as this are not generalizable, however. Erickson (1986) stated that generalizable knowledge is an unrealistic goal for interpretive research. The researcher's aim rather is to extend the understanding of the phenomenon to other studies. Detailed descriptions of the design and methodology enable others to understand similar situations of coaching and to look for patterns that explain their own experiences (Stake, 1978). Comparability is improved by the researcher's providing a rich, thick description of the study and reporting the extent of typicality of the phenomenon that can be extended to other studies. Knowledge is produced by the prevalence of separate case studies over time.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These are the results of my study in answer to seven research questions concerning my role as a reading coach during the first year of my district's Reading First grant implementation in 2003-2004. With these questions, I examined the perceptions of the district teachers and administrators who were directly responsible for implementing the grant and who worked closely with me as one of the reading coaches in the district.

Section 1 of this chapter presents the results of the first three research questions that examined the perceptions of the teachers and administrators regarding the role of the reading coach. These questions were: (1) What were the perceptions of the district's teachers concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach? (2) What were the perceptions of the district's administrators concerning the role of the Reading First reading coach? (3) Were there differences in the ways the district's teachers and administrators perceived the roles of the reading coach? From the transcriptions of my interviews with the six participants, I identified six themes that revealed their perceptions of the role of the reading coach. These themes included: fidelity, resource, voice, assessment, encourager/mentor, and modeling. I present these themes in order according to the ones that elicited the most participant response to the ones that elicited the least response. I created a spreadsheet to visually represent the themes that the participants agreed with strongly, moderately, or did not make any reference to (See Appendix F).

Section 2 examines the roles and duties of the teachers and administrators for which the coach took responsibility. This section reports the answers to research questions 4 and 5: Which roles of the teachers did the reading coach take responsibility for? Which roles of the administration did the reading coach take responsibility for? Through my examination and analysis of the interview data, I sought the participants' perceptions of the roles of the coach, although I analyzed the data from my own daily coaching log to determine the specific roles that I actually assumed as the reading coach and the time that I spent in those roles.

Section 3 discusses the professional development I provided as the coach, in answer to research question 6: What professional development opportunities did the reading coach provide? The data from both my transcriptions of the interviews of the participants and from my daily coaching log answer this question.

Section 4 presents the results of the data analysis of my coaching log, which documented the time I spent in various coaching roles and activities. These results answered research question 7: How much time did the reading coach spend in each of the coaching roles?

Section 5 identifies the conflicts and concerns of the teachers and administrators regarding the reading coach, which emerged from the data reduction.

Section 1: The Teachers and Administrators' Perceptions of the Role of the Reading First Reading Coach

As the transcribed interviews revealed, the teachers conceptualized the roles of the reading coach according to six themes: fidelity, resource, voice, assessment help, encourager/mentor, and model.

The Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of the Reading Coach

Fidelity

Judy defined fidelity:

Fidelity to me, at least in the way that we had been informed before, was that all of the classrooms of each grade were doing the *same things* and the same types of things so that all of the children were getting the same type of education.

Judy was explicit that the role of the coach should assure fidelity to the Reading First grant program. She described the reading coach as someone who was making sure that the teachers were doing what they were mandated to do. These mandates included teaching reading during a 90-minute block each day, monitoring the progress of the students, and providing students who were identified “at risk” with additional small group reading instruction. Judy also made several references to fidelity to instruction. She understood that the grant mandated the use of the newly adopted, scientifically research-based reading series and that those teachers had been asked by the administration to all be “on the same page.” Judy viewed the role of the coach as keeping all the teachers “on the same path.” Judy was extremely concerned that she might be tempted to supplement the reading series, veering off the prescribed path. She wanted to use valid instruction,

teaching with fidelity, but at the same time was fearful that she might wander off from the scripted reading series. Judy explained:

The role of the coach is making sure we are where we are supposed to be and doing what we are supposed to be doing. This includes the 90 minutes a day, tracking our students, assessing who is where and who needs additional help, who is doing fine, who's falling apart, and who's gaining.

I guess I see the reading coach as kinda keeping us all in the same little *path* and not letting anyone wander too far off and getting lost. Kinda keeping us all moving *in a parallel direction towards a common goal . . .* because we can only see what we are doing, we can't see the overall picture.

I hope that the reading coach and I can talk and make plans, and make sure that I *stay on that path*. I have a tendency to wander *sometimes* and *I don't want to do that*. I want to make sure that this is a *valid . . .* model being done, to see if it is going to do what it needs to do. If I do too much extra beyond then, it's, it's not a valid presentation, of the series.

Another teacher, Sue, defined the term fidelity by giving an example:

If a child came from another building *in this district* that they would be pretty well on target with what I'm doing. That they would just ease into this classroom and, uh, be able to accomplish what my classroom's doing.

Sue reiterated the message given by the state of maintaining fidelity to the program, which means that each teacher of each grade is teaching the same material at the same time and administering the same assessments. Sue apparently believes that the role of the coach is to ensure that fidelity to the Reading First program is maintained. She went on:

The reading coach is to make sure that we were teaching the reading that we were supposed to be teaching and the assessments were being done.

At the state level they're talking about . . . what's the word I forget . . . when each grade teaches the same . . . validity. Validity, fidelity, yeah, fidelity was the word I was looking for. And I think maybe they can see that that will happen.

A third teacher, Mary, described fidelity as the way in which the reading series is taught:

All the reading series were so different. You could do it this way, you could do it that way, you didn't have to do that, and you could pick and choose what you wanted to do. This is - you do this. And it's working.

Mary identified the role of the coach as keeping fidelity to the reading series. The coach would assure that all teachers across the grade levels are "doing the same thing." She believes that fidelity to the core reading program is positive for the district. She indicated that in the past, the teachers were all teaching differently and one was not sure what the other was doing.

For fidelity, or as close to fidelity as we can get.

I like it that all the second grade teachers are doing the same thing, if we, as closely as we can do the same thing, so that when we have like a grade meeting like we're having tonight we can talk about it and find out if we are. I mean I think it's a good thing to have fidelity, or at least strive for that . . . but, I don't, I know before we didn't have any clue what each other was doing.

Resource

The teachers identified the role of the reading coach as a resource person—the role the teachers most frequently mentioned. According to the teachers, the coach should act as a resource by answering questions and sharing materials. When describing this role, the teachers identified ideas and materials that the coach brought them. The teachers indicated that they like to be updated on new practices and strategies, and appreciated the coach's sharing new ideas that they could incorporate into their instruction. The teachers also valued the coach as someone they could brainstorm with. They wanted to have conversations with the coach in order to solve problems or to simply bounce ideas off of. Through the conversation with the coach, the teachers could clarify information, and find answers to their questions.

Judy described the role of the coach as a resource. When she has a question concerning instructional strategies or materials to use with a child, the coach could help her make decisions to meet those needs. The coach is also someone who could provide instructional materials for classroom use. She said:

I guess I would like to see them be I guess you could call it the resource person not necessarily coming into a classroom and doing, although . . . coming into model if someone needs to see how a piece works or . . . ya know being there if someone says I need to do *this* and these two children this isn't working what else is available for me to do with them to get them where we need them to be, can you locate something for me? Is someone else doing something differently that might work for me that I haven't thought of yet?

You [the coach] found me the thesauruses, you put up my cards, you helped me brainstorm for a sensory adjective activities.

You're looking into the leveled libraries for us and for the tapes in our desks, and whatever we've asked you, you've done what you could.

Mary also valued the role of the coach as a resource, to answer questions and to bounce ideas off of. She respected the coach as part of the team, working to make instructional decisions for her children.

I like how the coach comes in and talks to you about certain students and gives you feedback on what they see you can either validate what you see, or to point you in a different direction maybe in another way to help them.

Giving me other ideas to help them, and I can voice my concerns to my coach and so we can kind of bounce things off of each other so that its not just me . . . helping these kids. I have somebody else I can go to, as well as my Title I coach. It's a good team effort.

I think it is because the coach lets you know more, what is going on. I can ask her questions and she gives me answers because she knows what is going on in other places. She can coordinate everything.

Sue identified the coach as a resource, who shared instructional materials, strategies, and ideas to supplement the reading series. The coach was also able to answer Sue's questions in a timely manner. Sue appreciated the coach as an observer. She felt that teachers, especially in the outlying buildings, are very isolated. In Sue's view, the

coach brought coherence to the teaching of reading by sharing ideas and working with the teachers to solve problems. She commented:

I think I've asked for a lot of things to help me in kindergarten, which she's [the coach] brought that I haven't had. Materials definitely, ideas, songs that go along with my curriculum. If you need some extra materials or you were missing something I found it got here a lot quicker than it did before.

When you're talking about the reading reading coach, you're talking about the child and the individual child you can talk about. And I think you can relay some of those concerns . . . maybe some of the progress.

I think somebody watching very closely, not watching, observing would be the word . . . is you know, is a good resource for them.

I think . . . sometimes we have, as a teacher, and if you've taught for a long time there's something you know that you could do for a child but you've forgotten, and if you have an opportunity to bounce it off somebody else, you say 'you know I did that before and it worked' I just couldn't quite retrieve it, and I know things come back to me, that I have done in the past and that I knew worked. I just couldn't figure out how to do it again, and, just being able to talk to somebody. When you're in a classroom you become very isolated, and it's really nice to have somebody pop in and out to see that you're still alive.

The reading coach is a good person to have around to . . . fill in gaps. There's are a lot of gaps in the educational system, with reading, and people do not have all of the answers and somebody that they can get to quickly to ask before whatever they needed to know is forgotten. I think that's one of the main things, uh, when you're in an outlying building like we are, the answers to questions sometimes take months, and by then it's way too late or it's completely forgotten and doesn't matter anymore. And I think that if you can get it, that question answered or a problem solved quickly, it benefits everybody, teachers, child, and parents, whatever . . . You know its something that I think its nice having somebody around.

Voice

The teachers interviewed articulated the notion that the reading coach would open communication, or be their voice. Acting as a liaison between the teachers and the administrators, the coach would pose the teachers' questions, concerns, and needs to the administration and get clarification in a timely manner. The teachers also wanted the coach to improve dialogue between them and their colleagues. The teachers wanted to work together in grade-level teams to solve problems and share ideas. They also wanted

the coach to share strategies that were working across the district. The teachers viewed themselves as isolated professionals who valued professional dialogue between colleagues.

Communication was a significant issue in the district because of the physical distance between the five elementary schools. In the outlying buildings there was only one teacher per grade level. The principal's office was located in the main elementary building, so she did not visit the outlying buildings daily. During the first year of Reading First implementation, the teachers had many questions concerning policy and practices, and needed clarification. In the past, questions were not addressed by the administration in a timely manner and communication faltered. Thus, the teachers held the role of the coach's voice in high regard for facilitating this communication.

Judy used the coach as a voice to communicate with the administration and to clarify information for her coming from the administration. She was unclear about expectations and wanted to make sure that her instructional practices were within the confines of the grant. Judy was concerned that if her questions were not answered and information was not clarified, then she might strike out on her own and not keep fidelity to the grant and the newly adopted reading series. Judy remarked:

So finding answers I guess I can . . . do a lot of things, but if I am in the dark and don't know *what's* expected, then I don't know where to go, so I'll do what I think is best for my students to get them to where I think they need to be at the end of the year. I would rather do it within the confines of where we are supposed to be, but if I don't get answers than I have a tendency to . . . *strike out on my own* (laughs).

Sue expressed hope that the coach would open communication between the teachers and the administration. She also valued sharing of ideas with teachers from other classrooms or other buildings. Sue believed that I spent most of my time as the coach

serving as a liaison between the teachers and the administration. In this regard, she offered:

Hopefully the reading coach will bring some connection with the rest of the district.

I think the reading coach can be a good liaison from teacher to administrator. I think the paperwork and the rules and regulations of public schools are overwhelming anymore, especially at the administrative level.

Most of the coach's time's been spent... a lot of it's been spent liasioning between the administration, which is something I don't think has ever existed before.

The reading coach gets some wonderful ideas from, uh, other classrooms and brings them to us. Teachers are more than willing to share, but we haven't had an opportunity to. Our day is very full.

Mary sees the coach as a voice from the teachers to the administration. In the past, the teachers' voices have not always been heard, she claimed. The coach takes the teachers concerns and feelings to the administration. Issues are resolved or clarified in a timely manner. Mary reported that the coach also shared ideas and instructional strategies between the teachers.

I see the reading coach taking the information to the district level so that . . . we're all on the same page.

I like my reading coach what she just did about going to the administrators and saying 'here's how the second grade teachers feel,' and then coming back and . . saying, 'Well, this is the consensus we have because it's a quicker and easier way than waiting for monthly grade levels, or whatever.'

Just because she [the coach] can bring ideas from other classrooms to me, and say this other second grade classroom's doing it this way so maybe you could try that, which is something that I don't have right now because I'm, I'm all alone.

She knows what the other Reading First classrooms are doing, and . . is able to let me know so that . . .there is communication again.

Assessment Help

Two out of the three teachers noted that the coach was a help with classroom, district, and progress monitoring assessments. The teachers appreciated the coach's

assistance with test administration. They saw the coach as an unbiased evaluator administering and analyzing student data. The coach assisted the teachers in the identification of at-risk students and their specific strengths and weaknesses. The coach provided feedback in the form of coach-teacher discussion on the use of data to drive the classroom instruction.

Although Judy did not make any reference to the coach's role in assisting with assessments, the coach's help with assessments was a valuable asset to Sue who identified this as her favorite role of the coach. Sue appreciated the coach as an impartial assessor who provided feedback and helped plan instruction in the classroom based on the assessment data.

I like the reading coach, I like help with assessment. I think that so far it's been one of my favorite parts, not that I don't like to do assessment, I've been doing assessment for, all my teaching years, which has been quite some time, but, I really like the idea of blending assessment so that I know that it's impartial because we tend to like kids and tend to know, oh, this is one of my brighter ones, they should have be able to do that, and I wonder sometimes if you don't think they did and they didn't really. But I think it's going to show the areas that are maybe weak in my classroom that I need to rework or redo. That I might not have picked up if I had done the assessing myself. Not that I won't do assessing. I do a lot of informal assessing all the time, but I think it's nice to have that, uh, other perspective.

