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Literacy Coaching

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LITERACY COACHING: THE ROLE OF REFLECTIVE THOUGHT IN
TEACHER DECISION MAKING

BY

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Abstract

Qualitative studies of classroom teachers involved in literacy coaching are crucial to provide direction for future literacy coaching practice and research. Using a grounded theory design, this study examined the experience of four elementary level classroom teachers and one coach as they engaged in a year-long literacy coaching program. Teachers were observed throughout the literacy coaching cycle including: pre and post conferences, coach demonstrations and teacher' implementation of new instructional practices. Analysis of coach/teacher interactions highlighted the role of reflective thought in teacher learning, and positioned reflective thought as a foundational premise of teacher learning. In addition, as a result of the discovery process inherent in the grounded theory design, the study found that teachers' goal setting influenced movement along a gradual release of responsibility continuum of adult learning.

Acknowledgement

To Jim

It is an honor to thank all those who helped me realize a long held goal. To the teachers who allowed me to investigate their thinking, and to my doctoral committee who guided and prodded for success. I am truly grateful.

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Chapter 1

   The content and purpose of the reflective conversations between literacy coaches

and classroom teachers may have a significant impact on teachers' future

instructional decision making. As a result, what literacy coaches and classroom

teachers choose to focus on, and how they choose to structure their reflective

discourse, is of interest to educators concerned with improving teacher quality

(Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Nowak, 2003; Sweeney, 2003). The form and content of

reflective conversation between literacy coaches and classroom teachers may

influence what the teachers learn, and consequently influence the teachers' future

instructional decision-making. In this study, teacher instructional decision-making is

positioned as an outgrowth of teacher learning.

   The central role of reflective thought in teacher learning is well documented.

Additionally, the role of reflective thought has been positioned as an important tool

for teacher learning when coaching is used as the professional development model

(Costa & Garmston 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sparks,

1994; Vacca & Padak, 1990; Wold, 2000). According to Wold (2000)

> reflection assists teachers in developing knowledge, and coaching is essential
>
> to making changes in behavior….Deep-level literacy implementation requires
>
> strategic decision making and action. The process of becoming an exemplary
>
> literacy practitioner requires deliberate, long-term attention to and reflection
>
> on practice. (pp. 90- 91)

As a result, in this work the role of reflective thought has been positioned as a fundamental premise of teacher learning during literacy coaching. This study explored interactions between one literacy coach and four elementary level classroom teachers as they participated in a literacy coaching program designed to provide collaborative, long term, job-embedded support for teacher learning. Specifically, the purpose of this qualitative study was to expand understanding of how literacy coaching affected teacher decision making during reading comprehension instruction. Since the reflective thought engaged in by the coach and teachers are considered central to coach/teacher interactions during literacy coaching, it was predicted that the co-constructed reflective discourse between the coach and teachers affected teacher learning, and consequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction.

The reflective process that teachers engage in as they learn new instructional practices is of concern to teacher educators (Hughes, Cash, Ahwee, & Klinger, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, 2002; Toll, 2005; Walpole & McKenna, 2004; Wold, 2000). According to Walpole and Blamey (2008), "the real goal of coaching [is] improving teaching and improving student achievement" (p. 231). Teachers who are knowledgeable and reflective concerning instructional practice are among the most important factors associated with student achievement in reading (Darling-Hammond, 1997; International Reading Association, 2003, 2004; Marzano, Pickering & Pollack, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). According to The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996), educational resources spent on teacher education result in greater returns in

terms of student achievement than any other allocation of resources. The structure and organization of professional development experiences for teachers is critical to the reading achievement of students. Therefore, it follows that research into literacy coaching as a professional development model has the potential for contributing to effective teacher education practices.

Literacy coaching, as a professional development model, is designed to provide the support for both learning new instructional practice and also transferring new practices to the classroom through collaborative, reflective, and job-embedded professional learning (Annenberg Institute, 2004; Lyons and Pinnell, 2001, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Sweeney, 2003; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

This study followed the participants during their first year of participation in a district wide Lab Classroom Program (LCP). The LCP was first initiated by district level administration in conjunction with the regional educational collaborative associated with the school district. The LCP is defined as a job-embedded, professional development program which links a literacy coach and a classroom teacher in order to implement best practice in literacy instruction. In addition, the LCP was designed to open up the classrooms of participating teachers to peer observations and subsequent professional conversations concerning literacy instruction. The LCP was a long-term program in that classroom teachers agree to participate in the program for a minimum of one school year. Finally, literacy coaching activities are integrated into the teacher's classroom routines and structured to address student learning needs.

The LCP had two overall goals. First, classroom teachers would develop knowledge and skill in implementing the workshop model during literacy instruction. The workshop model, as defined by the LCP, consisted of learning experiences designed to include four basic phases: teacher modeling, guided practice, opportunity for one on one, small group or independent student work, and a final sharing phase.

The workshop model is based on the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, children may learn most effectively within a 'zone of proximal development'. The zone of proximal development is the "place at which a child's empirically rich but disorganized spontaneous concepts "meet" the systematicity and logic of adult reasoning" (Kozulin, 1986, p. xxxv). Vygotsky recognized the discrepancy between a child's independent level of performance and the level which may be achieved with the assistance of an adult. Vygotsky determined this range of performance to be the child's 'zone of proximal development.

Pearson and Gallagher (1983) used Vygotsky's concept of a 'zone of proximal development' to develop a 'gradual release of responsibility' model for reading instruction. Pearson and Gallagher believed that children learn to read most effectively by watching a more knowledgeable adult model a process. This is usually followed by a phase of guided practice when the child practices with the support of a teacher. Finally, after sufficient practice the child will work independently. As a core component of the workshop model, gradual release of responsibility would then be achieved through teacher modeling, guided practice and, finally, independent practice (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Sweeny, 2003).

A second overall goal of the LCP was to develop theoretical understanding and instructional implementation of effective reading comprehension strategies. The LCP focused on seven reading comprehension strategies drawn from the work of Pearson and Gallagher (1983) and articulated by Zimmermann and Hutchins (2003). The seven strategies include: sensory imaging, background knowledge, questioning, drawing inferences, determining importance, synthesizing, and fix-up strategies. The efficacy of these comprehension strategies have been the focus of extensive reading comprehension research. Pearson and Gallagher (1983), in their review of reading comprehension instruction, concluded that proficient readers consistently used a core set of reading comprehension strategies including: engaging background knowledge; use of vocabulary; drawing inferences; summarization; recognition of text structures; and monitoring and adjusting comprehension strategies.

A central tenet of the LCP was to position the literacy coach as a resource for teacher learning. Much of the work of the coach revolved around modeling of new instructional practices in teachers' classrooms. Modeling sessions included pre and post conferences based on reflective conversations designed to move teachers into a phase of trying out, or practicing and experimenting with a new instructional practice in their classrooms. For the LCP the new instructional practices included the workshop model of instruction and the seven comprehension strategies outlined above. As stated, a major goal of the LCP was to encourage teacher transfer of these instructional practices to their classroom instruction.

In the LCP, a literacy coaching cycle of five basic learning events occurred including: (1) coach/teacher pre-conference for assessment of teacher/student learning

needs, (2) in-class modeling of instructional practice by the coach, (3) follow up

coach/teacher conference, (4) teacher application of the new instructional practice in

the classroom, (5) follow up coach/teacher post-conference.

A variety of data sources were analyzed including: field notes of all observations,

pre and post teacher interviews, transcribed audio tapes of teacher implementation of

new instructional practices in their respective classrooms, transcribed audio tapes of

coach/teacher conferences, and artifacts of thought such as pre and post conference

forms, and lesson planning materials.

Background

Literacy coaching provides an alternative model of professional development in

response to the criticism of traditional 'one-shot' professional development models.

The one-shot workshop model generally consists of dispensing of information by

those considered to be experts, and, most notably, a lack of classroom follow-up to

workshop presentations. According to the International Reading Association

(2004)there is evidence that one-shot, workshop-oriented professional development

efforts do not result in changes in classroom practice or in student learning. Coaching

provides the additional support needed for teachers to implement various programs or

practices" (p.2). Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) suggest that traditional

professional development models, such as the one-shot workshop, do not provide

effective professional development experiences for teachers. Vacca and Padak (1990)

state the following:

> no longer, for example, do effective consultants for reading and
>
> language arts act as "dispensers" of knowledge – a role too often

assumed by many experts. We are shifting away from the

education/training model of consultation described by Idol (1998), in

which the goal was to transmit needed knowledge, information, and

skills to alleviate problems. Rather than viewing the consultant as

expert, we are embracing a collaborative model in which the aim is

parity between special and classroom teachers who share ownership of

learning and management problems (p. 10).

Coaching differs from the one-shot workshop model in that it is long-term, job-

embedded, and provides an opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively with a

literacy coach as they work with students in their classrooms.

The collaboration between teachers and coaches revolves around reflection on

theory, demonstration, and practice. Literacy coaching as an adult learning model

incorporates the use of reflection as a learning strategy which is considered to be

integral to the adult learning process (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; National Staff

Development Council, 2001). According to Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, and

Grogan (2006), the literacy coaching model of professional development relies heavily

on the ability of coaches to scaffold or support the instructional decision making of

teachers. Further, scaffolding during literacy coaching requires that teachers and

coaches engage in critical reflection on literacy concepts and instruction in a variety of

contexts including: classroom demonstrations of literacy instruction by the coach;

coach/teacher conferences; and teacher implementation of new practice in the

classroom.

Teacher decision making about literacy instruction requires extensive reflection followed by action in the form of in-class implementation of instructional practice. Coaching encourages teachers and coaches to reflect on their experiences as they move toward the outcome of refining classroom literacy instruction. Given the central role of reflection in the literacy coaching process this study addresses a critical concept which lies at the foundation of literacy coaching as a model of professional development.

Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) recommend more research into how teachers learn and embrace change. In their review of the research on teacher education, these researchers point out that teacher educators need to know more about how teachers learn in order to better educate teachers to embrace change, strategic teaching and critical decision-making. This call for research concerned with teacher learning is referenced by those educators concerned with coaching as a model for teacher learning. For example, Walpole and McKenna (2004) point out that while the literacy coaching model of professional development holds promise, more research is needed which is specifically related to how this model of professional development affects teacher instructional decision making. Additionally, Nowak (2003), further refines the call for research on the processes involved in literacy coaching by calling for research on how coaching supports the reflective discourse engaged in by coaches and teachers. Nowak states, "little consideration has been given to the discourse in coaching interactions ….[u]fortunately, little is know about the processes of teacher learning through the discourse in coaching experiences" (pp. 7-8). Given that the central role of reflection within the literacy coaching model is

well documented (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Nowak, 2003; Rock, 2002; Rogers & Pinnell, 2002; Sweeney, 2003; Toll, 2005; Walpole & McKenna, 2004) Nowak's call for additional research on the reflection discourse constructed between coaches and teachers highlights the significance of this research study.

Data collection and analysis was guided by the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher's stance as a participant observer allowed for the observation within the natural setting of the classroom. The purpose was to understand teacher learning through the participants' perspective. All interactions with participants, as well as the ongoing analysis of their experience was firmly situated in the belief that "qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.19).

Grounded theory methodology with constant comparative coding procedures was used to collect and analyze data. A grounded theory "is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.19).   Since the purpose in this study was to 'discover' how literacy coaching may affect a teacher's implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom, and how the discourse during coach/teacher interactions affects teacher decision making, grounded theory provided a viable methodology for the discovery process.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study was to understand how literacy coaching affected teacher learning and instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction**.** It was predicted that the discourse engaged in by literacy coaches and classroom teachers would be pivotal in shaping a teacher's instructional decisions during reading comprehension instruction.

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) used to guide this research study represents the cycle of literacy coaching utilized by the district under study.

Figure 1. Literacy coaching framework.
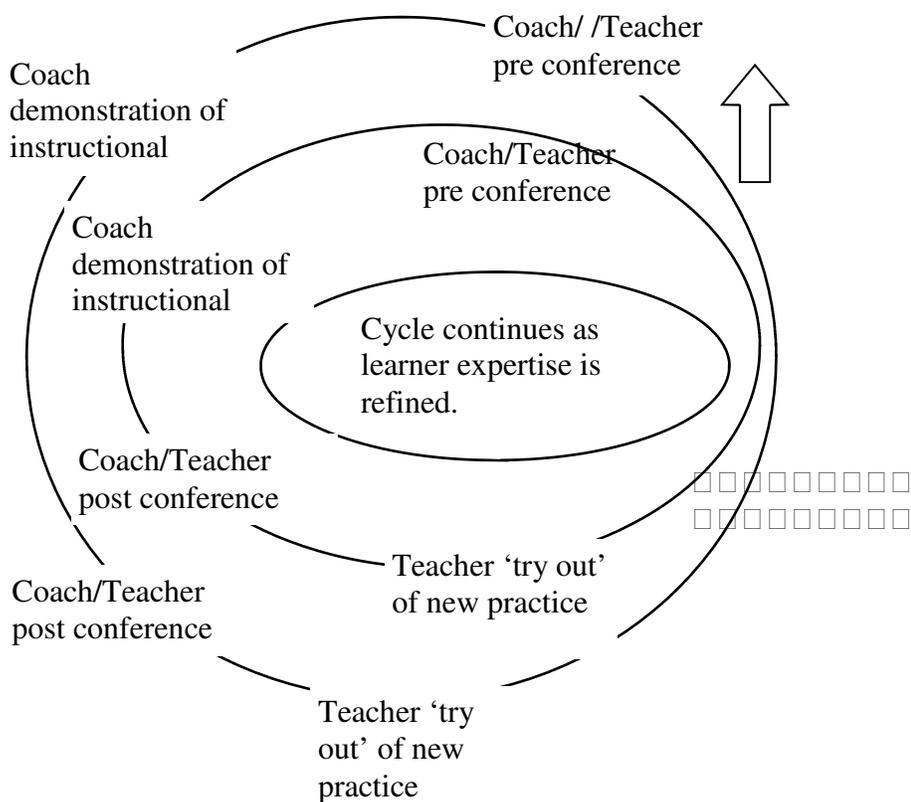
The literacy coaching framework is adapted from the work of Lyons & Pinnell (2001), and depicts a nonlinear, and potentially recursive progression of coach/teacher interactions. The framework depicts repeated cycles of literacy coaching. Each cycle starts with a coach teacher pre-conference phase. It then moves on to a demonstration of a new instructional practice in the teacher's classroom. The demonstration is followed by a post conference phase. Finally, the teacher then attempts to 'try out', or practice and experiment with the new instructional practice in the classroom.

In order to analyze the interactions between the coach and teacher during the coaching cycle, each phase of the cycle was observed for this study including: pre and post conferences between a teacher and the coach; classroom demonstration of instructional practices by the coach; subsequent teacher application of learning as the teacher tried out an instructional practice in her classroom; and follow up post conferences.

According to Lyons and Pinnell (2001), the activities at the core of coaching provide the supports teachers need to work toward transfer of new instructional practices to the classroom setting. These supports include: multiple in-class demonstrations of instructional practice by a coach; opportunity for both coaches and teachers to study all aspects of a new instructional practice including a thorough understanding of the rationale for a practice; and continued, long term interaction between the coach and teacher designed to support the teacher's attempts to implement new practices in her classroom.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry process within the context of the literacy coaching conceptual framework.

1. How does the coaching model of professional development affect the teacher's implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom?

2. How does the discourse during teacher/coach pre and post observation conferencing affect teacher learning and subsequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction?

Question one focused on the coaching model as a whole and provided guidance during observation of demonstrations by the coach, and observations of the teachers as they tried out new practices in their classrooms. This question was designed to be comprehensive in nature in order to provide latitude for discovery of unpredicted factors within coach teacher interactions. Question two was designed to specifically address the pre and post conferencing phases of the coaching model as the coach and teachers engaged in reflective conversations. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest framing the research question in a qualitative study in such a manner as to focus the research while also maintaining "the flexibility and freedom to explore a phenomenon in depth" (p. 37). These two research questions were specific enough to provide guidance during the inquiry process, while at the same time provide freedom for discovery.

Overview

This dissertation study is divided into five chapters: Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on adult learning theory, professional development, literacy coaching,

reflective thought, discourse and learning, gradual release of responsibility and goal theory. Chapter 3 discusses the research questions, which guide the inquiry process, and the methodology employed in this study. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of data analysis and research results. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the research findings, recommendations for future research, and limitations of this research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review is organized into the following sections: (1) professional

development and the adult learner; (2) reflective thought; (3) the role of discourse in

the learning process; (4) gradual release of responsibility; and (6) goal theory. As

Figure 2 demonstrates, adult learning theory provides a foundation for the four

concepts which are positioned as central to the understanding of literacy coaching as a

professional development model.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for the discussion of the central concepts which support literacy coaching as a professional development model for teachers of reading.
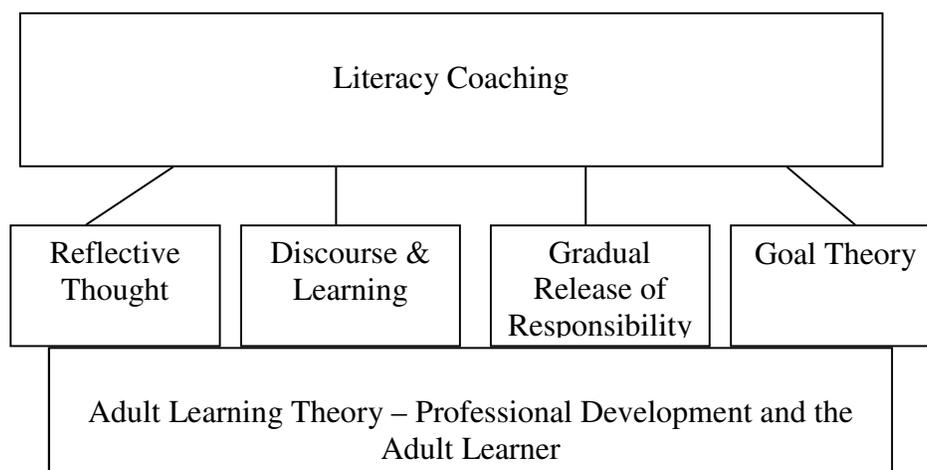
Adult Learning Theory - Professional Development and the Adult Learner

Literacy coaching, as a model of professional development, is situated within a

broader context of traditional professional development, which has not supported long

term, reflective interactions between teachers as a method for teacher learning.