The coach is helping assess and we're getting DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills) going, and I, I think that's what I *need*, and I need the feedback that she tells me that these kids are doing, you know, okay. And not only in my kindergarten class, but also with my kids that I'm doing ok in Title I reading.

Mary sees the role of the reading coach as someone who helps with assessment.

The coach helped her analyze and interpret student data and record progress. The coach also helped Mary use the data to identify children who needed additional assistance. She noted how the coach helped:

Probably helping test the kids. Assess them on where they are and showing me the graphs and running it off on the computer and all that kind of stuff, keeping

records. Um, that's very important to me. Helping me identify kids and what their needs are so that I can teach more directly to their needs.

Encourager/Mentor

Two teachers indicated that the reading coach was an encourager. According to these teachers, the coach gave them support in the implementation of the new core curriculum and in strategy use. The coach encouraged them by supporting instruction in the classroom and providing positive feedback. As a mentor to these teachers, the coach provided feedback on lessons, informed the teachers on alternative classroom practices, and answered their questions.

Judy did not make any reference to the coach's role as an encourager or mentor, but Sue did identify the reading coach as a mentor, who provided support and encouragement on the instructional practices that Sue was using. As she said:

The rapid thing is just support, hey, am I doing this right? Is this what I should be doing, what do you think, what's going on in other places? And I think I've got that feedback, that its pretty similar going on across the district from what I'm picking up.

Mary also saw the role of the reading coach as an encourager and mentor offering feedback on lessons and providing support. As she explained:

Exactly that, a coach. And a coach is somebody that . . . encourages you. A coach is somebody that stops you if you're doing something wrong, in a nice way. And a coach is somebody that prompts you to 'keep going, you're doing a good job.'

Well, she's already helped me in my classroom. She's commented on a lesson, and . . . proved to me that I was doing it the right way. And . . . I ask her all kinds of questions, and she keeps me informed as to what I should do, and should be doing, and that I'm doing an okay job.

Model

When I interviewed the teachers on my role as the Reading First reading coach, only Judy made reference to the coach being a model. She noted the coach “[would come] in to model if someone needs to see how a piece works.”

The Administrators’ Perceptions of the Roles of the Coach

My interviews with the three administrators revealed five themes concerning the coach’s roles: fidelity, modeling, being an encourager, a voice, and someone that can help with the assessment of students.

Fidelity

Larry, the superintendent of schools, saw fidelity to the newly adopted reading series as a strength of the Reading First grant program. He believes that one of the biggest accomplishments of the Reading First coach was the implementation of fidelity to the program across the district. Teacher fidelity to the program and to the reading curriculum he believes is crucial to the success of the grant. Larry’s classroom observations verified the teachers’ fidelity to the program: “What was being taught in one classroom is being taught in the next, not with 100% fidelity due to teacher’s individual styles but with confidence.” Larry elaborated:

The improving and the facilitating of fidelity is one big one. I think that’s been providing of workshops, on-going professional education.

One of our goals with the grant was that we would work to support and develop teacher fidelity. So I think that is one that sticks in my mind as I reflect.

All of the indicators, I as an educator am looking for is to improve student performance by having the teachers using the best practices with fidelity.

The implementation of the grant itself I would say has been outstanding in many areas, teacher fidelity to the program and implementation toward the curriculum. It is seen as an accomplishment of the coach and the strength of the Reading First grant.

When the superintendent of schools was asked, “Are you looking for fidelity?” he responded, “Oh absolutely. And I see that word being every bit as important as we thought it was going to be and maybe even more so. I am seeing, and I have the luxury of going to the first grades that are back to back and I see the same lesson essentially being taught in a very comfortable level by teacher. 1A just for example and teacher 1B are teaching the very, maybe the same lesson. Not in a *robotic* fashion but using the same strategies and seeing the same good reaction from students. I do not see 100% fidelity but mine is a very limited view. There are individual teaching styles, there is individual pacing, and I think there is some individual confidence levels of teachers that will always be a variable.

Patricia, the district curriculum coordinator, felt the coach’s role was to ensure fidelity across the Reading First schools. She referred to fidelity as assuring that reading instruction is consistent in every classroom, and sounding the same. As she explained:

The reading coach has taken over every small detail of seeing that we’re getting our core reading program off and running in a manner where it’s being taught the way it’s supposed to be taught and with fidelity.

Without reading coaches, I don’t think we would have someone to help again help with fidelity. I hate to keep using that word but that is a good word because it does talk about seeing what is happening in reading instruction is happening consistently and regularly in and across the Reading First schools.

We are teaching, and I hate to sound trite when I keep using that term fidelity, but I really do feel that, that the program is being taught very similar in every classroom, because I’ve walked down the halls and it sounds the same, you know what I mean.

Ellen, the elementary building principal interviewed, attributed the fidelity to the core reading program as an accomplishment of the reading coach. She thought that the coach brought cohesiveness to the teaching of reading and saw the teachers become enthusiastic about teaching reading. Fidelity to the core reading series does not mean word for word but that teachers across grade levels are teaching the same material.

The program seems to be working. I see the teachers more enthusiastic, I actually see them really teaching reading now. And what is easy for me as an administrator is to go into one room, to the next room and we’re all doing the

same thing. Not everyone is doing their own thing. I think you brought cohesiveness to the teaching of reading. Teachers are working closer and closer to each other, and they have taken fidelity . . . in this program. I think it's all because of the coaches.

Reading First is not a script, but I think there is still a fidelity that I can go into one classroom and I see teachers teaching and I can go into another classroom and I see basically about the same thing. So, I am seeing the fidelity in those classrooms that I go into. But it is not word for word for word. You know they can do their own creativity a little bit too with this program.”

Modeling

Modeling was identified by the administration as one of the strengths of the coaching role. Even prior to the hiring of a coach, the administration identified modeling as a role of the coach and was looking for someone who would be comfortable and competent modeling lessons in the classroom. The administration connected the modeling role of the reading coach with adult learning theory and identified modeling as a natural way to scaffold and support new learning through guided practice. While the administration valued the reading coach's modeling in the classroom, they were clearly aware that I spent the least amount of my time in this role.

Larry valued modeling as a role of the coach. He believed that through the modeling of lessons the coach would become the teacher's ally. Teachers would trust the coach and would learn new teaching strategies in a non-threatening way. The coach would be available to encourage the teachers and provide support for the implementation of new strategies. However, Larry expressed concern that the coach has not been engaged in as much modeling as he had expected. He would like to see teachers modeling for other teachers as well. Experience has proven to him that this is one of the best learning experiences for teachers.

You are modeling, you are encouraging the teacher to then mimic and demonstrate the skill and you are not critiquing but you are providing supported, non-threatening feedback. So you become that teacher's . . . not best friend, but best ally, where they look to you not as quote, necessarily the expert, but uh, but a sounding board where they, they trust you, they can open up to you and say, I'm not sure of this, how, how did I sound when I did this.

I haven't heard much about modeling. That as reading coaches you have done this modeling, observing, and providing feedback to teachers. I am not certain that's why that is or if that is intended to be that way that that's your minimal, but I hear that being discussed at least apparently.

If you believe other classroom teachers in that building have mastered a certain skill or a certain teaching strategy there is nothing saying that they could not become the model or the peer coach, peer coach for one of their peers.

Once again where teachers have been given some freedom or where they have taken that opportunity on frankly some rare occasions over the years, those have been some of the best learning experiences for our teachers. And they have chosen to critique, ah, coach and model for each other so that's a, that's a long shot that has it's own set of problems, logistically because you obviously have to get subs in and so on and so forth. I don't see that as a bad thing because we want our substitutes to be able to have a chance to learn how to utilize our reading series as well.

Patricia identified modeling as an important role of the reading coach. She connected the modeling of instructional strategies with adult learning theory. She thought that through modeling, the coach would fulfill a natural need though support and guided practice. However, Patricia expressed frustration concerning the lack of time for modeling instruction and hoped that as the year progressed, the coach would have more time to model in the classroom, eliciting questions from the teachers concerning instructional decisions.

If you look at, um, the theory about learning and you look at how people learn and you look how adults learn too. Um, I think it is a natural need which is someone that is there to support and model and give guided practice just like we know that you need to do.

I think its still hard trying to find enough time to, to, or to schedule the right time to go in and model things for teachers.

What I would like to see is more and more opportunity for you to model something.

I guess what I would love to see you be able to have time to do between now and the end of the year would be spend more time modeling for the teachers and,

having time to talk to them about what's happening in their reading instruction, or answer their questions

. . . schedule more of your day, or more of your, more of your time throughout the year, um, to meet those modeling needs that we've talked about.

I guess I should say, for teachers to maybe then question you about why you did something the way you did it.

I guess, again, you've talked about it, so I'm sure that you're going to maintain the goal of trying to get, schedule more of your day, or more of your, more of your time throughout the year, to meet those modeling needs that we've talked about.

When interviewing candidates for the position of reading coach, the principal was looking for someone who would be comfortable modeling in the classroom. Ellen believed that modeling was a necessary role of the coach. Ellen saw the coach scaffolding teachers learning by modeling in the classroom.

The principal said that they were looking for "Someone that could go in and teach to their peers, which is difficult to do, and sometimes you have to do, modeling." Someone that will model, if necessary, and actually do some teaching with the students.

Your role, I saw you as a coach pulling the team together, instructing them, modeling for them, uh, helping them in whatever way that you could, for instance, um, even offering suggestions as far as strategies to help them.

You were there to model, which I think is very nice.

You are in there to model; you are in there to help with testing.

Almost what you do with children is scaffolding effect, the modeling effect . . .

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Encourager/Mentor

All of the administrators expressed the importance of the role of the coach as mentor and encourager. As a mentor the coach would work with teachers, instructing, modeling, and assisting classroom teachers in the use of best practices. The coach would provide encouragement and constructive feedback during this scaffolding process. As an encourager, the coach would help build up the teacher's confidence and support the use of new instructional strategies in the classroom. The coach would also build teacher ownership in the program, empowering the teacher.

Larry saw the role of the reading coach as mentor and encourager as being vital to the implementation of the Reading First grant. Larry charged the coach with enabling all of the teachers to become the best reading teachers they could be. The coach could accomplish this goal by educating, supporting, and encouraging the teachers professionally. The coach would provide instruction on the use of new strategies while partnering with the teachers to develop their own craft. As a mentor, the coach was also responsible for building teacher ownership in the Reading First initiative, empowering teachers to use research-based best practices. Larry further described the coach's role:

The coach is a person who's going to enable all our teachers to become the best reading teachers that they can.

The coaching role would be to support, educate, encourage, um . . . and facilitate that teacher's classroom, structure, and assessment so that the teacher, it brings out the best in the teacher, just in the true coaching mentality from sports that they would, um, they would build that teacher up . . . not artificially but professionally, and give them new skills, new talents, and, encourage them and support the use of those new skills and strategies in the classroom reading instruction.

Enable them and, by encouraging and educating, and helping them develop better skills. Uh, once again, the, the concept of working with that building as a team is important.

So since that time I have seen the key word that keeps coming up for me when I think of the reading coach is the leadership, the facilitating, the encouraging, the encouragement that, ah, you are providing to the teachers and to the parents. I see the reading coach needing to facilitate teacher ownership of the initiative because if the coach can't get the teachers to believe, they're doing something worth while and its meaningful for them, the coach can work his or her head off and tail off and they can't do it alone. Because if the teacher is saying I don't know where we're going with this, I don't know why we're doing it, I don't agree with this, it's not going to happen. So the coach has to fulfill their role, develop that teacher ownership at the building level. And that's, uh, a challenge, but it's, it's essential.

At the classroom level I would hope that it's still a supportive, collegial, professional relationship between the coach and an individual teacher, where you are once again bringing out the *best* in that teacher.

I believe . . . that they are perceiving the reading coaches as facilitators, not as assistants, not as gophers, not as you do it for me, but I see it as a collegial, professional, um, exchange where you are sounding boards for them. You are facilitators for them in terms of what can you do to support their efforts in the

classroom and provide the best reading instruction that's research based for our kids.

I believe the coaches have been there to support the teachers but way more than that. In general, coaches can support the teachers in implementing the program the way it was designed to be implemented. To advise them, to provide in-service, look at what the bottom line is to improve and facilitate the teacher's best performance in the classroom with the Reading First All of the things that will help the teachers become a better teacher on a day-to-day and a year-long basis.

Patricia sees the reading coach as a mentor and confidante, working with teachers by providing ideas, suggestions, and by helping them problem solve. The coach would encourage the teacher and build up their confidence level.

I would hope that those teachers would be able to benefit . . . to have them instruct reading in their classroom at the highest level that they can. Um, the, knowing and feeling that the reading coach is someone that they have confidence in, to be able to give them ideas and suggestions, and if they feel comfortable enough with, to go with, go to them if they see some kind of problem. So I guess I see them as an overseer of the program, as far as keeping us all in line. I see them as a, as a confidante to that, to the classroom teacher. I see them as, as a coach, meaning someone who's going to show them how to do things, and build up their confidence.

Ellen saw the coach as a mentor, instructing, modeling, and assisting classroom teachers in the use of instructional strategies.

Your role, I saw you as a coach pulling the team together, instructing them, modeling for them, helping them in whatever way that you could, for instance, even offering suggestions as far as strategies to help them.

Voice

The administration expressed the notion that the coach would be responsible for fostering communication between the teachers and administrators, and between the administrators themselves, including the superintendent of schools, curriculum coordinator, and two building principals. They emphasized the value of the coach's oral as well as written communication, such as meeting minutes, emails, and note-taking, to

ensure that all members of the Reading First team were informed of the grant status and had a clear understanding of the ultimate goals. The administration expanded on the role of voice to include communication with students, parents, the school board, and the community.

Larry believes that the role of the coach as a voice opened communication between the administration, teachers, coaches, and parents. The coach was able to voice the needs and concerns of the teachers to the administration. Through emails and notices that the coach provided, all the participants were better informed.