Instead, educators have usually relied on a one-shot model of professional

development. Presently, teacher educators have questioned the efficacy of improving

literacy instruction using a traditional one-shot model of professional development.

Research describes the traditional one-shot approach to professional development as

one which relies on presentations by experts in workshops and conferences with little

if any follow up to assist teachers in the transfer of new knowledge to classroom

practice (Hughes et al., 2002; International Reading Association, 2004; Porter, Garet,

Desimore, Yoon, & Birman, 2000).

In response to this traditional approach, Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000)

suggest educators adopt a reform agenda when considering the design of professional

development. This reform agenda would include professional experiences which are

intensive, include aspects of follow-up such as monitoring, coaching or clinical

support; incorporate reflection, discussion, and collaboration among teachers and

administrators; and are voluntary.

Description of quality professional development for teachers appears in the

literature on professional development. The National Staff Development Council

(2001) describes high quality professional development for teachers through the

establishment of standards for staff development. These standards support the notion

that staff development for teachers should incorporate instructional strategies

consistent with adult learning theory by emphasizing the need for resources to support

adult learners and instructional strategies specific to adult learning such as

collaboration, reflection and problem solving around real life issues.

Grant, Young and Montbriand (2001) emphasize the need for continued support for

the adult learner. Continued support may be addressed in a variety of formats.

However, in regard to teacher learning, one of the greatest challenges is the need to transfer new knowledge to classroom practice. The challenges associated with transfer of knowledge and skill to classroom practice requires long-term professional support (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Showers & Joyce, 1996; Showers, Joyce & Bennett, 1987; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

   Lyons and Pinnell (2001) specifically address the learning needs of teachers as adult learners and, as such, identify important characteristics of professional development design for teachers. Teachers as adult learners need to be motivated, engaged, able to self-regulate their learning, able to problem solve as a central focus of learning, and reflect on the learning experience. For adults to be motivated they must be engaged in a learning process where they focus on solving their own immediate problems.   Lyons and Pinnell (2001) identify seven characteristics of teachers as adult learners including: a vast knowledge base, experience and a wide range of skills; acquired ideas, beliefs, and values; strongly held ideas about learning; a strong goal oriented perspective in which the adult is focused on solving immediate problems; high expectations of the professional development experience; multiple commitments and time constraints; and motivation to learn.

   According to Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), high quality professional development programs for teachers should include: teacher involvement in planning; a connection between the goals of the professional development program and the school's goals; discussion and reflection; attention to the background knowledge of participants; and application of the concepts and practices learned in the classroom.

In conclusion, the design and implementation of professional development experiences for teachers must address two overarching aspects of teacher learning. First, teachers need opportunities to learn in an environment where the particular needs of the adult learner are recognized and addressed (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Grant, Young, & Montrbriand, 2001; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; National Staff Development Council, 2001; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Second, teacher learning requires ongoing, job-embedded support as the teacher seeks to transfer new skills and knowledge to classroom practice (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lyons, 2002; National Staff Development Council, 2001; Showers & Joyce, 1996).

The emergence of literacy coaching

In response to the demand for effective professional development literacy coaching has emerged as one example of a reform type of professional development for teachers of reading. According to Hasbrouck and Denton (2007), "coaching is quickly becoming a popular model in schools for providing job-embedded, individualized, and sustained professional development to teachers"
(p. 1). There is growing research support for the notion that coaching teachers in their practice is one of the most powerful professional development tools for helping teachers learn new instructional techniques and develop skills in problem solving (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Darling-Hammond & MacLaughlin, 1996).

According to Hall (2004), the history of literacy coaching may be traced to the work of Bean and Wilson who describe the emergence of the reading specialist as a support person in schools. In the 1930's educators who were especially skilled in

reading acted as instructional supports for teachers to encourage best practices in literacy. After World War II remedial reading teachers emerged and became a common element in elementary schools. In the 1960's, these reading teachers took on more of a resource role. The reading resource teacher position was seen as a collegial role in which the reading teacher worked alongside the classroom teacher to shape classroom instruction as well as deliver direct services to students. The reading resource teacher would act as a partner with the classroom teacher with the common goal of improving student achievement through improved literacy instruction. Since the late 1990's the reading specialist has gradually taken on more of the role of literacy coach.

While coaching is presently an evolving practice, Walpole and Blamey (2008) state, "literacy coaches serve teachers through ongoing, comprehensive professional development consistent with a system of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback (Joyce and Showers, 2002)" (p. 222). As literacy researchers have grappled with the question of how to best facilitate teacher learning, a number of models of coaching have been developed.

Forms of coaching include technical coaching, problem solving coaching, reflective coaching, collegial coaching, challenge coaching, cognitive coaching, and peer coaching (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007; Showers & Joyce, 1996). According to Adey, Hewitt, Hewitt, and Landan (2004) coaching models may include demonstration lessons, observations-plus-feedback, team teaching, peer coaching, and video based feedback. Regardless of the specific coaching model, all share the central

concept of "bringing the practicalities of pedagogical change into the teachers' own classroom with their own students" (Adey et al., p. 16).

While many coaching models rely on similar instructional strategies such as presentation of theory, demonstration, practice, and observation with feedback, this discussion will focus primarily on peer coaching, or collegial coaching, as it informs models of literacy coaching being implemented today. First, the research of Joyce and Showers (1995) is presented as foundational to the understanding of literacy coaching today. Second, the varied roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach are reviewed.

The next section presents an overview of the body of research on peer coaching conducted since the late 1980's. Since today's models of literacy coaching are influenced by peer coaching practices, the processes involved in literacy coaching may become more visible through a study of peer coaching as developed by Joyce and Showers (1995).

The influence of peer coaching

The use of peer coaching as a professional development model for teachers was researched by Joyce and Showers in the late 1980's and has since informed today's practice of literacy coaching. Their work was grounded in research from the 1970's which revealed the difficulties associated with the transfer of knowledge from traditional one-shot workshop models of professional development to classroom practice (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Subsequent research by Joyce and Showers (1995) investigated the issue of transfer. Their objective was to develop a model of professional development which would increase the likelihood of transfer of new

knowledge to classroom practice. Showers, Joyce, and Bennett (1987) conducted a meta-analysis of approximately two hundred research studies on staff development. Findings confirm that teachers are likely to incorporate new information into their classroom instructional practices when presentation of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback are integral components of the professional development design. In addition, coaching by an expert or a peer supports initial practice by the teacher and also helps to sustain a new instructional practice over time. Professional development, which includes only presentation of theory and demonstration, does not produce a high enough effect to result in sustained use of a new strategy over time in the classroom.

The issue of transfer was again researched as part of the Augusta Models of Teaching Project conducted in the 1980's (Joyce & Showers, 1995). The objective of the project was to study a school-wide improvement initiative in which alternative models of teaching were introduced. Data were analyzed in an attempt to determine the level of transfer of new knowledge and skill to teachers' classroom practice. The findings indicate that the combination of theory, demonstration, practice, and collaboration produced a significant increase in the level of practice and an associated increase in the level of transfer. The most important factor associated with transfer of new knowledge to a teacher's classroom practice proved to be levels of in-class practice following presentation of theory, demonstration of instructional strategies, practice in a simulated environment, and peer support in the form of peer coaching study groups.

Results from these studies point to the observation that transfer, or implementation of a new instructional strategy in the classroom, significantly increased when peer

coaching groups were included as part of the overall professional development design. Showers and Joyce (1996) report these early studies led them to conclude "members of peer coaching groups exhibited greater long-term retention of new strategies and more appropriate use of new teaching models over time…. Coaching helped nearly all the teachers implement new teaching strategies" (p. 14).

As a result of their decades long investigation of coaching, Joyce and Showers (1995) now identify four elements inherent in the peer coaching process, which they believe are most effective in not only developing teacher knowledge and skills, but also in ensuring the transfer of that knowledge and skill to the classroom. These activities include: presentation of theory; opportunities for teachers to see demonstrations of instructional practices; opportunities for teachers to practice instructional practices within the context of the classroom; and collaboration between learners. The literacy coach acts as the facilitator for adult learning within this model of professional development. The next section reviews the high level knowledge and skills necessary for effective literacy coaching.

The literacy coach

The role of the literacy coach is highly complex. The research conducted by Lyons and Pinnell (2001) indicates coaching requires both analytic and inferential skills. Their research highlights specific skills of effective coaches including: clear understanding of the reading and writing processes, the ability to identify critical aspects of an observed lesson, the ability to identify important learning points, skill in stimulating reflection on the part of teachers, and the ability to establish interpersonal relationships based on trust. Costa and Garmston (1994) emphasize the role of the

cognitive coach as one who employs "specific strategies to enhance another person's perceptions, decisions, and intellectual functions. Changing these inner thought processes is prerequisite to improving overt behaviors" (p. 2). Toll (2005) identifies five categories of understanding that literacy coaches must possess including: adult learning theory; effective coaching processes; reading and writing processes; literacy assessment; and effective instructional strategies.

Literacy coaching involves various levels of intensity ranging from informal conversation with teachers around literacy instruction, assessment, instructional materials, and curriculum design to more demanding interactions such as providing professional development in both coaching and workshop sessions as well as leading school improvement efforts (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; International Reading Association, 2004; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

While the role and responsibilities of the literacy coach continues to evolve, some research has been conducted in an effort to define what literacy coaches actually do. Coggins, Stoddard, and Cutler (2003) found that coaches reported a host of responsibilities including: leading professional development activity, in-class coaching of teachers as follow-up to presentation of new instructional strategies, capacity-building in their role as trainers of new coaches, assessment of student learning data, providing feedback to teachers after observations or discussions, and problem-solving with teachers and administrators.

The roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches vary across educational settings. In response, researchers have called for studies which focus on the actual practices of

effective literacy coaches as a means of informing the evolving literacy coach position (Dole, 2004; Walpole & Blamey, 2008).

As stated in the Introduction, four concepts are positioned as foundational to the literacy coaching model of professional development including: reflective thought; gradual release of responsibility; discourse and learning; and goal theory. The remainder of the literature review includes a review of each concept as it relates to adult learning theory and literacy coaching.

Reflective Thought

Reflection is central to the literacy coaching model and, as stated, is positioned as a fundamental premise of this study. For example, teacher/coach collaboration revolves around reflection on theory, demonstration and practice. Literacy coaching, as an adult learning model, also incorporates the use of reflection as a learning strategy. According to Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, and Grogan (2006) the literacy coaching model of professional development relies heavily on the ability of coaches to scaffold the instructional decision making of teachers. Scaffolding during literacy coaching requires that teachers and coaches engage in critical reflection on literacy concepts and instruction in a variety of contexts including: classroom demonstrations of literacy instruction by the coach; coach/teacher conferences; and teacher implementation of new literacy practice in the classroom. Lyons and Pinnell (2001) emphasize the need for critical reflection in the adult learning process and incorporate critical reflection as an integral component of literacy coaching. Given the central role of reflection in the literacy coaching process, it is necessary to review the theoretical foundations of reflection in the adult learning process.

According to Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), reflection is, "thinking and feeling activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations" (p. 19). Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) present a distinction between reflection and critical reflection. While critical reflection is conceptualized as a higher level of reflection in which the learner reflects on her own learning process, reflection is seen as a process whereby a learner thinks on a more concrete level about the learning experience itself. During critical reflection "rather than thinking only *descriptively* about experience, the learner '*goes meta*' and thinks consciously and deeply about her '*process of thinking*', learning, and understanding" (Taylor et al. (2000), p. 28). Critical reflection leads to development of knowledge and to personal change. The type of thinking teachers and coaches engage in during reflective conferences may include reflection on experiences, in order to gain new understanding, and critical reflection on the underlying thinking, which supports understandings about teaching and learning.

For these researchers, the process of critical reflection includes similar phases of thinking in which the learner engages in analysis of a problem or dilemma. According to Boud et al. (1985), it is somewhat misleading to conceptualize the process of critical reflection as phases or stages of thought and action. In reality experience(s) and reflection may overlap, may be sequential, phases may be omitted, or phases may be simultaneously processed. Clearly, reflection is a complex, dynamic process which includes "the sorts of thinking….many of which are interlocking and overlapping" (Heron, 1985, p.136).

According to Taylor et al. (2000), the initial phase of critical reflection involves the analysis of a problem or dilemma. From this point forward the learner is engaged in a series of thinking activities, actions, or ways of feeling. Taylor et al. (2000) identify five overlapping phases of thinking inherent in critical reflection including: consideration of new information; reflection on possible gaps in one's thinking, such as information or strategies one is not considering; conscious attempts to analyze information from various perspectives; attempts at trying out new ways of thinking, feeling or acting; and integration of new ways of thinking, behaving, and feeling.

Boud et al. (1985) provide a three stage model of reflection which graphically displays the dynamic nature of reflection (see Figure 3). As the model indicates, reflective thought has its basis in experience(s), which may include behaviors, ideas and/or feelings. The model includes three stages of reflective thought including: returning to experience, attending to feelings, and re-evaluating experience.

Figure 3. Model of ReflectiveThought.

Returning to experience
Attending to feelings:
- utilizing positive feelings,
-removing obstruct-
   ing feelings
Re-evaluating experience:
- association,
integration,
validation,
appropriation

Behavior

Ideas

Feelings

New perspectives on experience

Change in behavior

Experience(s)   **Reflective Process**   **Outcomes**

Boud,, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 36
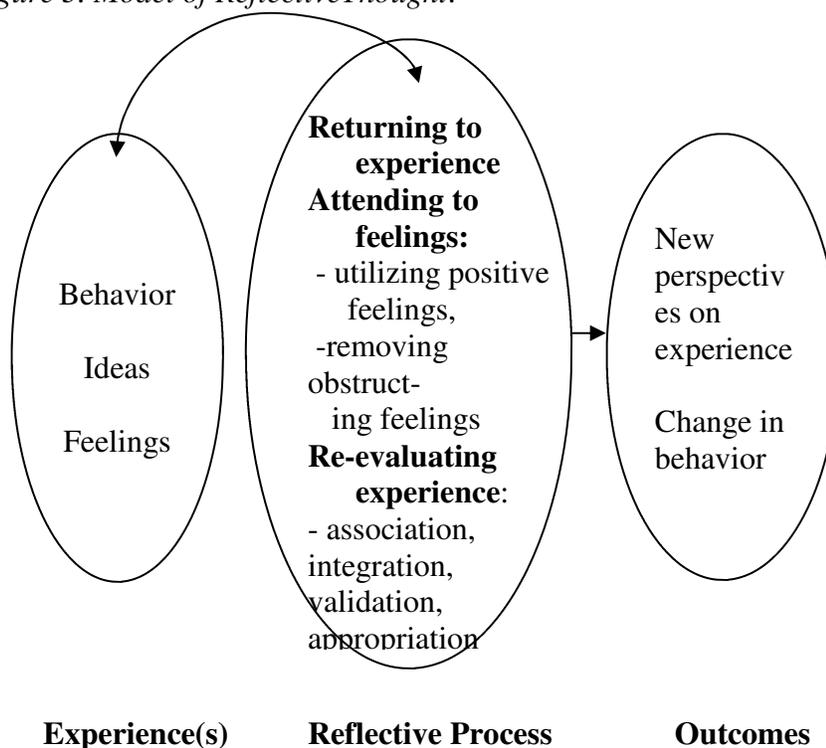
During the first stage of reflective thought the learner returns to an experience and recollects what transpired. This may be accomplished alone or by recounting the experience with others. During the second stage the learner attends to positive and negative feelings about the experience. Attending to feelings during reflective thought involves both the utilization of positive feelings and the "removing [of] obstructing feelings [as] a necessary precursor to a rational consideration of events…It involves whatever needs to be done in order to remove impediments to a thorough examination of the experience" (Boud et al., 1985,

p. 26). The third stage includes re-evaluating the experience. "Re-evaluating involves re-examining experience in the light of the learner's intent, associating new knowledge with that which is already possessed, and integrating this new knowledge into the learner's conceptual framework" (Boud et al., 1985, pp. 26-27). This stage is characterized by four aspects of thought: (1) association of new data to what is already known; (2) integration, or creation of relationships among concepts; (3) validation of ideas and feelings resulting from the experience; and (4) appropriation of new knowledge into one's repertoire of behavior.

Associating, integrating and validating of new knowledge leads to appropriation of the new knowledge into the learner's overall conceptual understandings. At this point, a learner may engage in mental 'rehearsals' of activities where the new understandings may be applied to future activities. Here the learner is testing out possible application of new knowledge. It is important to realize the complexity of these patterns of thought. As Boud and his colleagues state, "although we have separated these elements and stages, within each it is not possible to regard them as distinct and

unrelated….this may involve many cycles between stages, repetitions of important elements and lingering over particularly significant components" (p. 27).

Other researchers have developed models of reflective thought such as the phases of thinking identified by Taylor et al. (2000), which provide similar phases of reflective thought, including: analysis of new information, trying out new ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving, and integration of new ways of thinking into one's behaviors. Nevertheless, Boud et al. (1985) provide a more discreet, or granular analysis of the reflective stages, which are especially useful for consideration of coach/teacher reflective thought.

Discourse and Learning

In order to better understand the reflective conversations that occur between coaches and teachers, it is necessary to understand the relationship between discourse and learning. Lyons and Pinnell (2001) state,

> conversation is the reciprocal medium through which adults construct meaning….coaches provide the feedback teachers need to refine specific procedures, but more important, coaching expands teachers' conceptual knowledge in a way that helps them learn from their own teaching over time (p. 139).

The discourse engaged in by coaches and teachers has the potential to impact conceptual understanding of literacy instruction and teachers' subsequent instructional decisions. In addition, the reflective conversations between coaches and teachers have the capacity to build a self perpetuating system of learning in which teachers are able to critically reflect on their own instructional practice and, as a result, further refine

their ever growing expertise during and after the coaching process (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Given the role of discourse in literacy coaching as a collaborative learning activity, it is necessary to understand the function of discourse in adult learning.