I think constantly striving to improve the communication link between the administration, teachers and reading coaches and parents. That's where I have seen the change.

So I think the things that have been notable to me have been the monitoring that you are providing feedback to the teachers and to the administration in terms of . . . what the teachers are saying that they're needing, and how are you all providing it.

Coaches can speak a language that is understandable to the administration, to the parents, to the board, to the community, to the staff and to the students. So at the district level, they are not only symbolic, but they are a literal leader and a walking, talking example of what good reading instruction should be. I have appreciated the emails and the updates that you have provided.

Patricia viewed the role of the coach as a voice for keeping communication open between the teachers and the administration. It was important to her that the administrators were well informed of the teacher needs and were kept up to date with the status of the grant implementation. She felt that written communication provided by the coach in the form of notes, agendas, and meeting minutes kept the leadership team on task, goal oriented, and better informed.

At the district level, um, the reading coach needs to be in close communication with the leadership team, be it the administrative team, be it the district leadership team or the administrative level, however you want to look at it. I think that, that reading coaches themselves need to have a good working relationship with that administrative level to know the direction the district wants to go in . . . all the

time. You know, I think they have to have knowledge of that. I don't think it should be something hidden. They can't be down there doing their job if I'm expecting one thing in achievement, or the superintendent's giving me direction and I'm writing goals to do one thing. I think we have to have a good communication with the, with the reading coaches.

I think the minutes are pretty up front, you know about what happens at our meetings, and stuff, and I think that's gonna be, I think that's going to be important. I don't think that's something that we did enough of. So that would be something that, I guess, at the district level I want, I want to be able to know that I can sit down with the reading coach and get a good feeling about how things are going. And I think they need to know from me what I expect them to do.

And the minutes for me, for us keep us goal oriented and focused. And that's the reason we've been doing the minutes, because it gives us a time to reflect and read just our goals. And it keeps us all on task, I think, rather than just chattering, you know what I mean. I think you don't have time. I think the minutes are going to serve a lot of purposes. I know I value them.

Taking notes, I think that's helped a hundred percent in everybody's communication. And so I do value that and that would be something I'd like to see you guys continue.

I think, again, that we need to know in general how the program is going, I think we need to know what our general needs that the school's have that are reported from the reading coach.

Ellen made no reference to the role of the coach as a voice.

Assessment Help

The administration identified the role of the coach as being the driving force of the mandatory Reading First assessments. The coach was responsible for training teachers on the administration and analysis of the DIBELS assessment. The coach was responsible for creating an assessment schedule and entering data into the DIBELS website. The coach was also expected to meet with the teachers every two weeks to analyze the DIBELS data. Using DIBELS as a progress-monitoring tool informed the coach and the teacher on the students' progress. The coach and the teacher discussed the students' needs and modified flexible small group instruction based on the specific needs of the children. One of the strengths of the grant implementation identified by the

administration was that the teachers were learning how to use the data to adjust their classroom instruction. However, the role of the coach in driving assessment came as a surprise to the administration, which viewed the district assessments as strong and already in place prior to the reading coach's involvement. The administration identified assessment as the area that the coach spent most of her time on.

But Larry emphasized that the role of the coach as assessment coordinator was a huge step forward for the district. The coach spent much of her time meeting with teachers to analyze assessment data to drive instruction. Larry attributed the success of the administration and interpretation of the DIBELS assessment by classroom teachers to the reading coach.

I think the assessment cannot be over-emphasized. I haven't spoken about it, but I think it is a huge step forward with the DIBELS assessment and hopefully the teachers' awareness of what the DIBELS results mean for their future instruction. I think it is a big step forward which I attribute much to the reading coaches.

I think the assessment and the review of those results has been significant so I see you guys spending a lot of time on assessment and that sounds like a good thing in light of us trying to emphasize assessment driving instruction. So, I see that as a very good use of time.

I do believe I heard the teachers in at least a couple of in-services where the teachers were asked to explain what those assessments results meant and not just meant as in good bad but it meant where their students were weak and then they took that and used the results to do what I think is ideal and used the assessment to drive each instruction and inform instruction. I have seen that and I hope that we could continue doing that.

Patricia saw assessment as an overwhelming role for the Reading First coach. The curriculum coordinator did not anticipate assessments as having such a dominant role for the coach, as she had the impression that the district had already been effective with the assessment tools they were using. She saw assessment as a monumental task of the coach

and a critical role since it is how the state would measure the district's success in the Reading First grant implementation.

So, yes, you know I actually never thought about the role you were going to have as far as driving the assessment in this program as much. That's a new one that popped up, um, I don't know why, I just kind of dreamed that that was already going pretty good in that direction, and now I see there's no one else to drive that part, you guys *had* to take it, because it's such a critical part to measuring the success of the program and now it's just a, it turns me and worries me at how monumental that task is alone. But I don't think I anticipated it, I don't, I know I didn't anticipate the, uh, the overwhelming job with assessment is right now.

Ellen saw the coach spending much of her time assessing children, entering and interpreting data, and meeting with the teachers to determine if instructional changes needed to be made. Ellen would like to see the teachers having more ownership in this process. She would like to see them do more of their own testing and determining flexible grouping based on the assessment data. The benefits of coaching that Ellen identified were that the teachers were using assessment data to drive instruction.

Helping out with the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills), the ERDA (Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment), all the assessment and then showing them, showing the teachers, actually taking about what we found from the DIBELS, and what we found from the ERTA, and how, now how can we change? How can we move the strategic and the intensive group? You show them that know that we have this in front of us, we can see and maybe Molly is doing better here so we can switch and change and that was a new concept for the teachers. I don't think that was ever done before.

You are in there to help with testing. I still think the teachers need to do a little bit more on their own with the testing. You've showed them, you have helped them. You put it into graphs for them to read easily. I think they have to go that direction right now, implementing the DIBELS, giving the DIBELS. Actually gathering the data and putting it together. Knowing how to take that data and move those children around. I think a lot of it was done by you or the Title people and not by the teachers themselves, and I would like to see them being able to look at this and say, oh, ok I need to put Johnny here now because he needs this and this particular group. And what's what I see.

Another strength I think the teachers are finally learning how to use the data . . . and I didn't see that at the beginning in fact I think they were frightened by the data. I really see curriculum being adjusted because of what we are seeing from assessments like DIBELS, ERDA, things like that.

**The Similarities and Differences in the Perceptions
of the Teachers and Administrators on the Roles of the Reading Coach**

The teachers and administrators saw that the role of the coach was to ensure fidelity, be an encourager/mentor, act as a voice, be a resource, help with assessments, and model instruction. They indicated that the coach was making certain the grant was being implemented and followed according to the state's expectations. Fidelity to the grant, including the Reading First approved core reading series and the use of the mandatory assessments, was the responsibility of the coach, according to the teachers and the administrators. This meant the coach was to guarantee that the teachers in the Reading First schools were in compliance with the grant. The administrators and teachers agreed that as an encourager/mentor, the coach was expected to support and encourage the teachers in learning and implementing the grant mandates. Both felt that communication was a role of the coach in being a voice linking the teachers and administrators, and in keeping all the administrators informed of the progress of the grant implementation. The teachers and administrators both saw the coach as an assessment coordinator. The coach also helped assess the children and met with the teachers to analyze the data to make instructional decisions.

Differences did exist between the perceptions of the teachers and the administrators on the roles of the coach. They did not share the view of the coach as being a resource or someone to model instruction in the classroom. Nor did the teachers emphasize modeling as a role of the coach. Yet the administrators clearly believed that this modeling was a critical component and benefit of the grant. The administrators identified modeling to be a role of the coach, even prior to advertising the First Reading

coach position. The administrators saw this as a means of professional development and of scaffolding learning for teachers in the classroom. With the coach's help, the teachers could transfer their newly acquired skills into their classroom teaching, and fine-tune them through the modeling and feedback process. The teachers frequently referred to the role of the coach as a resource, but the administrators made no reference to it. The teachers appreciated new ideas and strategies that the coach shared. The coach was also a resource for the teachers by providing answers to questions and acting as a sounding board for the teachers.

Section 2. Roles of the Administrators and Teachers for Which the Coach Took Responsibility

Roles of the Teachers for Which the Coach Took Responsibility

My transcribed interviews confirmed that the teachers and the administrators agreed that the coach's role did not take any responsibilities away from the teachers. In fact, the administrators thought that my role as coach empowered the teachers. The principal did comment, however, that a few teachers relied heavily on me as the coach to help with their assessments.

The Teachers' Perceptions

When asked if my role as coach took away any from any of the teachers' roles, Judy simply stated, "No, I wouldn't say so." Mary replied, "No." Sue did not comment on this.

The Administrators' Perceptions

Larry, the principal did not observe that the coach took away any of the roles of the teacher. As he said:

I hope not and in my observation I do not see our coaches having minimized the entire teachers' role. On the contrary, I think it would be a negative sign of coaching in my opinion if the coach had any lessening of the teachers' influence. The coach should engage and empower, build confidence in the teachers. So the teacher has the confidence to say yes I know I can do this, my coach advised me and showed me that this is correct. This is the appropriate implementation and best practice. On the contrary, it should empower and build the teachers role to be more vocal with the quality of assessment. I have heard and seen that example several times.

Patricia, the curriculum coordinator, believes that the coach did not take on any roles of the teacher either. She believes the coach actually empowered the teachers. Her response was:

No. No. Absolutely not. I think you [the coach] actually empowered the teachers. I think that they had a greater role in Reading First than they would have if they didn't have some kind of leadership there or support or whatever you want to call it. You know that coaching element gave them the, um, the empowerment, and I think that is what I can't take away from you. You know what I mean when I walk out and I talk to those people, they are proud of what they are doing. So, no, I don't think you minimized their role at all.

Ellen, the elementary school principal, made reference to some classrooms in which she thought the teachers relied too heavily on the coach. She commented:

I think in some classrooms, yes. I think some teachers used you [the coach] as they should, where others I think looked at it like "I can't do it so you do it." So I do think that is a weak area that we need to work on.

My daily written log did document the time I spent in roles that had previously been the responsibility of the teachers: parent trainings (2%), meetings with parents (3%), assessment of students (16%), and data analysis (5%). The traditional teacher roles that I carried out accounted for 26% of my time. During the school year, I held two parent

meetings to inform the children's parents about the Reading First grant and its components. These parent trainings accounted for 2% of my time. In addition to the parent-teacher meetings traditionally held at the beginning of the school year, I organized two additional parent trainings to support the Reading First grant. These trainings included an informational parent luncheon, a parent training on computer software, and a parent meeting to share the students' reading performance profile. The parent luncheon held in January gave parents an overview of the Reading First grant, especially the newly adopted core curriculum and assessment components that were being used to diagnose and monitor student progress in reading performance. Later in the year, I added a parent component that provided interested families with laptop computers for take-home use. This allowed students to practice reading skills at home, using a supplemental reading computer program called Successmaker. Parents and students were trained after school by a classroom teacher on the use of this program. Instructional sessions the children completed using the software were monitored online by the classroom teacher.

Additionally, I organized and chaired individual parent-teacher meetings during the months of April and May, which accounted for 3% of my time. The purpose of these meetings was to share with parents their child's reading assessment profile. The student profiles included the results of classroom assessments, standardized assessment, diagnostic assessments (ERDA), district assessments (writing prompts, DIBELS), and progress monitoring data (DIBELS).

The administration of student assessments, previously the responsibility of the classroom teacher, accounted for 16% of my time. Mandatory Reading First assessments included the administration of the ERDA (Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment), and

the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills). The DIBELS assessment was administered three times during the year, fall, winter and spring, to all kindergarten through third-grade children. This assessment determined which children were performing at the benchmark level (according to the DIBELS sub-tests) and which children needed additional instructional support. The children performing at benchmark were not required to have additional small group direct instruction. The children who performed below the benchmark on the DIBELS were classified into two groups, strategic and intensive. The children in the strategic group were required to have an additional 30 minutes a day of small group, direct instruction while the intensive-group children were required to have an additional 60 minutes of direct, small group instruction per day. According to the Reading First grant, the progress of the strategic- and intensive-group children needed to be monitored using the DIBELS progress monitoring assessments. The children identified in the strategic group were reassessed every four weeks, while the intensive-group students were assessed every two weeks. Progress monitoring was primarily my responsibility. I was also required to administer an individual diagnostic assessment (ERDA) to all the children in the strategic and intensive groups. I recorded and analyzed all the data and was required to enter the DIBELS results into the data base www.dibels.uoregon.edu. I met with the classroom teacher and Title I reading specialist bi-monthly to review the assessment results and discuss instructional modifications and regrouping. This data analysis accounted for 5% of my time as the reading coach.

Roles of the Administrators For Which the Coach Took Responsibility

My review of the transcribed interviews of the three administrators showed that they believed that the Reading First reading coach took on some of their responsibilities. These responsibilities included the coordination of assessment, informing the administrators about the grant status, and serving as a “psuedo-administrator” in the outlying buildings. The teachers were unaware of these administrative responsibilities put on the coach. The data from my coach’s logs documented the administrative duties I assumed as the reading coach, i.e., taking on general administrative duties, planning professional development of teachers, performing grant writing, and doing outreach.

The Teachers’ Perceptions

When asked if the reading coach had assumed responsibilities of the administrators, Sue said, “None that I know of. I think they [the coach and administration] were in their own roles which were established.” Judy replied, “I don’t believe so, not in my experience. That doesn’t mean it hasn’t everywhere else but not here.” Mary did not respond to the question.

The Administrators’ Perceptions

Larry had concerns about the coach taking on an administrative role. But he understood that the reading coach has taken on the coordination of assessments, which the administrators used to be responsible for. He reflected on the coach’s role in relation to his own:

I hope not in an official capacity. But truth be told, this nebulous thing of the ideal administrator has always been that your principal can be your friend, that your

principal can be your advisor, your principal can be your coach. In the days before there was a coach, anything a coach might have taken on—the role of being an instructional advisor but on a different level. The administrator, just by the nature of their semi-authoritarian position and a traditional view, couldn't do the things that the coach could do, but I hope our coaches are not being administrative. But clearly, coordinating assessments are something administrators do. So, no, I would say it is not the role of a coach to take on an administrator's role. A coach's activity can be complementary to an administrator and vice versa.