Barnes and Todd (1977), in reflecting on the relationship between cognition and speech state, "speech functions as a means by which people construct and reconstruct views of the world about them, often jointly, when the speech is a means of communicating with other people" (p. 1). Social interaction is important in adult learning because "shared activity and shared meaning help learners make sense of new information" (Lyons and Pinnell, 2001, p. 138). Consequently, discourse may be conceptualized as a tool which shapes both the content and process of learning. According to Phillips and Hardy (2002), "beginning with the work of linguistic philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1967) and Winch (1958), the idea that language is much more than a simple reflection of reality – that, in fact, it is *constitutive* of social reality – has become commonly accepted" (p. 12).

Schön (1987) identifies three essential features of the dialogue between a coach and student, which demonstrate the constructive nature of dialogue in learning. First, the dialogue takes place within the context of the student's attempts to learn. Second, both coach and student use words as well as actions to construct, demonstrate, and clarify meaning. Third, the dialogue includes, and is dependent upon, 'reflection-in-action'. Reflection-in-action happens when a coach and a student test their understandings through words and actions directed at one another in the immediate and on-going context of a learning situation.

An example of reflection-in-action may be seen in the interactions between a literacy coach and a teacher. A literacy coach demonstrates a particular instructional practice for a teacher. The teacher attempts to understand the demonstration and tests out initial understanding by trying out the practice, usually in the context of the classroom. As the teacher tries out an instructional practice she, in effect, demonstrates the understanding she has constructed. The coach, in turn, will attempt to understand the teacher's actions, assess her understanding, and then respond accordingly. The reflection between coach and student is reciprocal in nature, and highly dependent on dialogue and action.   This example of learning demonstrates the social construction of knowledge and reveals the ways in which discourse constructs what is learned.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Gradual release of responsibility (GRR) refers to a model of instruction in which the "cognitive load should shift slowly and purposefully from teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility, to independent practice and application by the learner" (Fisher & Frey, 2008). GRR suggests that learning occurs through social interactions with others, and that a learner will progress through a continuum of learning. Learning is viewed as on-going; progressing through stages which are supported through collaboration with others.

Historically, GRR as a model of learning has been implemented in the realm of adult/child interactions. Pearson (1985) presents a four stage model of GRR for reading comprehension instruction. During stage one, the teacher takes all the responsibility for a learning task by providing an explicit model for the learning task.

During stages two and three, the child and teacher assume joint responsibility for learning as they engage in guided practice. During guided practice the teacher initially assumes most of the responsibility for the learning task. As instruction continues, the teacher gradually guides the child to assume more and more of the responsibility for the learning task through questions, prompts, suggestions and cues. In stage four, the child is released to independently practice or apply what has been learned. At this point in the learning process students should be able to independently apply what has been taught in new and varied situations.

Sweeny (2003) has applied the GRR model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983) to professional development for adults. As discussed in Chapter 1, Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' provided the theoretical foundation for Pearson and Gallagher's work. Sweeny (2003) states, "adults learn in much the same way as children do….Though the gradual release of responsibility model was designed to support reading instruction, a similar process occurs for any kind of learning" (p. 3). Sweeny advocates for a learner-centered model of professional development which leads teachers through a GRR continuum. Figure 4 presents Sweeny's model of gradual release of responsibility for adults.

Figure 4. Gradual Release of Responsibility Model for Adult Learning.

	All Staff Developer	Joint Responsibility	All Teacher
High Degree of teacher Independence Low	Instruction is modeled through demonstration, lessons, observation, videos, and professional reading with discussion.	Guided practice includes co-teaching, observation with feedback, continued professional reading with discussion, discussions, planning sessions.	Independence includes sharing successes with colleagues, receiving coaching to support next steps, fine-tuning, assuming new leadership roles, determining where to begin new learning

As with Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) model in each successive stage the learner assumes more and more of the responsibility for the learning task, and the teacher, or coach, gradually releases responsibility. During stage one of the Sweeny (2003) GRR continuum, the staff developer would assume all of the responsibility for the learning task. Instruction is modeled for the teacher "to provide a visual picture of high-quality instruction" (Sweeny, 2003, p.4). The staff developer takes the lead in planning, teaching, and in the reflective processes which occur after the modeling event. Stage two is also similar to Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) GRR model in that the staff developer and the teacher assume joint responsibility for the learning task. The coach provides support as the teacher practices a new instructional strategy in the classroom.

Support during stage two may include: co-teaching, co-planning, observations of the teacher trying out an instructional practice with feedback, and/or continued professional reading with discussions. Stage three is the independent stage in which the teacher assumes all responsibility for the learning task. This stage of learning includes sharing with colleagues and coaching for next steps in which the teacher is a full participant in the planning. The teacher is may now begin the process of integrating the new practice into her established instructional repertoire.

Goal Theory

Goal setting plays an important role in adult learning. As has been discussed, adult learning theory holds that adults are motivated to learn in order to solve personally relevant problems. As a result, adults will set goals designed to address these problems.

According to Locke and Latham (1990), "a goal is the object or aim of an action, for example, to attain a specific standard of proficiency, usually within a specified time limit" (p. 705). Goal theory "assumes that goals (ideas of future, desired end states) play a causal role in action….that human action is directed by conscious goals and intentions" (Locke & Latham, p. 2).

Locke and Latham (1990) emphasize that explanations of human behavior exist on many levels. "Goal setting theory provides an immediate or first-level explanation of action. Goals and intentions are viewed as immediate precursors and regulators of much, if not most, human action" (p.8). Second and third level explanations include motivational factors and values/beliefs, motives and personality, and are beyond the scope of this discussion.

Goal theory emphasizes the importance of one's ability measure progress toward meeting a goal. Bandura (1990) states, "activation of self-evaluation processes through internal comparison requires both comparative factors – a personal standard and knowledge of one's performance level. Neither performance knowledge without standards nor standards without performance knowledge can provide a basis for self-evaluative reactions" (p. 81).

Goal theory may be seen in the everyday experience and reflections of people. That is, everyday actions are often explained in terms of goals or purposes. For example, adult learning theory holds that people are motivated to action in relation to their goals (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). According to Lyons and Pinnell (2001) "adults are goal oriented. They generally have a set of goals and /or issues they are facing at a particular time, and they want to resolve these problems or issues *now"* (p. 3).

Dewey (1933) links reflective thought with goals or 'ends-in-view'. He stresses the need for foresight in planning for the future.

> Thinking enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in-view, or purposes of which we are aware. It enables us to act in deliberate and intentional fashion to attain future objects or to come into command of what is now distant or lacking. (p. 17)

Bandura (1990) identifies cognitively based motivation for action in relation to goals, which is guided by foresight as well. People "anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions, they set goals for themselves, and they plan courses of action designed to realize valued futures" (p. 71).

Given that goals may direct and motivate action, it is also important to consider the characteristics of goals. Zimmerman (1998) explains that all learners are concerned with how they learn and act in some manner in an effort to 'self-regulate' their learning through reflective thought. There are differences in how individuals accomplish this, however. To account for these differences, Zimmerman identifies three phases of self-regulation in learning. The first phase focuses on goal setting, and draws distinctions between skillful and less skillful learners and the types of goals they may set.

According to Zimmerman (1998), skillful learners set goals which are specific and, further, break distal goals down into hierarchies of attainment. Learners who break distal goals down into proximal, sub-goals create an environment for success. These learners are more likely to achieve challenging distal goals as they focus on the hierarchy of more achievable proximal sub-goals. These skillful learners are motivated and encouraged by their performance. "To skillful self-regulators, favorable self-evaluations stem directly from their goal-setting and self-monitoring efforts" (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 9). Skillful self-regulators position themselves as independent learners who are able to monitor goal achievement.

In addition to setting proximal goals, skillful learners set specific goals that are considered achievable. According to Locke and Latham (1990), people will work longer and harder if the goal is considered demanding but achievable, and is specific enough to be clear, relevant and measurable. "Specific, challenging goals lead to higher performance than other types of goals….[because they] entail less ambiguity about what constitutes high or good performance" (Locke & Latham, 1990, p. 108).

Specific goals allow people to formulate standards for action and thus measure their progress toward the goal.

On the other hand, less skillful learners do not form goal hierarchies. Distal goals are not broken down into achievable, proximal sub-goals. These learners focus on nonspecific, distal goals, which do not lend themselves to measurement, self-evaluation or self-regulation. These 'naïve self-regulators' are often dependent on others for feedback. The nonspecific, distal nature of a goal results in poor standards for self-evaluation and self-monitoring of goal achievement.

Bandura (1990) also emphasizes the importance of goal characteristics or properties. He highlights the essential characteristics of an effective goal and the effects of goals on performance. Bandura states, "because the effects of goals depend on their properties, propositions about the impact of goals… must be qualified by the nature and structure of the goals" (p. 103). Bandura identifies three goal properties to consider including: goal challenge, goal specificity, and goal proximity.

First, goal challenge exists on a continuum of difficulty. Difficult goals produce more effort than easily attained goals. However, if a goal is so difficult that it is not attainable effort and commitment to a goal will decline. Second, specific goals lend themselves to self-monitoring, or self-regulation, because one is more able to set a standard of performance by which to monitor progress. It is difficult to self-monitor progress toward nonspecific goals because standards of performance are not readily available. When performance standards are difficult to discern the goal is less likely to act as a guide for action.

A third characteristic of goals refers to the proximal or distal nature of a goal. According to Locke and Latham (2002), "the use of proximal goals may positively impact performance" (p. 709). This is because proximal goals allow for self-regulation. Proximal goals allow for ongoing monitoring of where one is in relation to the goal. Standards are more easily set, which allow for monitoring of performance.

Bandura (1990) points to the motivating nature of the self satisfaction attained from reaching one's goals. Satisfaction is not readily measurable when goals are distal and nonspecific. Distal goals require substantial disciplined in order to put off the satisfaction of reaching a goal for longer periods of time. Further, proximal, specific goals allow for feedback from others in regard to performance. According to Locke and Latham (2002), "proximal feedback regarding errors can yield information for people about whether their picture of reality is aligned with what is required to attain the goal" (p. 709).

In summary, goal theory offers a rationale for professional development, which is consistent with adult learning theory. Lyons & Pinnell (2001) have identified goal setting as a requirement for professional development for adults. However, not all goals have the potential to motivate and act as 'guides for learning' (Bandura, 1990). As a result, the characteristics of goals are of concern to both literacy coaches and adult learners. Goals, which exist within a hierarchy of proximal and distal relationships; are specific enough to act as standards for self monitoring of progress; and are considered achievable may offer optimal opportunity for success.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

The participants in this study included one literacy coach and four elementary level classroom teachers involved in a district wide literacy coaching program. During the 2003-04 school year the district adopted a coaching model of professional development in an effort to enhance teachers' understanding of reading comprehension instruction and the workshop model of instruction. All of the teachers voluntarily participated in the district coaching program. The coaching program initially started in the fall of 2003 with a cohort of five elementary classroom teachers and one literacy coach. By the 2007-08 school year the literacy coaching program had grown to include four middle school teachers and nine elementary teachers for a total of 13 first year lab classroom teachers.

The study took take place in a moderately sized school district with a total population of 3,848 students located in the northeast. According to Information Works! (2007), 11% of the students in the district are eligible for free or reduced lunch. There are five ethnic groups including 88% white, 3% African-American, 3% Asian, 2% Hispanic, and 4% Native American. Only 1% of students receive ESL/bilingual education services. Data on school performance for 2006-2007 indicates that all elementary schools rank as high performing schools. The 2006-07 state testing data indicates that 56% of grade three students, 52% of grade four students, and 37% of grade five students reached proficiency in reading. Eight percent of the teachers believe that a lack of training is a moderate or major problem within

the district and 20% have been in the field of education for more than twenty five years. In terms of teacher mobility 24% have been teaching in the same building for three years or less.

The literacy coaching program is referred to as the 'lab classroom program' (LCP) within the district. As was stated, the LCP began with one coach working with volunteer lab classroom teachers at the elementary level. Lab classroom teachers are individuals who take part in professional development workshops and receive follow up, in-class support from the literacy coach. Follow up support includes a cycle of pre and post conferences with the coach, demonstrations of instructional practices by the coach in the teacher's classroom, and support for the teacher's attempts to 'try out', or transfer, new instructional practices to the classroom. In this study, support for the teacher's 'try out' of new instructional practices in the classroom included co-teaching events, with the classroom teacher taking the lead and the coach offering support both during the lesson and in pre and post conference settings.

Since the inception of the LCP, lab classroom teachers agreed to open their classrooms for colleagues to observe demonstration lessons one day during the school year. These events were facilitated by the literacy coach and included a pre conference, demonstration lesson, and post conference. Conferences were offered as an opportunity for teachers to critically reflect on instructional practice.

Due to scheduling issues demonstration lessons proved to be problematic for first year lab classroom teachers during the 2007-08 LCP, resulting in no first year lab classroom teachers opening their classrooms for colleague observations.

Instrumentation

A variety of data sources were used including: field notes of all observations, pre and post teacher interviews, transcribed audio tapes of teacher try outs of new instructional practices, transcribed audio tapes of coach/teacher conferences, artifacts such as pre and post conference forms, and lesson planning materials and a series of conversations with the coach over the course of the data collection period from January 2008 through June 2008. Figure 5 illustrates data sources in relation to each research question.

As each event in the coaching cycle was observed, data were collected and analyzed which were pertinent to the overall setting including: classroom arrangement of furniture and materials, time of day, number of students and teachers present and materials used in lessons or in the pre and post conferences. In addition, various documents were collected and analyzed including: the conversations between coaches and teachers, which were audio taped and transcribed; field notes of observable behaviors of coaches and teachers; written artifacts such as pre and post conference planning forms and lesson plans, and notes compiled by the coach and/or teachers.

Figure 5. Research Questions in Relation to Data Sources.

Research Question	Pre Interview	Post Inter-view	Coach/ Teacher Pre con-ference	Post Demo. Coach Teach-er Confer-ence	Teacher Applica-tion of Learning	Post Applica-tion Coach/ Teacher Confer-ence
How does the coaching model of professional development affect the teacher's implement of new instructional practice in the classroom?	**Audio taped/ Transcrib-ed Struc-tured interview**	**Audio taped/ Tran-scribe Struc-tured inter-view**	**Audio taped/ Transcrib-ed** **Field notes**		**Audio taped/ Tran-scribed** **Field notes** **Forms and lesson materials**	**Audio taped/ Tran-scribed** **Field notes**
How does the discourse during teacher/coach pre and post observation conferencing affect teacher learning and subsequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction?			**Audio taped/ Transcrib-ed** **Field notes**	**Audio taped/ Tran-scribe** **Field notes** **Forms and lesson mater-ials**	**Audio taped/ Tran-scribed** **Field notes** **Forms and lesson materials**	**Audio taped/ Tran-scribed** **Field notes**

Research design

This section will describe the procedures used to collect and analyze multiple sources of data compiled through structured interviews, observations, conversations with participants, and collection of artifacts such as pre and post conference forms and lesson plans.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the instructional decision making of elementary level reading teachers as they participate in a coaching model of professional development in literacy. The inquiry process was guided by two questions: (1) How does the literacy coaching model of professional development affect teachers' implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom? (2) How does the discourse during teacher/coach conferencing affect teacher learning and subsequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction?

Procedures

This study consisted of four definable phases of data collection and analysis.

Phase 1: Initial contact

A first contact with the district involved in this study was made in the spring of 2007. A meeting was held with two district literacy coaches and the district level administrator responsible for the literacy coaching program. Of the two literacy coaches present at this meeting, one was a veteran coach who had worked in the LCP since its inception, and the other coach was new to the position. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the focus of the research and to seek permission to conduct a study of the literacy coaching program during the 2007-08 school year involving first year lab classroom teachers. First year lab classroom teachers were teachers who

volunteered to take part in the 2007-08 LCP and who had no prior formal experience with the program. An overview of the study was provided (see Appendix A). As a result of this meeting both literacy coaches agreed to participate in the study, although the new coach eventually dropped out of the study before data collection started in February 2008 due to reassignment within the district.

The first contact with the lab classroom teachers was in July 2007 at a week long summer workshop for all of the teachers who had volunteered for the upcoming 2007-08 LCP. This session provided the opportunity to establish rapport with the pool of prospective study volunteers and to develop understanding of the overall organization and goals of the LCP.

Phase 2: Selection of participants

On January 29, 2008 the study was presented to a gathering of all first year LCP teachers in the district. An overview of the study was provided (see Appendix A). In addition, informed consent for research (see Appendix B) and informed consent for audio taping (see Appendix C) was secured. At this time a total of nine elementary and four middle school teachers volunteered to participate. All of the middle school teachers were eliminated as possible participants. The decision to eliminate middle school teachers was due to the small number of middle school volunteers (two) and the district uncertainty as to the organization of the new middle school LCP program. The original pool of elementary LCP teachers is described in Figure 6. In an effort to obtain as wide a spectrum of teachers from each grade level as possible, one teacher was chosen randomly from the three third grade volunteers.   As a result, the study was initially conducted with six teachers and one literacy coach (see Figure 7).

Eventually two of the teachers, Sid and Emily, were dropped from this study. The decision to exclude these two teachers was based on the incompatibility of their team teaching situation, with the other four teachers who taught alone in their respective classrooms. Observations of the two team teaching indicated that their experience was not comparable to the experience of the four other teachers. The patterns of their interactions with the coach were altered by their interaction with one another. In addition, health limitations made it impossible for one of these teachers to fully participate in this study.

Figure 6. First Year Elementary Lab Classroom Teachers.

	Gender	Grade
1	Female	1st
2	Female	2nd
3	Female	3rd
4	Female	3rd
5	Female	3rd
6	Female	3/4split
7	Female	3/4 split (inclusion)*
8	Female	4th grade

*Inclusion – refers to inclusion of special education students in a regular classroom setting with 2 full time teachers.

Figure 7. First Year Lab Classroom Teacher Participants.

	Teacher	Grade
1	Lil	1st grade
2	Lowry	3rd grade
3 4	*Sid Emily	3/4split grade 3/4 split inclusion
5	Tara	4th grade
6	Elaine	5th grade

Lil, Lowry, Tara and Elaine taught in traditional classrooms with between 18 and

20 students. Sid and Emily taught in an inclusion classroom.   This classroom

included a group of students serviced by the special education teacher and one

classroom teacher. The special education students would spend the majority of the

day in the classroom and be periodically assigned to other settings for intensive special

education instruction.