Patricia shared that the reading coach did at times did take on roles that were previously administrative. This administrator admitted that the administrators got overwhelmed with their jobs and sometimes eased out of programs. In fact, Patricia found the coach's work supportive of the administrators:

I am sure there were times you [the coach] probably wish we would take a little bit bigger role because you ended up doing things that you probably thought 'This isn't really our job, why are we doing this.' I think, um, that you have done an excellent job of keeping us, um, right in there with you and, um, and actually I have to say because I know how easily administrators can get overwhelmed with their other jobs and just kind of ease out of programs and not be part of it. I think you re being an ally worked to keep us all involved, and I think that has been very positive.

Ellen noted that the role of the reading coach minimized the administrators' roles. Once the coach was in the schools, the administrators found themselves spending less time in the classrooms. Ellen commented on the coach filling in for the administrator:

Yes, I think [the coach] has. Because I know that we would have to be in the rooms more than what we can get in, especially this year. It's been a terrible year with this building project, because I feel that we have been out of the classroom way too much!

The data I collected in my daily logs revealed that as coach I assumed part of the roles that were previously the function of the administration. The percentages of the time I spent as a coach on administrative duties were the following: planning (11%), professional development for teachers (11%), grant writing (4%), general administrative duties (11%) and outreach (13%). Together, these roles accounted for 50% of my time

spent as the Reading First reading coach. These administrative duties also included phone calls, emails, paperwork, and documentation of grant status to keep the teachers and administrators informed about the execution of the Reading First program.

To further explain the administrative duties I took on: Planning was the preparation and organization of professional development for primary-level teachers. Preparation included the identification of professional development needs, contacting consultants, organizing training schedules, and obtaining substitute teacher coverage. Planning also involved the creation of and preparation for professional development trainings that I provided. Professional development for teachers referred to my being the training provider as the coach. I met with primary teachers monthly at grade-level meetings, informing them of the requirements, status, and progress of the Reading First grant. During this time, I trained teachers on the use of newly adopted assessments and core components. I also spent time writing a Commonwealth Library grant available to Reading First schools. I met numerous times with the school and local town librarian to determine the needs and choose reading materials for library selections. I was also asked by the administration to communicate with and provide outreach training on Reading First to local educational agencies, including the public libraries, Head Start, parochial schools, private schools, and preschools. Outreach was a requirement of the Reading First grant.

Section 3. Professional Development That the Coach Provided

The perceptions of the teachers and the administrators that I gathered from my interviews were that all of the professional development opportunities that I provided for

the teachers centered on the newly adopted reading series (Open Court) and the use of the mandatory Reading First assessments (DIBELS). My coaching logs documented the fact that 11% of my time during the year was spent on providing professional development for the Reading First program teachers. This time included the planning, preparation, presentation, and organization of trainings provided by the Open Court consultant and myself. Professional development on the use of the core reading series accounted for 80% of the trainings, while 15% was on the use of the mandatory assessments. The remaining 5% of the trainings were informative or supplemental.

The Administrator's Perceptions

Larry was concerned that the professional development provided by the coach was too narrowly defined, focusing primarily on Reading First. He believed, however, that the professional development training did close the communication gap between the teachers and the administrators. As superintendent, his goal for future professional development is to develop a peer coaching model, pairing teachers to coach each other.

Yes I think it definitely has impacted professional development in a positive way. The ideal professional development in my experience has been professional development that has a payback for the classroom teachers in their classrooms by providing information that they can utilize to become a better teacher. I think with the bridging of communication and improving the communication between the classroom teachers and the administration, I would hope our professional development has been more pertinent. We have always tried to make it more, but I believe that the improved communication between classroom teachers and those who actually provide the professional development, and in many cases the coaches, are providing the development,. So I think we have closed that communication loop. So I think it has impacted on professional development in a very positive way.

With facilitating the in-services, with the state, um, support systems as well as the, um, Open Court representatives. The parent workshops and luncheons that

you [the coach] have provided I think have been very notable and I think outstanding. So, those are the big three or four that I've seen.

This year I have noticed this and frankly I won't say this is a weakness, but it is a slight, slight concern. The emphasis on professional development has been work on Reading First implementation issues, and much if not the majority of our in-service time grade-level reading has been allocated to Reading First issues. Not at the expense of, but literally we haven't done some technology work, we haven't done some other standard work, but historically we might have done because we are doing Reading First. And I don't have any reservations about that. In future years we have to balance that out though.

I think in expansion of the coaching responsibilities and opportunities in terms of further building that peer observation, that peer modeling when we have that semi-idealistic community of learners where the coaches model for the teacher, the teachers then implement that instructional strategy and get some feedback from the coach and do that for x number of months or whatever it takes and then build that where the teachers get comfortable and confident enough that they could do some peer-to-peer observations. I think that's one of your [coach's] goals for the future, so I see that as when we get to that point then I think we are getting there. The other thing that I have seen is when we get the teachers to become more vocal, more confident spokespersons on the assessment results and meaning of those assessment results and I think we are getting there with our at-risk lists and the teachers' willingness and awareness of the confidence and to speak about those to parents and to peers. So I think we are headed in that direction of teacher empowerment, teacher confidence in using best practices with the Reading First grant.

Patricia saw the reading coach as a catalyst of professional development for the district. She emphasized professional development on the Open Court series, and the administration emphasized the use of the mandatory Reading First assessments. Patricia identified assessment as a future professional development need for the district teachers. She said she would like to reevaluate the assessment tools we are currently using and build on them.

We wouldn't have had the level of professional development from Open Court that we had if it hadn't been for you coming back and saying we need more or we need this extra one. Talk and see if we can get one more day or this and that.

Well, I would say the emphasis if you looked at what we needed as emphasis—without a doubt the first thing I think we say is that we needed to feel comfortable implementing our Open Court reading program, and I think that was an emphasis.

The other thing they needed and you followed through on was, um, to take the information from the DIBELS assessment and give them the background they needed to be comfortable administering and interpreting it. That has already been proven. They said 100% of the people felt comfortable giving and administering and interpreting the DIBELS, so, um, when I look at, um, at the two main thrusts, I see how to implement our core reading program, how to perform our assessments, and then I saw numerous other instructional strategies that you felt might be helpful in their classrooms that you seemed to emphasize.

We do need to look at assessment even further. We have a couple of areas we need to emphasize there. One is, as you talk about the fidelity of assessment in Open Court, in our core reading program. Yeah, I know we need to look at what we are going to do there. We need to look at that comprehension section of assessment for the second and third graders.

Ellen indicated that the emphasis on district professional development has been on how to administer and interpret the results of the mandatory Reading First assessments, DIBELS and ERDA. This principal cited future professional development goals in fluency instruction.

This year? I think a lot of it was the DIBELS and the ERDA and how to read them and what to do with them. It is believed that the grant impacted professional development. I think it has . . . even with our grade level meetings you [the coach] were given the opportunity, I think at every meeting, if I am not mistaken, to do in-service for the teachers. I think that was really nice for them too, to come together and have that in-service. So yes, I think that it has.

For the entire district I would, well, obviously we have a need for strategies with fluency, and I think not even the lower grades but with the intermediate grades and I *really* think we really need to do something about that.

The Teachers' Perceptions

All three teachers agreed that the professional development provided by the reading coach focused solely on the newly adopted, scientifically based reading research (SBRR) series, Open Court, and the mandatory Reading First assessments (ERDA and DIBELS).

Judy felt that Reading First impacted the district-provided professional development, which focused on the Reading First implementation.

Because many of the in-services or opportunities that we had were directly related to, um, Reading First. The various components of Reading First and curriculum and how it is related to achieving the goals that we are headed for.

Sue claimed that the professional development that the district provided was all centered on Reading First. She identified assessment as the focus of the trainings.

I think that was *all* the professional development we had. It was nothing *but* Reading First and, uh, hopefully it impacted some classrooms.

I think *assessment*. I think that we should have the assessment drive our instruction, and I think that's hit home closer than it ever has in this district before.

Mary responded positively to the impact that Reading First had on the district's professional development, which centered on the use of the core reading series. Mary was interested in additional professional development on the series.

Probably just understanding the Open Court reading series so we can better teach it. You know it is all so new to me that it wouldn't be bad to review at the beginning of next year and just go over what we did this year.

My coaching logs documented that I spent 11% of my time during the year providing professional development for the Reading First teachers. This time included the planning, preparation, presentation, and organization of trainings provided by the Open Court consultant and myself. Professional development on the use of the core reading series accounted for 80% of the trainings, while 15% was on the use of the mandatory assessments. The remaining 5% of training were informative or supplemental.

My coaching log documents that 13 of the trainings we provided were on the use of the Open Court reading series. An Open Court consultant provided nine of the

trainings (69%), while I provided the other four (31%) to address the questions and concerns of the classroom teachers. My time spent on professional development included contacting consultants, arranging for substitute coverage for teachers, determining content to be covered based on needs surveys, organizing the training format as well as the planning and presentation of content information.

At the beginning of the school year, the Open Court consultant trained primary teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, and the speech pathologist on the use of the series. The consultant followed up the training with a question-and-answer session during a two-day stay in November. During this stay the consultant was able to clarify information for the teachers. On the request of the primary staff, the consultant returned in February for three days to model reading instruction in the classrooms, which was followed by teacher-consultant discussion. In April the consultant spent three days coaching teachers. This coaching component consisted of the consultant observing the teacher, teaching 20-minute lesson, and concluding with a 10-minute follow-up discussion.

In response to the teachers' needs, I provided four one-hour trainings on the use of the Open Court core reading series. Topics included core assessments, workshop activities, pacing, grading, successes and barriers. In the months of October and November I ran grade-level meetings after school to clarify core instructional needs. In February the primary teachers met with me during grade-level meetings to discuss and plan the upcoming modeling component provided by the Open Court consultant. Teacher input was used to inform and design in-class professional development provided by the consultant. Specific questions concerning core instruction were addressed. In April I held

a training and shared the accomplishments of the staff. Artifacts such as student work, photographs, and teacher-created materials were shared. All four of these trainings were centered on the adoption and implementation of the core reading series.

The DIBELS assessment accounted for 15% of the professional development that I provided. These trainings were held in September, March, and April. In September I trained the teachers on how to enter student data from district and progress-monitoring assessments into the DIBELS website. In March I trained the teachers to analyze student data, downloaded from the DIBELS website in the form of classroom, grade level, and district reports. In April I trained the teachers on how to enter, review, and print additional reports from the DIBELS website. Following each of these trainings the teachers met with grade-level teams to determine patterns and generalizations of student performance base on the data they reviewed.

Four (5%) professional development opportunities were not directly related to the Open Court reading series or the DIBELS assessment. These training were informational or supplemental. At the beginning of the school year (August), I held an informational meeting to inform the teachers of the grant mandates and to introduce myself. I provided supplemental trainings on strategies that would support the Open Court series. The state technical assistant (TA) modeled the use of interactive read alouds, a comprehension strategy, in primary classrooms. I followed up this modeling with a training on the theory and significance of this strategy use. I conducted another supplemental training on fluency activities during the month of March.

Section 4. How Much Time the Coach Spent in Various Coaching Roles

In my coaching log, I documented how I spent my time every day. I recorded the time in hours rounded off to within 15 minutes of an hour. In my data analysis, I broke down my roles into 18 categories: unrelated tasks, grant writing, planning, professional development of the coach, professional development of the teacher, parent trainings, meetings with parents, outreach, meetings with the technical assistant, meetings with administrators, meetings with teachers, doing observations, modeling, co-teaching, performing administrative duties, and participating in coach and teacher conferences.

However, the role that I spent the most time on (over one 110 hours) was in assessing students, which accounted for 16% of my total time as the reading coach. I spent the next highest amount of time (over 91 hours or 13%) in my own professional development as a reading coach. Altogether, I spent 78 eight hours or more planning (11%), performing administrative duties (11%), and providing professional development for teachers (11%). My meetings with the administration occupied 51.25 hours or 7% of my time. I spent over 25 hours as follows: analyzing data (5%), conferencing with teachers (4%), grant writing (4%), and meeting with the state technical assistant (4%). I spent less than 24 hours in each of these roles: meeting with parents (3%), engaging in unrelated tasks (3%), meeting with teachers (2%), and providing parent trainings. I spent the least amount of my time, less than seven hours during the year, observing reading instruction (1%), modeling (1%), co-teaching (1%), and doing outreach (1%).

Section 5 Conflict and Concerns of the Administrators and Teachers

Concerning the Role of the Reading First Coach

The data I collected through the interviews confirmed that the administrators were unclear about the role of the reading coach. They had concerns that my role might be more administrative and that I might spend more time implementing the grant and not enough time supporting the Reading First teachers in their instruction. The administrators' ambiguity about the role of the coach left them questioning their own expectations of the reading coach.

As early as September 2003, the district's administration had concerns about the role of the reading coach. The administration described the primary role of the coach as overseeing the grant implementation, following state directives, and serving in the role of an administrator. In the administration's view, the secondary role of the coach was to implement a peer coaching model in the school, working with teachers collaboratively to develop and refine skills in reading instruction.

The Administrators' Perceptions

Larry expressed reservations concerning the role of the coach as being the grant implementer versus the peer coach working with the teachers. He did not want the coach's time to be spent on grant administration at the expense of working with the Reading First teachers. Larry's priority for the coach's role was to work with classroom teachers to improve reading instruction.

It's essential that they're [the reading coaches] aware of what are the requirements and indicators of success as measured by the grant. But frankly, some of those features of the grant could be looked at as more administrative, and I would not

want our reading coaches to be overly driven by the grant at the expense of working with the teachers. So I think that there should be a reality check done periodically: Are they coaching the teachers or being a slave to the grant? And I would hope there would be some balance. My first priority for the reading coaches would be: Are they making great reading instruction happen in the classroom? And the grant's going to take care of itself.