Phase 3: Coach/Teacher Observations and Pre and Post-Interview.

Coach/teacher observations and pre-interviews (see Appendix D) started in

February 2008. Post-interviews (see Appendix E) were conducted at the close of each

teacher's final session with the coach between May 23, 2008 and June 9, 2008. All

interviews were approximately one hour in length and were conducted using open-

ended questions, in a semi-structured interview format. This approach allowed the

participants to describe and reflect on their own experience (Charmaz, 2006).

Throughout the pre and post-interviews, the flexible nature of the interview approach

allowed for potentially relevant lines of questioning to be explored, shedding greater light on participants' experiences.

During the pre interview phase, information was gathered as to teacher characteristics pertinent to the study. Figure 8 provides information gathered during the pre interview. All other information gathered from the pre and post interviews including: understanding of the goals of the LCP; prior experience with the specific reading comprehension strategies and/or the workshop model; and personal goals for participation in the LCP are discussed in Chapter 4.

As Figure 8 indicates, four female teachers participated in this study. Participants had varying years of experience and teaching degrees. All were highly experienced with between 11 and 25 years of teaching. Lil and Tara each had a bachelor's degree in education. Lowry held a master's degree in Special Education and Elaine held a master's degree in education.

All the participants were familiar with the LCP prior to entering the program. Each participant had been introduced to the LCP through contact with another teacher in their school who had participated in the LCP in previous years. In Lil's case there had been informal interaction with a fellow first grade teacher who was working with the literacy coach. Lil reported opportunities to learn from this teacher as they engaged in grade level planning. Lowry, Elaine and Tara also had opportunity to talk with former lab classroom teachers.

Figure 8. Teacher Profile.

	Teacher	Grade	Teaching Experience in Years/Assignment	Highest Degree	Professional Development with workshop model or comprehension strategies
1	Lil	1st grade	11 years experience in pre K – 2 5 years – grade 1	BA – Early Childhood Education	Limited experience with workshop model & strategies through informal observation and interaction with another first grade teacher and the literacy coach.
2	Lowry	3rd grade	25 years experience in K, special education, grade 3	MA – Special Education	12 hours of professional development around 7 Keys. Some informal exposure to another teacher using workshop model and 7 comprehension strategies.
3	Tara	4th grade	20 years experience in Pre-K, 3-6, science grades 7-8	BA - Education	Previous participation in a school based study group focusing on 7 Keys. Some informal interaction with another teacher using the workshop model and 7 comprehension strategies.
4	Elaine	5th grade	11 years experience in elementary grades	BA Early Childhood	Limited experience with workshop model & strategies through informal observation and interaction with another lab classroom teacher. Limited professional development in literacy including reading 7 Keys.

Lowry and Tara also participated in a school-based study group which read and

discussed Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003), *7 Keys to Comprehension.* This text

provided understanding of the seven comprehension strategies, which formed the basis

of LCP reading comprehension instruction.

Next, the literacy coach and individual lab classroom teachers were observed as they engaged in pre-conferences, classroom demonstrations by the coach, post-conferences and co-teaching events. Data collection occurred from the end of January 2008 through the beginning of June 2008. The scheduling of coaching sessions was dependent on many external factors such as teachers' classroom schedules, district wide scheduling and the coach's schedule. The coach's schedule was subject to many competing demands such as attending district wide meetings and professional development sessions. Individual coaching schedules for each of the participating teachers ranged from seven coach/teacher interactions to 12 interactions as indicated in Figure 9.

The four teachers experienced varying frequency of observed interactions with the coach. The observed interactions ranged from a low of seven (Tara) to a high of twelve (Elaine).

The pattern of activities within the coaching cycle was consistent across each teacher, with the exception of Tara. Because of scheduling conflicts, and unexplained delays in scheduling, Tara had the least interactions with the coach and was observed only four times. In addition, only one post conference was observed as the post conference was never scheduled immediately after a demonstration.

Figure 9. Coaching Sessions By Date.

Name	PC	CD	PoC	PC	CD	CT	PoC	PrC	CD	CT	PoC	PC	CT	PoC	PrI.	PoI
Lil	2/11 N/O	2/13	2/13	4/3	--	4/10	4/10	5/3 N/O	--	5/6	5/6	--	--	--	3/15	5/08
Lowry	2/11	2/15	2/15	3/5	3/5	--	3/9 N/O	3/11	3/12	--	3/12	--	--	--	3/5	6/9
Tara	2/5 N/O	2/7	2/7	4/2 N/O	--	4/3 N/O	--	5/15	--	5/21	N/O	--	--	--	3/11	6/9
Elaine	2/25	2/27	2/27	4/27	4/28	--	4/28	5/5 N/O	--	5/7	5/7	5/16	5/16	5/17	2/27	5/28

Key: PrC   =   Pre conference
        CD   =   Coach Demonstration
        PoC   =   Post Conference
        CT   =   Co-Teaching
        PrI Pre =   Interview
        PoI   =   Post Interview
        N/O   =   Not Observed

The coach and teacher determined specific learning goals for students during the pre conference phase. For example, the coach and teacher would decide on one of the seven reading comprehension strategies (determining importance, sensory images, background knowledge, questioning, drawing inferences, determining importance, synthesizing, fix-up strategies) for instruction. The pre conference was also the time when the various components of the coach demonstration lesson were discussed. Every lesson was taught using the workshop model (modeling, guided practice, independent practice, sharing).

Responsibility for the planning and teaching was gradually released from the coach to the teacher over the course of multiple coaching cycles. While the level of release varied across teachers in this study, all the teachers and the coach engaged in a co-teaching experience designed to give the teacher opportunity to co-plan and then try

out the instructional practice in the classroom with the support of the coach. A post-conference was conducted after the co-teaching experience.

Phase 4: Data Analysis

Data were collected and analyzed using grounded theory as a qualitative research method. Grounded theory, also referred to as the constant comparative method of analysis, is designed to build theory concerned with " process, sequence, and change pertaining to organizations, positions, and social interaction" (Glazer & Strauss, 1967, p. 114) and as such is well suited to the examination of the literacy coaching process as a phenomenon encompassing social interactions within an organizational setting. The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers made instructional decisions within the context of literacy coaching. Therefore, the potential of grounded theory method in explaining the dynamic processes within coach/teacher interactions provided an excellent opportunity for capturing the intricacies of teacher decision making.

The core of grounded theory method encompasses the process of analyzing data through ever increasing levels of abstraction (Charmaz, 2006). The procedures used in grounded theory analysis are described in four specific stages by Glazer and Strauss (1967) including: comparing incidents by category, integrating categories and properties, delimiting theory and writing theory. In the following section each of these stages is explained in relation to this study.

Comparing incidents by category.

In this stage of open coding, data were collected and coded, or labeled. Glazer and Strauss (1967) identify a "defining rule for the constant comparative method: *while*

coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). In essence grounded theory requires the researcher to conceptualize data by assigning conceptual labels to phenomenon. This was accomplished through the two main strategies of (1) asking questions of the data and, (2) comparing data with one another. Throughout this process data were constantly compared and categorized so that similar phenomena were grouped under the same conceptual label (Charmaz, 2006; Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

During initial open coding, categories derived from Boud, Keogh, & Walker's (1985) model of reflective thought (see Figure 1) were utilized. At the same time grounded theory demands the researcher "remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by…reading of the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). The decision to initiate coding with an analysis of reflective thought processes was based on research which suggests that the reflective thought engaged in by coaches and teachers is the basic vehicle for learning during literacy coaching (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Lyons & Pinnell, 2002; Nowak, 2003; Schön, 1987; Sweeney, 2003; Walpole & McKenna, 2004; Wold, 2002). This research, coupled with the belief that categories "can be borrowed from existing theory provided that the data are continually studied to make certain that the categories fit," (Glazer & Strauss, 1967, p.36) provided a solid starting point or 'beginning foothold' for initial open coding.

While Glazer and Strauss (1967) cautiously support the use of categories borrowed from existing theory they also state, "emergent categories usually prove to be the most relevant and the best fitted to the data" (p. 37). This proved to be true in this study.

In summary, there exists a tension between the application of preconceived concepts or categories derived from the literature, and the process of discovery that is integral to the grounded theory method. It is the use of the literature, an open approach to discovery of new concepts, the adherence to grounding all findings in the data, along with the ever present search for the discovery of patterns and relationships among categories, which enables a grounded theory to meet the criteria of: fit; usefulness; conceptual density; durability over time; modifiability; and explanatory power (Charmaz, 2006).

The process of coding and comparing, inherent in the initial coding stage requires the use of memo writing as the second rule of the constant comparative method. During this study memo writing included analysis of concepts and categories as they emerge, and recording of theoretical ideas, general thoughts, questions, or insights (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Integrating categories and properties.

As the open coding of data continued, emerging concepts were categorized through the constant comparison of the data on a conceptual level. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), "the process of grouping concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena is called *categorizing*….Categories have conceptual power because they are able to pull together around them other groups of concepts or subcategories*"* (p. 65).

Categorizing is the classification of concepts at a higher level of abstraction and, as was stated, is a process at the very center of the grounded theory method.   As

categories were developed descriptions were formulated by developing properties or characteristics of each category.

Delimiting theory.