I think it's clear, teacher fidelity is not going to be present with a substitute teacher or a student teacher who might not be that experienced. And I guess also the intensity. I won't call it a weakness [of the coach] but a concern. How do we maintain the teacher intensity and maintain that fidelity, and also the training for new teachers? Overall, I would not see a weakness in I think there are overwhelming strengths and very few notable weaknesses.

The problem as identified by Patricia was that the role of the coach was constantly changing and expanding. She was unclear as to what her expectations of the coach were.

But she defined the primary role of the coach as overseeing the grant:

You know I have to say to you that the role in my mind is constantly evolving still, and that's a problem because I think that we need to get something written down, and we have to get at least some direction.

But again, um, just as I said earlier, the job description's still a problem, but the role keeps, keeps expanding I guess, almost I guess I would say the word is expanding, based on needs that come from my attention from the staff.

I think they [the coaches] need to know clearly what we expect of them. I wish I knew clearly what I expected of them right now because it would be a lot easier to tell them what I expected of them, if I knew what I expected of them. But I don't right now, if you want to know the truth, and it's difficult, but I can live with that because I think by midyear we need to sit down and talk about what was, what's working well and what needs to be looked at. And at the end of the year.

I looked at it as the primary role being someone who was going to oversee or, I don't want to say supervise, that's not what I mean, but 'oversee' I guess would be the word, the implementation of the Reading First grant in the two schools. Kind of the, like, key player that was going to keep everybody on board and stretch what we had and keep us all on task. And that still is . . . one of the places that I think this person needs to be an expert in, is what is required in this grant and are we still going the course, are we still sailing the course?

Ellen saw the coach as somewhat of an administrator, someone who understands the grant and will be responsible for its implementation.

We have a grant to follow and I think someone that understands that grant, and will make sure that everything that we said that we would do in that grant would

be accomplished . . . and also to someone that could work with the administrators. I guess I sort of, as a reading coach, consider you sort of as an administrator . . . just someone that we can work with.

The Teachers' Perceptions

Judy was concerned with fidelity and did not agree that all the teachers should follow a script. She believed if the teachers taught by following a script they were not teaching children to be independent learners but were acting as a font of knowledge. Judy thought that the role of the coach would be difficult to fulfill. She viewed the role as two jobs in one—the first being administrative, keeping the district teachers on parallel paths, and the other in helping the teachers in their day-to-day accomplishments.

If we want our low kids to succeed and our top kids to excel, we have to be able to go beyond . . . whatever this little box is that we seem to be *stuck in* at the moment that says, you know, if, if, if you know if you're doing exactly what they're doing and you can leave one room in the middle of a sentence and walk down the hall and hear the end of the sentence, that *scares me*. *I just*, either I'm getting too old and its time to leave, or, or there's something *really* scary going on in education. And I have always felt that my main job was to teach students to learn how to learn, so that whether I *was there* or there was no one there, they still knew how to find out what they needed to know. To be independent enough to say, 'hmm, this is what I need to know, this is where I can go to find it, and to do it' . . . and it sounds like we're getting back to . . . someone who is a font of knowledge standing up front, and there's too much information for us to be a font of knowledge. We can do process, we can do concepts, but content depends on the group of students and what their interests are.

I guess, I am thinking . . . Reading First wants us to teach to standards and specific skills and areas of reading that apply, and I would hope that it's not intended to be as scripted as you know you walk into one classroom and hear the beginning of a sentence and leave and go to the next classroom and hear the end. Every class is a little different; every group of students needs maybe a little bit of an approach even though they are all learning the same basic skills. I *hope* it is not that structured.

I have *big concerns only* because . . . this is my, what did I decide last night, thirty-second year of teaching. Every class is *so different*, and its just not possible to teach each class *exactly* the same and get the same results . . . because every student is an individual and, and I, I guess my concern is that . . . somebody up there somewhere who develops all of these things . . . possibly is from a business background where if they receive and begin with all the same raw materials and

they do the same process with them, they get *identical* end products, and, and that works for business and we have come to expect that kind of quality control from business. Unfortunately, schools don't . . . get raw materials that are *equal* to each other. They're all different, they're all individuals, one is not necessarily better than another, they're just different and unique, and they have . . . needs that don't always overlap as consistently as we would like them to and . . . I don't feel that a one-fits-all curriculum is the way to go if we want each of our students to achieve their highest potential. I think we need to find out where they are and what they know, how they learn and, um, what interests them, and when you do that, then you can start them moving . . . and you can teach any process using just about any, any content . . . and still accomplish it. My favorite example is, you know, if you want to teach a child to read and you give them . . . fairy tale books and they're into non-fiction facts about animals or trains . . . you're going to turn them off and they're never going to either learn to read well or like to read. But if you give them factual animal books to learn to read, those students will excel and soar . . . and the reverse is true, if you give . . . kids fairy tale books it isn't going to work. But can you teach the skills necessary to be a good reader regardless of which content? *Yes you can.*

The one thing that I've noticed the most is that . . . there isn't as much time . . . to read (laugh) as there was in years past, and, and it strikes me as rather ironic when the whole grant is called Reading First (laughs). And I have to carve time out of, out of other curriculum to just let them have time to sit and read.

I think that is where it is going to be difficult for the reading coaches as it is two jobs in one. You know the district level of keeping the parallel paths and keeping everyone moving is more of an administrative position where the . . . building level was, is in the trenches helping *with* the day-to-day. Well, how can we get this accomplished? What can we do with this, so this is kinda a whole . . . different aspect?

Sue believed that fidelity to the Reading First program would be difficult to implement. She did not believe that everyone could teach in the same way.

I think it's a tough thing to pull off because of personalities. Uh, I think benchmarks can be used, you know you should be here, you should be finishing this up or, I think they can be done that way, but *exactly* how everything's taught, there's going to be some difference. I mean, I'm not sure . . . with, with fidelity how . . . um, how targeted it has to be. I'm hoping it can be in a range and it still works very well.

Summary

Despite the administrators' concerns, both the teachers and the administrators involved in Reading First found the multiple roles of the reading coach to be valuable. The teachers desired feedback on lessons taught and expected the coach to answer their questions concerning instruction. The administrators expected the coach to coordinate and provide professional development on assessments and the core reading series mandated by the Reading First grant. Both felt the coach could continue professional development in the classroom by supporting the teachers' transfer of learning about the program and strategies for teaching reading. The coach could help the teachers acquire new skills by team teaching, modeling, and observing, and thus help them fine tune their instructional methods. The coach could encourage the teachers through this scaffolding process.

Both the teachers and the administrators saw the coach as an assessment coordinator. The teachers appreciated the coach's help with assessing their students and saw the coach as an unbiased evaluator who could administer and analyze student data. The teachers valued the coach-teacher meetings to identify at-risk children and to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The coach and the teachers discussed student data to make instructional decisions in the classroom. The administrators saw the coach as the driving force in the assessment process, since I spent much of my time in this role. The time spent on assessments was important, however, since the students' progress shown by these assessments was the only way the state could evaluate the success or failure of the district in its Reading First grant implementation. The considerable time I spent on assessment was a surprise to the administration. They believed that the district's

methods of assessment were already in place and quite valid. The administrators described my overseeing of the assessment of the Reading First grant as an overwhelming undertaking. One of the benefits of the frequent, mandated assessments of the children was that the teachers were learning how to use this student data to adjust their instruction in the classroom.

On the other hand, the roles of the coach discussed in the literature included: observation, modeling, co-teaching, and coach-teacher conferences. As the reading coach in the Reading First program, I spent only six hours or 1% of my time going into the classroom and observing a lesson taught by the classroom teachers. I modeled an instructional strategy in the classroom 1% of the time. As a teacher model, I spent 5.75 hours teaching a lesson in a classroom and giving the teacher an opportunity to observe. I also spent 1% of my time co-teaching with a teacher. Co-teaching involves the coach and classroom teacher jointly planning and teaching a lesson. I spent 6.5 hours co-teaching, and I spent 13% of my time in coach-teacher conferences.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter I discuss the conclusions and implications of my study, which examined how I spent my time as a reading coach in the initial year of my district's Reading First grant implementation, and how the administrators and teachers involved in the program perceived my role as a coach.

In my study, I conducted in-depth interviews with three administrators and three teachers who were responsible for implementing the Reading First grant to determine their perceptions of how I conducted my role as the reading coach. Not only was I the researcher in this study, but also the reading coach. Hence I examined how my own role was perceived by my colleagues, along with a self-examination of my role through the use of my daily written log.

My district was one of the 43 in Pennsylvania that received a Reading First grant under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The initial year of the six-year grant implementation was in 2003-2004. This research was designed in hopes that the data collected would help me to fulfill the expectations of teachers and administrators in future years of grant implementation and to make suggestions to districts as how to effectively implement coaching in their existing professional development plans.

Three conclusions emerged from my data analysis. The first conclusion was that I spent the majority of my time implementing the grant and the least amount of my time in peer coaching activities. This means that fulfilling the expectations of the Reading First grant and the State consumed most of my time and took priority over my role as a peer

coach. The data from my daily written logs and my interview transcriptions validated this conclusion. The second and most surprising conclusion obtained from my interviews was that the *only* role of the coach that all of the participants strongly agreed on was fidelity. It was the perception of both the administrators and teachers I interviewed that my primary role was to ensure fidelity to the grant's implementation and reading instruction. The third conclusion was my identification of the coaching roles that the administrators and teachers valued: reading coach as voice, resource, and mentor/encourager.

Grant Implementation Predominant Coaching Role

The district had three expectations of me as the reading coach for the Reading First grant: I was to protect the integrity of the assessment process, to ensure fidelity of the Reading First initiative, and to provide the teachers with professional development on the core reading series being used in Reading First. Another expectation of my district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education was that I should implement a peer coaching model based on the one developed by Joyce and Showers (1980).

My first conclusion from the analysis of the data from my daily log showed that I spent the majority of my time implementing the Reading First grant and the least amount of my time in peer coaching activities with the teachers. This conclusion was validated through my transcriptions of my interviews with the participants in the program and hence in this study. The data showed that my grant duties included coordinating and administering student assessments (21%) and providing (11%) and planning professional development (11%). These roles were an expectation of the coach identified in the district's Reading First grant stipulations, which stated that my role was to "mostly"

protect the integrity of the assessment process and its results. I was to work with the administrators and teachers in the administration, gathering and recording assessment results. I was also responsible to assure that all assessments were given according to the proposed timelines. Data from my coaching logs indicated that I spent the least amount of time engaged in peer coaching activities, co-teaching (1%), observation (1%), and modeling (1%).

The administrators and teachers viewed my primary role as overseeing the grant implementation and my secondary role as implementing a peer coaching model, that is, working with teachers collaboratively to develop and refine skills in reading instruction. It seems that the administrators were concerned that my role might become more administrative. They expressed concern that I might spend more time implementing the grant and doing administrative tasks, even some of their own, and not enough time supporting the Reading First teachers in their reading instruction. Apparently the teachers had similar concerns; they felt that the role of the reading coach would be difficult to fulfill. The teachers that I interviewed saw the coach's role as carrying out two jobs: the first as administrative—ensuring fidelity to the program, and the second as a peer—helping the teachers in their day-to-day classroom work and development of their teaching practices.

Coordinating and Administering Assessments

Coordinating and administering assessments accounted for 21% of my time. My transcribed interviews confirmed that the participants—with the exception of the one teacher, Judy—strongly agreed that one of my roles was assessment coordinator for the

district. The administrators saw my role as the driving force behind the implementation and training of the mandatory reading assessment DIBELS. The administration saw this as a huge step forward for the district and identified it as the role in which I spent the most time. The administrators in this study believed that for the first time the teachers were using data to drive instruction. They attributed this to the time that I spent discussing and interpreting data results with the teachers. The building principal Ellen expressed the desire to see the teachers taking more ownership in the assessment process, doing more of their own testing, and determining their own flexible groups. The role that the reading coach assumed as an assessment coordinator came as a surprise to the administrators, who believed that the district assessments were strong and already in place. The administrators described the coach's role of serving as an assessment coordinator as being an overwhelming task for her. The teachers appreciated my assistance with assessments, however, especially the time I spent analyzing data, and meeting with them to discuss individual students' needs. One of the teachers, Sue, identified my role as assessor as the most valuable asset and her favorite of my reading coach roles.

Planning and Providing Professional Development

Planning and providing professional development for the teachers participating in my districts' Reading First program accounted for 22% of my time spent as reading coach. According to the district's grant requirements, I was expected to work closely with the core curriculum publisher to develop ongoing professional development. My interviews with the administrators and teachers revealed that they believed that the

content of *all* of the professional development that I provided centered on the use of the newly adopted reading series and assessments. The study participants were concerned that professional development was too narrowly defined, however. My coaching logs indicated that *all* of the professional development that I provided as the reading coach was related to the Reading First grant: 65% was on the reading series; 15% was on assessments; 10% was on informing the teachers about the Reading First grant and its status, and 10% was in training the teachers in a comprehension strategy called interactive read alouds. Model lessons on interactive read alouds were provided by the state technical assistant and followed up with an in-service training that I provided.

Modeling Teaching as a Reading Coach

The time I spent in peer coaching activities, co-teaching, observing, and modeling accounted for only 3% of my time. Little emphasis was placed on modeling instruction in the district's grant. It stated that I was to model instructional practices and techniques in the classroom "as needed." The data from my interviews, however, indicated that the administrators perceived modeling to be an essential role of the coach. They identified modeling as an effective way to scaffold and support teachers' learning. The administrators agreed that one criterion for the reading coaches would be that they would be comfortable and competent with modeling lessons in the classroom. While the administrators identified the modeling of instruction to be one of my strong roles, they were clearly aware that I spent the least amount of my time doing so in the classroom. Thus, the administrators were disappointed that there was little time for me to model instruction in the classroom. On the other hand, Judy was the only teacher who made

reference to modeling as a role of the coach. She stated that the “coach [would come] in to model if someone needed to see how a piece works.” The two other teachers did not associate modeling with the role of the coach.

Modeling, according to the literature review, is an essential role of a peer coach (Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1981, 1988; Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992). Joyce et al. (1992) defined modeling as the enactment of a teaching skill or strategy, either through a live demonstration with children or adults, or through television, film, or other media. Research (Borg, 1975; Edwards, 1975; Friebe & Kallenbach, 1969; Good & Brophy, 1974; Henderson, 1993; Koren, Snow, & McDonald, 1971; Joyce & Showers, 1980; Orme, 1966) supports the fact that modeling has a considerable effect on teachers’ awareness and knowledge of their teaching practices. The results of these studies were extremely consistent: teachers learned the knowledge and concepts that they were taught and applied these skills in the classroom when provided with opportunities for any combination of modeling, practice, and feedback. Poglinco and Bach (2004) confirmed that modeling instruction in individual classrooms was most likely to result in modifications in instructional practices. Joyce and Showers (1988) identified modeling as a critical coaching component to ensure transfer, that is, the integration of new skills into the teacher’s existing repertoire and appropriate use of skills. This underscores the need for coaches to provide modeling in classrooms.

However, there seems to be a conflict between the two roles of the coach, between ensuring fidelity to the grant and implementing a peer coaching model. The term fidelity by definition means conformity. Reading First expects funded districts to conform to an ideal model. In doing so, the participants must give up their professional

initiative and put faith in the design of the scripted reading programs and mandatory assessments. By following the prescribed reading manual, the teacher presents reading in a systematic, sequential, and robotic fashion. The teacher presents the same instruction to the whole group of students, taking on the role of font of all knowledge, while the children remain passive recipients of the instruction.

On the contrary, the coaching model reflects the social nature of learning, in that we acquire much of what we learn through our social interchanges with others. This notion is consistent with constructivist theory. Coaching levels of activities are differentiated for the teachers based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development. This theory is based on the notion that there is a range of tasks one can achieve if they are assisted by a more knowledgeable or competent other. The feedback provided by the coach should be non-evaluative and enhance teacher problem solving through reflective thinking processes and self-analysis (Garmston, 1987).

Ensuring Fidelity as a Reading Coach

The second conclusion I found when analyzing my role as reading coach from the perceptions of the teachers and administrators was that fidelity was the overriding theme in this study, since it was the only theme that all of the participants strongly agreed on as being my role. This expectation came directly from the Reading First grant, which identified one of my primary roles as serving the district to ensure fidelity to the Reading First initiative. The participants defined fidelity as the consistent and regular reading instruction across Reading First schools. The coach was expected to ensure fidelity to the grant including the newly adopted reading series and the state-mandated assessments.

The Coach and Fidelity

According to the participants' perceptions, it was my responsibility to ensure that all of the Reading First teachers were providing 90 minutes of uninterrupted core reading instruction to their students, using the newly adopted, scientifically based reading series. An additional 60 minutes of small group direct instruction was to be provided outside of the 90-minute block, 30 minutes for the identified strategic group children and 30 minutes for the identified intensive group children. The teachers were expected to teach the core reading series with fidelity, following the instructional manual as designed. I was to ensure that reading instruction across the grades looked and sounded the same. I was also responsible to ensure fidelity to the administration and report the results of the DIBELS, the state-mandated assessments, and assure that these assessments were given according to the proposed timelines.

When I accepted the position of reading coach, I was not aware of the responsibilities described in the district's Reading First grant and the emphasis placed on fidelity. As the coach, I was confused by this expectation because the literature on coaching clearly stated that it should be a non-evaluative, voluntary, mutual agreement between teachers, based on trust. Teachers in the Reading First buildings did not volunteer to work with me but were required to do so. I accepted the position anticipating that teachers would view me as a peer working collaboratively with them to obtain and/or refine instructional strategies that they identified. Instead I was perceived as the "grant police" making sure that the teachers were providing reading instruction according to the prescribed manual and administering assessments according to the prescribed timelines.

Professionally I was uncomfortable with the Reading First mandates concerning the adoption of a scientifically based reading series and the DIBELS assessments. Not only was I aware of the criticisms concerning the NRP, but I had also evaluated many of the phonics studies included in the NRP analysis and determined that they lacked reliability and validity. I was also skeptical of the fact the Open Court and DIBELS assessed only isolated reading skills that could be easily measured. These measures emphasized phonemic awareness and phonics rather than reading comprehension. I was terribly concerned that small group guided instruction using leveled reading materials matched to the children's instructional level was replaced throughout the district with a basal text that was taught to the whole group using material only at grade level.

Ideally, my primary role should have been as a peer coach providing professional development and support to the teachers in the areas they identified that could improve their classroom instruction (Cooter, 2003; Fullan, 1991; Joyce 1986; Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996; Showers, 1982). This support should have involved organizing school-wide professional development and structuring in-class training through modeling and co-teaching. Observations also would have allowed me to provide feedback to support the teachers' implementation of new instructional methods. I could have helped form study groups on topics that the teachers themselves identified as needed for improving their own instruction.

Moreover, my role as reading coach should have been tailored to each of the teachers I worked with, depending on their level of skill and need. As a peer coach I should have been responsible for scaffolding teachers' learning to assist them in achieving the goals they had set (Merenbloom, 1984; Sly, 1992; Wood, 1989; Wood,

Bruner, & Ross, 1976). This scaffolding of learning could have taken many forms, including modeling, monitoring, or organizing instruction. For some teachers I might have modeled instructional practices or assisted in guided practice, with follow up conversation to elicit reflective thinking (Garmston, 1993). For others, I might have acted as a guide, closely monitoring a given group of students while the teacher taught a new strategy lesson to the class. I could have helped the teacher organize and manage flexible small groups for instruction, including creating classroom centers and organizing meaningful independent work in those centers (Obrochta, 1995).

The Administrators and Fidelity

My transcribed interviews revealed that the administrators perceived my coaching role as ensuring fidelity, and agreed that this was one of my biggest accomplishments as a Reading First coach. According to the curriculum coordinator, I took over every small detail of seeing that our reading program was being taught the way it was supposed to be taught, with fidelity to the grant. Fidelity to instruction was believed to be critical to the success of the grant and viewed as a positive accomplishment of our district. The administrators were pleased to see fidelity to reading instruction across the district. They described evidence as they moved from one classroom to the next, hearing the same lesson taught, almost word for word, but with individual style and pacing.

In response to the additional pressures placed on the districts to achieve annual yearly progress, the administrators were willing to conform to the grant mandates. Reading First not only provided financial support to the district but also promised low-performing schools that with fidelity to the grant's implementation, all children would be

reading on grade level by the end of third grade, based on standardized test scores. The administrators mirrored the government's top-down approach in our district, mandating when and how the teachers in grades K-3 taught reading. Through this directive, the administrators were able to control, regulate, and normalize reading instruction, forcing all of the teachers to comply with the results of the NRP medically-based research and to implement scientifically based research programs in the classroom.

The Teachers and Fidelity

While the teachers in my district viewed my primary role as ensuring fidelity, they also described their own role in ensuring fidelity. The teachers felt that I was to make sure that they were all "on the same page," following the instructional manual of the reading series. The teachers in the study perceived that they were responsible for teaching the same reading material, at the same time, and administering the same assessments. Fidelity to systematic reading instruction was a new concept for the district as a result of the Reading First grant.

Judy, the third grade teacher, had considerable concern about maintaining fidelity to the reading instruction and questioned the use of "a script." She did not believe that all the teachers should be mandated to follow the instructions in the teacher's manual. She was concerned that this type of instruction would not meet the needs of all of her children. She believed that all of the teachers could be expected to cover the same content, but the manner in which they accomplished this should be the teacher's decision. She believed that instruction should match the needs and interests of the children but did not believe that following a teacher's manual would result in meeting those needs. The

concept of leaving one classroom in the middle of a sentence and hearing the sentence finished in another room down the hall disturbed Judy. She believed that her job was to teach children to be independent learners, not to stand in front of a group of children and be the font of all knowledge. Judy was also surprised that an initiative such as Reading First provided children with no time to read independently. Independent reading time was taken from other content instructional time. Judy wanted her reading instruction to be valid, but fidelity to the grant caused her to question her ability as a teacher.

While Judy had many concerns about fidelity to the reading instruction, Sue, the second grade teacher, saw this as a grant mandate that must be followed and was willing to do as she was told. Mary, the kindergarten teacher, who actually believed that fidelity to instruction was a positive attribute of the grant, indicated that in the previous reading series, the teachers were provided with instructional choices. The problem with that was that there was too much variance in the reading instruction across grade levels. The teachers in the outlying buildings were unclear as to what other teachers in their grade level were teaching. Mary liked the fact that this series did not provide the teachers with choices. When all the teachers' instruction was the same, they were better able to work together at grade levels to plan instruction.

What was most curious to me was that while one teacher shared her opposing view of following a scripted reading program, all of the teachers willingly complied with the Reading First mandates. I wondered why the teachers were so accepting of the mandates that made their decisions as to what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach. While these mandates obviously infringe on the instructional rights of teachers, my district's teachers were willing to conform to the social norms and expectations of the

grant program. Did they see themselves as using the factory model of schooling as described by Taylor (1912), thus promoting the social good and welfare, and preparing children to fit into society?

Specific Roles of the Coach

The third conclusion from my data analysis was the identification of three themes that emerged from my analysis of the interview data, which indicated that the study participants perceived the coach's role to include: being a voice, a resource, and a mentor/encourager for them as well.

Voice

The teachers and administrators, with the exception of Ellen, indicated that they valued my role in being a voice for them. According to the participants, my voice opened communication between the teachers and the administrators, and between the teachers and their colleagues. The administrators valued the verbal as well as the written communication that I provided, keeping all the participants well informed of the grant status. The teachers wanted me to be a liaison between the teachers and the administration, and to help open communication between the teachers across grade levels and in other buildings as well.

Acting as a voice for the teachers, I communicated their questions, concerns, and needs to the administration, and got clarification in a timely manner. The teachers wanted me to improve the dialogue between them and their colleagues. The teachers wanted to work together in grade-level teams to solve problems and share ideas. The teachers used

me as a vehicle to share strategies that were working across the district. Prior to creation of the reading coach's position, communication in the district was difficult due to the physical distance between the five elementary buildings. The teachers previously felt that their voice was not being heard and that their questions were not being answered. They viewed themselves as isolated professionals who valued professional dialogue between colleagues. Thus, the teachers saw my role as bringing coherence to the district and keeping all the participants better informed.

Two of the administrators, Larry and Patricia, indicated that my role would help them improve the communication link between administrators, teachers, coaches, and parents. They expected me to be knowledgeable about the grant status and to have a clear understanding of the district's future goals. An emphasis was placed on oral as well as on written communication, such as meeting minutes, emails, and note-taking, to ensure that all members of the Reading First team were informed. The administration expanded on the role of the coach's voice to include communication with the students, parents, the school board, and community.

Resource

The teachers and administrators had different perceptions of my role as a resource person. The teachers most frequently referred to me as a resource, yet the administrators did not make reference to this role. The teachers noted the importance of my role as a resource in providing materials, sharing new ideas, and answering their questions. They saw me as a team member helping to make instructional decisions for their children. They remarked that I brought coherence to the buildings by sharing ideas and working

with the teachers to solve problems. The teachers appreciated my sharing of materials and the use of instructional strategies. Through my conversations with them, I clarified information or found answers to their questions.

Mentor/Encourager

The administrator and teachers, with the exception of Judy, the third grade teacher, referred to my role as a mentor/encourager. The administrators identified this role as vital to the grant implementation. As a mentor I would model instruction for the teachers in their classroom and provide them with feedback on lessons that they taught. As an encourager I would build the teachers' confidence in the use of the new reading series and grant mandates. Mary and Sue felt that this was an important role for the reading coach. As a mentor I supported them in the implementation of the new reading series and provided positive feedback. I informed the teachers of alternative practices and the use of new strategies.

Districts implementing peer coaching as a requirement of the Reading First grant need to be aware of the significant role that administrators and teachers' perceptions play in determining the roles of the coach. The coach holding a position somewhere between the teachers and the administrators is constantly trying to fulfill the expectations set by all of the stakeholders. It is not unlikely that teachers and administrators might expect the coach to take on some of their own responsibilities. If this type of interchange occurs, the coach may have difficulty implementing a peer coaching model. The coach should spend the majority of time in the classroom working with teachers and students to improve reading instruction. These roles should include co-teaching, observing, and modeling. It

is vital that the coach not take on the role of a pseudo-administrator. Not only would administrative tasks consume much of the coach's time, but this type of position may threaten the trust that is an essential building block in the teacher/coach relationship. Additionally, it might be threatening to certain school administrators.

Implications

The implications of this study focus on the overriding theme of fidelity, in an effort to present an understanding of the participants' role in constructing policy at the local level. In this study, the participants were willing to conform to the requirements of Reading First and identified the role of the coach as primarily ensuring fidelity to the use of the core reading series and the DIBELS assessment.

Through Reading First mandates, the rights of teachers to make their own decisions, including the option of choosing their own materials and methods, have been taken away. The federal government has instead mandated the use of "scientifically research based" reading programs such as Open Court, which includes a teacher's manual with specific, detailed directions for teachers to follow. Commercially produced reading series (core reading) control the reading curriculum in bottom-up classrooms rather than the teacher. One of the main principles of bottom-up instruction is that the children must be taught phonics in order to be competent readers, and these skills must be developed before the child can read and write, rather than at the same time. The teachers move through the sequence of lessons and cover the material along the timeline outlined in the manual. This type of traditional instruction focuses on facts and memorization. Bottom-up taught classes are sometimes referred to as teacher-centered as opposed to student-

centered because the student's role is generally passive—that of a responder rather than an active initiator of questions and ideas (Garan, 2004).

The rationale behind the use of a scripted reading program in Reading First is that teachers are incapable of making decisions that affect the children in their classrooms (Garan, 2004). Reading First's emphasis on fidelity to the reading series means that teachers do not need to prepare for classes or make decisions. Reading First also ensures that federal monies must be spent on training teachers to use the required scripted reading series. Therefore, teachers do not need to be educated in a variety of methods; the reading series script contains the methods. It is also easy for the administrators to track what their teachers are doing since all of the teachers at the same grade level would be on the same page at the same time. Because reading coaches oversee the instruction based on the teacher's manual, it is reasonable to conclude that the reading series is in fact the reading curriculum (Garan). If the teacher must use a scripted reading program, then what is the role of the teacher? What does the use of programs such as Open Court mean for the future of teaching as a profession?

The mandatory Reading First assessment, DIBELS, aligns with the philosophy of bottom-up instruction, which places a lot of emphasis on how fast children read. In second and third grade, DIBELS assesses children in timed fluency tests which encourage fast, accurate reading. The result of this one subtest determines if a child is "at-risk." The assumption is that if a child reads quickly, he/she can understand what they read (Garan, 2004). We believe that reading requires an understanding of what we have read, yet the DIBELS tests letter identification and sounding out of words from a list in kindergarten and first grade. While some children might score very well on these tests,

the test would be invalid because it did not measure reading ability or growth (Garan, 2004). The results would only reflect that the child had the ability to recall isolated facts without the ability to apply them. According to Garan, the heavy emphasis on testing instead of thinking and application actually encourages lower-level skills. Krashen (2001) warns about the dangers of labeling and sorting children based on their ability to perform on tests that assess isolated skills rather than their application.

The Reading First initiative has eliminated teachers' control over curriculum decisions, which Michael Apple would refer to as an example of de-skilling. Apple (1982, 2000) has argued that the pre-packaged curriculum materials used in schools both control and de-skill teachers by divorcing conception from execution and by contributing to a reduction in teachers' capacities to devise curriculum materials suited to the needs of the learners. According to Apple (1988), teachers have been faced more and more with the prospect of being de-skilled because of the encroachment of technical control procedures on the curriculum of schools. Shannon (1989) has applied this analysis to reading programs, demonstrating the ways in which reading experts and basal textbook publishers have assumed the function of the conception of reading instruction, while teachers' manuals, with their prepared scripts, worksheets, and tests have stripped teachers of the skills of their craft. Through this legislated teaching, teachers are more accountable to the state than ever before. Federal and state initiatives have standardized the goals, monitored student progress, and regulated teaching methods. Kanpol (1999) believes that de-skilling is at its peak when teachers are denied control over the teaching process. By making teachers accountable for mandated curriculum and by promoting

competency-based education, system management, and employing rigid forms of evaluation, teachers are forced to comply with the federal, state, and grant mandates.

Most teachers consider themselves professionals and their level of schooling would signify this, yet they are supervised by managers, suggesting that their labor belongs more in the working-class category. School district managers include supervisors, superintendents, principals, staff developers, and trainers, and perhaps even coaches, who oversee teachers/workers creating a sort of class welfare of surveillance and possibly punishment (Kesson, 2004). Shannon (1989) notes that the way in which administrators have allowed scripted reading programs to choose the goals, methods and assessments for reading instruction, has focused their efforts on managing teachers' fidelity to a scripted reading series in an effort to raise student test scores. In doing so, the managers have become enforcers, ensuring teacher fidelity. According to Shannon, teachers working under these conditions of surveillance and threat are prevented from fully developing their mental and physical powers, and the relations between a worker's activity and powers remain at a low level of achievement.

De-skilling is not merely a professional issue but also a political one. It is employed not to just control the labor of teachers but also to ensure conformity of student thinking. The mandated teacher-proof curriculum serves the interests of those who would control the flow of information, limit access to ideas, structure the forms of acceptable thinking, and shape the consciousness of a generation (Kesson, 2004).

The federal government through its Reading First initiative has decided what we should teach, how we should teach it, and even when we should teach it in order to fulfill the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act. We are being pressured to follow "proven"

methods recommended by the NRP research and comply with federal grant mandates (Garan, 2002). The government will no doubt continue to be involved in education. To protect teacher professionalism and resist the government's goal of standardizing reading education, educators would have to become proactive in politics. Hence, educators need to take a critical stance in an effort to understand how political, social, and historical developments affect their daily teaching (Edmondson, 2000).

While the major goal of No Child Left Behind, as carried out by programs like Reading First, is desirable, i.e., enabling every child to learn to read by grade three, educators must ultimately assess how the teach-to-test style of instruction and federally-mandated scripted reading programs will ultimately affect children's ability to learn and develop on their own, and teachers' freedom and ability to meet the individual needs and interests of the children in their classrooms. And finally, if educators are to influence policy both at the local and national levels, they need to decide whether the role of the reading coach will be mainly to enforce the teachers' compliance with a prescribed reading program or to help teachers within their classrooms to develop professionally in their teaching practices in order to help children learn to read and thus improve their academic achievement.

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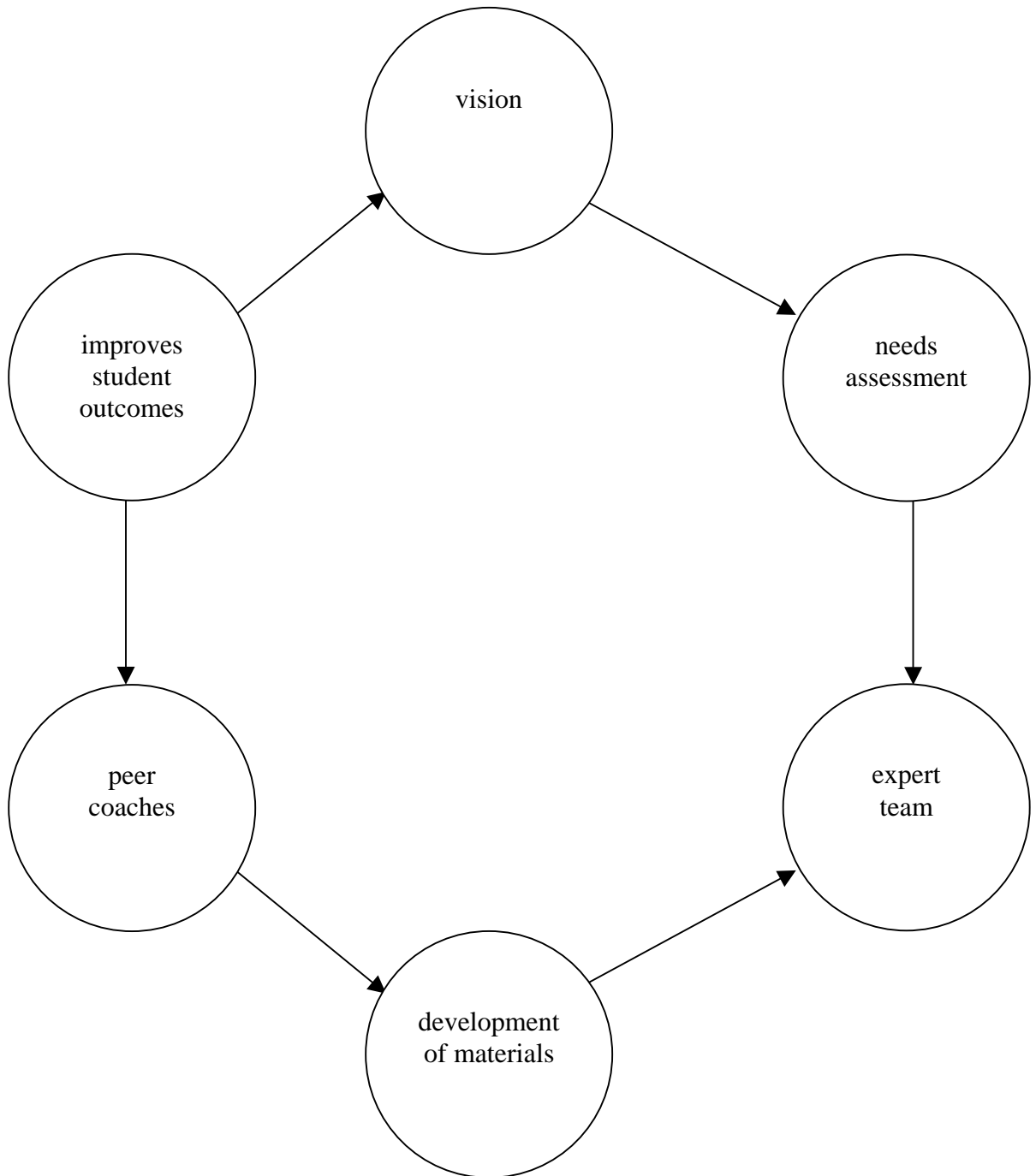
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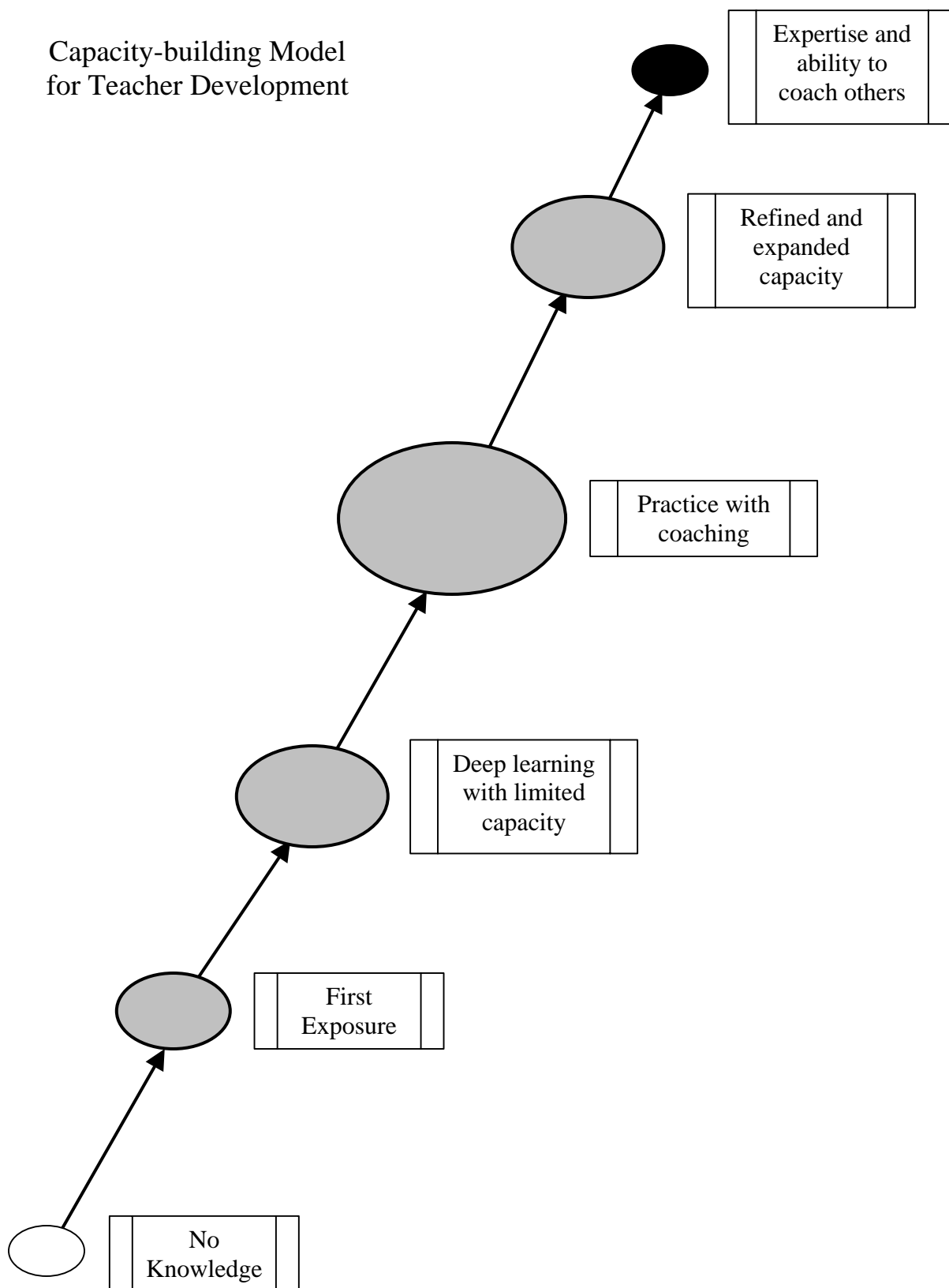
APPENDIX A
THE SCHOOL INNOVATION THROUGH TEACHER INTERACTION (SITTI)
MODEL

The Cycle of the SITTI Model



APPENDIX B
COOTER'S CAPACITY BUILDING MODEL

Capacity-building Model for Teacher Development



APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions/Teacher

Fall 2004

1. How would you describe the role or roles of the Reading First literacy coach?
2. Do you see this role played differently at the district level?
3. Do you see this role played differently at the school level?
4. Do you see this role played differently at the classroom level?
5. Do you think the role of the literacy coach might influence classroom instruction?

Interview Questions/Administrators

Fall 2004

1. When you were looking for a reading coach for our district what kind of qualifications were you looking for?
2. How would you describe the role or roles of the Reading First literacy coach?
3. Tell me how you see the role of the literacy coach played at the district level.
4. How do you see the role of the literacy coach played out at the school level?
5. How do you see the role of the literacy coach played out at the classroom level?
6. Do you think the role of the literacy coach might influence classroom instruction?

Interview Questions/Teachers

Winter 2004

1. How were you involved in the decision making process when our district was deciding if they would write the Reading First Grant?

2. What were your thoughts when you were told that you were going to be teaching in a Reading First school?

3. What were your thoughts when you were told that you would be assigned a literacy coach?

4. In our first interview you defined three roles of the literacy coach. They were: a resource person, a communicator between buildings and a liaison between administrators and teachers.

Do you think your coach has taken on these roles?

5. What role or roles have your coach primarily been engaged in?

6. What have been your needs of the coach?

7. Were these needs fulfilled?
8. What are your current needs of the reading coach?
9. What types of activities would you like to see the coach take on prior to the end of the year?
10. In our first interview you mentioned fidelity.
11. What did you mean by fidelity?
12. What are your thoughts and or concerns about fidelity?
13. Whose role would it be to ensure fidelity?
14. What suggestions would you make to improve the implementation of the literacy coach?
15. Are there any other thoughts you would like to add?

Interview Questions/Administrators

Winter 2004

1. During our first interview we discussed the role of the Reading First coaches at the district, school and classroom level. I would like you to reflect on the first half of the year and describe the roles that your coaches have been engaged in.
2. In what roles have the literacy coaches spent most of their time?
3. In what roles have the literacy coaches spent the least amount of time?
4. How would you like to see the time of the coaches spent?
5. When teachers discuss the role of the literacy coaches how do you believe this role is perceived by the teachers?
6. What would you identify as some accomplishments of the coaches?
7. What would you identify as some of the barriers the coaches have experienced?
8. What future goals would you set for your coaches?
9. Has the role of the literacy coach changed classroom instruction? Please explain.

Interview Questions/Teacher

Spring 2004

REFLECTION:

1. When reflecting on the first year of Reading First grant implementation- What would you describe as the strengths and weaknesses of the Reading First grant?
2. What are your thoughts and or concerns for future years of grant implementation?

ASSESSMENT:

3. What are your thoughts about the mandatory Reading First assessments? (DIBELS)
4. How have these testing tools (DIBELS) impacted classroom instruction?

COACHES:

5. Why do you think “literacy coaches” were a requirement of the Reading First grant?
6. What have been the coach’s responsibilities in grant implementation?
7. Has the role of the coach in grant implementation minimized the teachers role? (How and what roles)

8. Has the role of the coach in grant implementation minimized the administrations role?
(How and what roles)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

9. Has the Reading First grant impacted district provided, professional development for teachers? (How)

- What has been the emphasis?
- Has it been aligned to best practices?

10. What would you like to see as future professional development goals for the district?

ROLE OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS:

11. What has been the role of the classroom teacher in Reading First grant implementation?

- What voice have the teachers had?
- What choices have the teachers been given?

12. Has Reading First impacted classroom reading instruction?

- Pros/cons

13. Classroom observation has been a part of the Reading First grant. What are observers looking for during reading instruction?

- What should the teacher be teaching during core reading time?

ROLE OF THE READING SPECIALIST:

14. Has the Reading First grant changed the role of our district's Title 1 Reading Specialists? (How?)

- What are the pros and cons of this change (if any)?

15. What are your thoughts concerning the use of a scripted intervention program by Title 1 Reading Specialists?

- Meeting the needs of students?
- Compared to prior Title 1 reading instruction?

16. Do you have any other thoughts or concerns you would like to add?

Interview Questions/Administrators

Spring 2004

REFLECTION:

1. When reflecting on the first year of Reading First grant implementation- What would you describe as the strengths and weaknesses of the Reading First grant?
2. What are your thoughts and or concerns for future years of grant implementation?

ASSESSMENT:

3. What are your thoughts about the mandatory Reading First assessments? (Dibles)
4. How have these testing tools (namely Dibles) impacted classroom instruction?

COACHES:

5. Why do you think “literacy coaches” were a requirement of the Reading First grant?
6. What have been the coach’s responsibilities in grant implementation?
7. Has the role of the coach in grant implementation minimized the teachers role? (How and what roles)

8. Has the role of the coach in grant implementation minimized the administrations role?
(How and what roles)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

9. Has the Reading First grant impacted district provided professional development for teachers? (How)

- What has been the emphasis?
- Has it been aligned to best practices?

10. What would you like to see as future professional development goals for the district?

ROLE OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS:

11. What has been the role of the classroom teacher in Reading First grant implementation?

- What voice have the teachers had?
- What choices have the teachers been given?
- Has Reading First impacted classroom reading instruction?

12. If observing classroom reading instruction what would you be looking for?

- What should the teacher be teaching during core reading time?
- What would you say to a teacher in a grant school who is concerned about “fidelity” and does not believe that instruction in one classroom should mirror that of another in the same grade?

ROLE OF THE READING SPECIALIST:

13. Has the Reading First grant changed the role of our district’s Title 1 Reading Specialists? (How?)

- What are the pros and cons of this change (if any)?

14. What are your thoughts concerning the use of a scripted intervention program by Title 1 Reading Specialists?

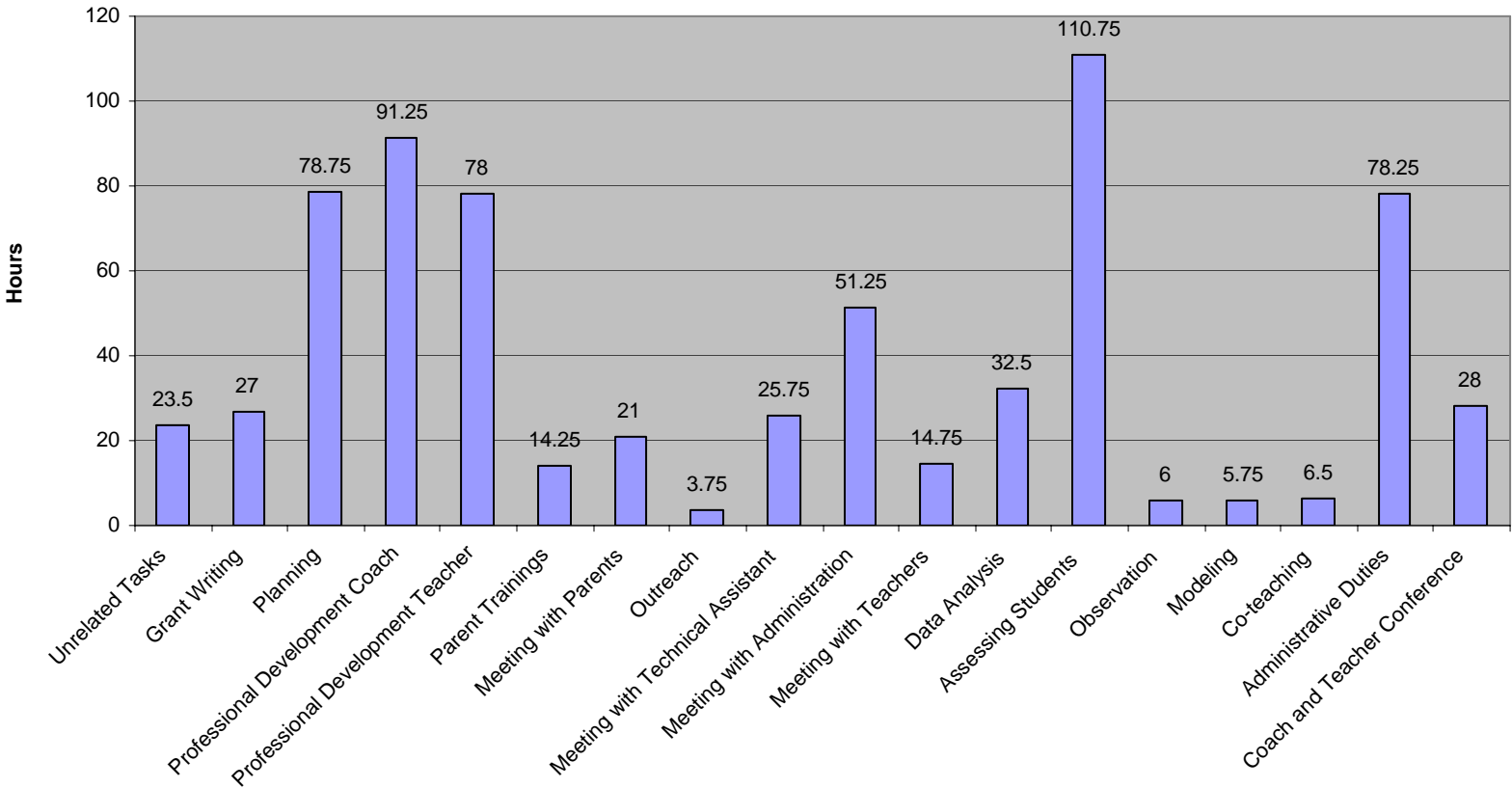
- Meeting the needs of students?
- Compared to prior Title 1 reading instruction?

15. Do you have any other thoughts or concerns you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

COACHING TIME SPENT IN ROLE/ACTIVITIES BY HOURS

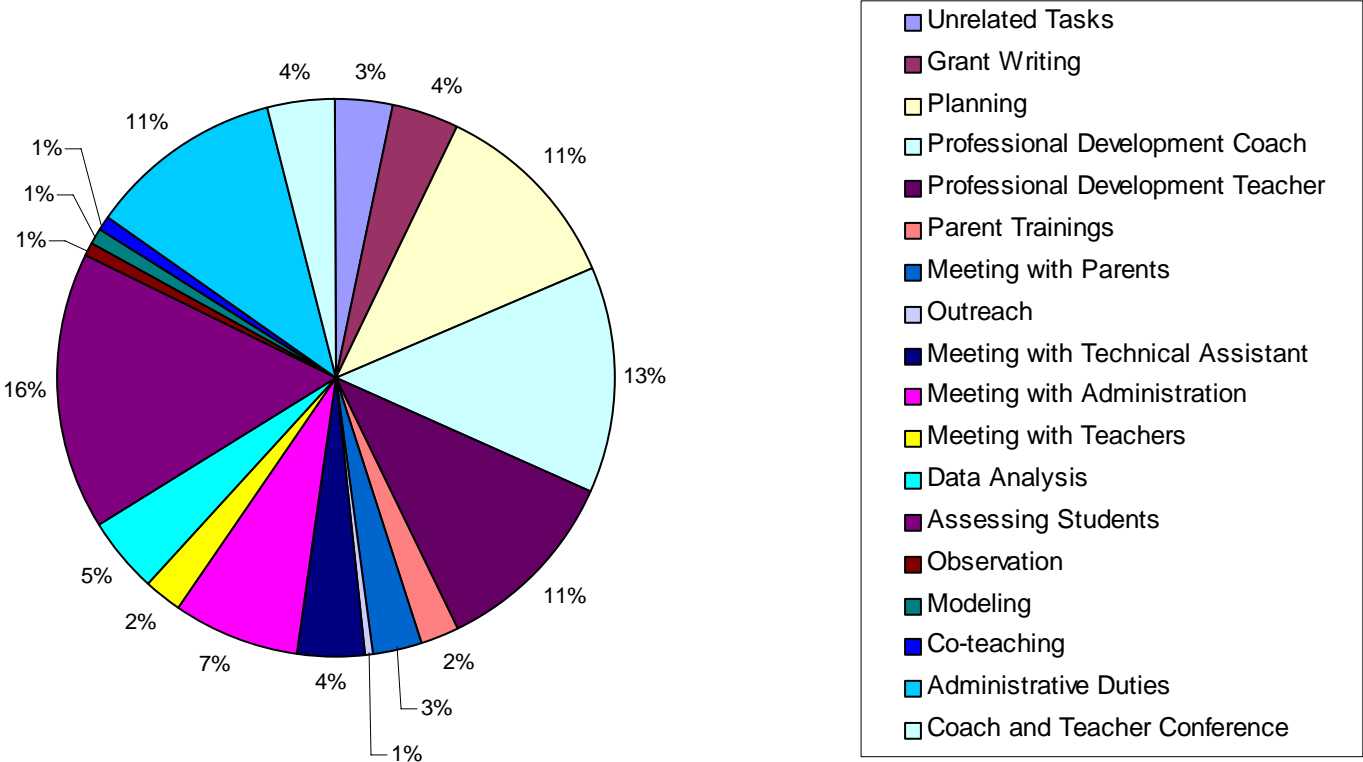
Coaching Time Spent in Roles/Activities by Hours



APPENDIX E

COACHING TIME SPENT IN ROLE/ACTIVITIES BY PERCENTAGES

Coach's Time Spent in Role/Activities by Percentages



APPENDIX F
ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ROLES OF THE
COACH

Roles of the Coach

Name	Position	Fidelity	Resource	Voice	Assessment	Mentor/ Encourager	Modeling
Judy	3 rd Grade Teacher	+	+	+	o	o	—
Mary	2 nd Grade Teacher	+	+	+	+	+	o
Sue	Kindergarten Teacher	+	+	+	+	+	+
Larry	Superintendent of Schools	+	o	+	+	+	+
Patricia	Curriculum Coordinator	+	o	+	+	+	+
Ellen	Building Principal	+	o	o	+	+	+

+ = strongly agree

— = moderately agree

o = Did not make reference

VITA

Robin M. Fillman

Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.
Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction, 2005
Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pa.
Post-Baccalaureate Elementary Education Certification, 1998
Millersville University of Pennsylvania, Millersville, Pa.
Master of Education, Reading Specialist Certification, 1991
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg, Pa
Bachelor of Science, Special Education, 1985

Professional Experience

Reading Specialist, Cranberry Area School District, Seneca, Pa., 2001-2003
Facilitator, Governor's Institute of Early Childhood Leadership, 2002-2004
Instructor, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pa., 2000-2001
Special Education Teacher, Warwick High School, Lititz, Pa. 1989-1990
Special Education Teacher, Manheim Township High School, Manheim, Pa., 1988-1989
Special Education Teacher, OakCrest High School, Mays Landing, NJ, 1985-1988

Presentations

International Reading Association (IRA), International Conference, 2002, 2003
Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), International Conference, 2002
College Reading Association (CRA), National Conference 2001, 2003
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Conference, 2002
Keystone State Reading Association (KSRA), State Conference, 2001, 2002
The Pennsylvania Association for Education Communications and Technology (PAECT).
State Conference, 2001

Publications

Clarion University Learning and Technology Center, Highlighted Projects, print copy and web site: www.clarion.edu/academic/adeptt/projects/readers/index.htm, August 2002

Professional Affiliations

Seneca Reading Council (Board Member)
Phi Delta Kappa
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
International Reading Association
Keystone State Reading Association

Professional Honors

Teaching Excellence Certificate, Demonstration of teaching excellence, The Association for Childhood Education International, 2002
Clarion University Faculty Development Committee Award, a grant to attend Faculty Development Workshops, Spring 2001
Student-Athlete Academic Awards Luncheon, the honored guest of Senior Elementary Education Student and Athlete, Megan Tracy, Clarion University, Clarion, PA, Spring 2001