Delimiting theory refers to the emergence of theory in that fewer modifications of the emerging theory are required as more data are collected and analyzed. In addition delimiting refers the reduction of the number of categories which pertain to the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

First, reduction of the theory occurred in this study when the constant comparison of concepts and categories revealed the relationships between categories or their properties. Second, the delimitation and saturation of categories occurred when categories were integrated, resulting in a smaller group of categories for coding. As analysis continued, it was possible to collect and code data within the boundaries of a developing theory. The smaller set of categories (reflective thought, goal setting, and gradual release of responsibility), which are discussed in Chapter 2, provided a clearer focus for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how the reflective conversations between one literacy coach and four elementary level classroom teachers affect teacher learning and instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction. This study has been guided by two research questions: (1) How does the literacy coaching model of professional development affect teachers' implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom? (2) How does the discourse during teacher/coach conferencing affect teacher instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction?

This chapter is organized around a discussion of three conceptual categories, which emerged as data were collected and analyzed. Analysis procedures are explained as they unfolded. The main conceptual categories and their interrelationships are explained through a discussion of each participants experience as part of the lab classroom program (LCP).

As the analysis of the reflective thought engaged in by the coach and teachers unfolded, two additional categories emerged including Gradual Release of Responsibility and Learner Goals. The organizational framework of the LCP, which rested on the notion of 'gradual release of responsibility (GRR) for adult learners' (Sweeney, 2003), as well as 'learner goals' (Bandura, 1990; Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005; Locke & Latham, 1990; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Zimmerman, 1998) became two important conceptual categories, which

explained teacher learning in the LCP. These three concepts (gradual release of responsibility, reflective thought and learner goals) are discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter. As coding continued, properties, which are defined as attributes, elements, or characteristics of a category (Charmaz, 2006; Glazer & Strauss,1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) for each category emerged and provided expanded understanding of the role of each concept in teacher learning and subsequent decision making. The three main categories are displayed along with related properties in Figure 10.

As stated, the results of this study are organized around the three main conceptual categories: Reflective Thought, Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR), and Learner Goals. Results indicate that reflective conversations during literacy coaching affect teacher decision making by providing a forum for the teacher to engage in reflective conversations about teaching and learning, provide support as the teacher gradually assumes responsibility for instructional decision making, and provides the opportunity to self-evaluate in light of established goals.

In the next three sections of this chapter each category is discussed and illustrated with evidence from data. First, reflective thought and GRR are discussed in section one. While all three categories are highly interrelated, it proved to be most illustrative to present the discussion of reflective thought and GRR simultaneously. Second, learner goals are presented. The data analysis presents the experience of each participant as seen through the lens of each conceptual category. Most important is the notion of the relationships which existed between each of these three categories.

Figure 10. Coding Scheme.

Reflective Thought	Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)	Learner Goals

Returning to Experience
• Recounting experience
• Clarifying experience
• Replaying experience
Attending to Feelings
• Removing obstructing feelings
• Utilizing feelings
• Laughing through embarrassing events
Re-evaluating Experience
• Re-examining in light of intent
• Associating (connecting ideas and feelings)
• Integrating (associations are integrated into a new whole) knowledge
• Validating (testing in reality)
• Appropriating (personal appropriation of new knowledge,
Outcomes & Actions
• New way of acting
• Change in behavior or beliefs
• New set of ideas
	GRR
	• Stage 1
	  Coach takes lead
	    All Coach
	
	• Stage 2
	  Teacher takes lead
	    Joint Responsibility
	
	• Stage 3
	    All Teacher
	    Teacher intent
		Goal setting
		• short term (for this lesson)
		• Long term (for the semester)
		• Long term focus (consistent attention to goal in words and actions)
		• Compatibility with LCP Goals
		• Measurable
		• Specific
		• Nonspecific

Reflective thought

The coach and teachers relied on reflective thought to drive the learning process and subsequent decision making. All four teachers engaged in multiple coaching cycles. The patterns of reflective thought during successive coaching cycles (pre conference, demonstration, post conference) changed as coaching cycles were

repeated, and as the coach gradually released responsibility for planning and teaching to individual teachers. Results indicate that individual teachers moved along a continuum of GRR at varying rates. In addition, as the coach released responsibility for planning during the pre conferences there was a significant shift in the teacher's and coach's interaction.

Reflective thought - GRR stage 1 pre conferences

During GRR Stage 1: Initial Pre Conferences, the coach took the lead in probing teachers for information as to the teacher's own learning needs and those of their students. The information focused on established classroom routines and curriculum issues. For example, the coach might ask teachers about seating arrangements or procedures for handling transitions from one activity to another. Curriculum issues included specifics about content and reading materials. The four teachers would then respond to the coach's questions. While teachers made some suggestions as to how a lesson should be structured, suggestions were minimal and consistently related to curriculum issues for a particular grade level and classroom, and/or student reading levels. Curriculum issues and details as to classroom organization and student reading levels were seen by the coach as the teacher's area of expertise the coach needed to tap in order to construct an appropriate demonstration lesson. As the coach states,

> I don't have the knowledge she (teacher) has of her grade level… nor of her students. I have knowledge, more knowledge about reading, more than she does. So it's a melding of the two. And also transferring the workshop model and writing out the lessons in the workshop model so that we get stricter about the workshop model. And this is our goal.

The coach's objective in these initial pre conferences, and throughout each coaching cycle, was to assess student and teacher learning needs, gather data for lesson planning, and make suggestions as to how the lesson should be structured. The coach clearly states that assessing teacher learning needs for all the teachers was a top priority. In the following excerpt the coach is referring to one of Lil's initial pre conference:

> Researcher: So you're (coach) saying that this lesson is different because of what the teacher indicated that she needed during the pre-conference?
>
> Coach: Yes, it's about what she needs and where she wants to go. The only thing is I would encourage her….if where she is and where she wants to go doesn't make sense I might indicate the research says something else.

This same pattern of the coach taking the lead during initial pre conferences and probing for information is repeated with Elaine and Lowry as the coach tries to structure the upcoming demonstration lesson. Questioning is focused on curriculum issues and text level as it relates to the students' reading ability. As discussed in Chapter 3 it was not possible to observe initial pre conferences with Tara due to scheduling difficulties including confusion as to dates and times of pre conferences. Elaine pre conference 2.25:

> Coach: I'm just thinking where I can go? One of the things research says about starting strategies that have to do with nonfiction questioning, determining importance and synthesizing is try to start with less dense text and move to the dense. So when you said, the kids were (reluctant)…. I'm just wondering if there was not a lot of background knowledge and way too dense text.

Lowry pre conference 3.11

> Coach: So is that the lifecycle?
>
> Lowry: Oh yes, because what we're doing. The other one (article) that I just showed you is about pollinators. This is about the purpose of bright flower is not to be pretty but to attract pollinators because the flower can't pollinate themselves.
>
> Coach: I'm thinking they (two articles) could go together to synthesize the whole big idea of lifecycles.
>
> Lowry: Yes, but I think I'd start with this one on the plant because it so reinforces what were doing (with curriculum). This is exactly what they're (students) doing.

In addition to the focus on curriculum and student reading levels, a significant aspect of the pre conference dialogue had to do with clarifying past experience. Some of the past experience was shared by the coach and the teacher because the lesson was part of a previous coaching cycle. However, some past experiences were not shared experiences in that both the coach and the teacher were not present for the instructional event. In this circumstance the teacher would return to the experience and recount the event. The coach in turn would then question in an attempt to clarify her understanding of the past teaching event. The coach and teacher would then use this new shared understanding to go forward with future instructional planning. Consequently, the decision making between the coach and the teacher was then based on a shared understanding of the class experience. Thus, an important goal of the

reflective process during the pre conferences was to transform non-shared experience into shared experience through returning to experience and recounting the event.

From the first observations of pre conferences in early February to approximately mid April the patterns described above dominated coach teacher interactions and placed these events clearly in GRR Stage 1. During this stage the coach did not release responsibility for lesson planning to the teachers. In essence, the coach took the lead during pre conferences, while verifying her instructional decisions with the teacher as she planned the lesson.

As stated, the pattern of interaction during the initial pre conferences for Lil, Elaine and Lowry was to confine suggestions to issues concerning curriculum and student reading levels in response to the coach's questions. The teachers focused on asking questions of the coach and responding to the coach's questions. Despite the fact that teachers did not take the lead in initial co-planning conferences, some of the teachers nevertheless employed re-evaluative reflective thought processes in these initial interactions with the coach. Reevaluating includes associating, integrating, validating, appropriating, and consideration of outcomes or possible actions in terms of future instructional decision making. For example, as the following excerpts illustrate, Elaine, Lil and Lowry all respond to the coach's questions by re-evaluating their previous instructional experiences by basing their instructional decision making on student learning outcomes.

Lowry pre conference 3.5

> Coach: So I have to figure out what it is I want to say to them (students). I'm
>
> thinking it works right into the NECAP (New England Comprehensive

Assessment Program) demands in determining importance in the nonfiction

text and will result in a level two to three depth of knowledge.

Lowry: The problem with those NECAP questions is that everything they

(students) need to know is embedded in the passage. But they don't know how

to go back and find it…to read carefully enough to find it… to take the

question and kind of work backward and reread. To do that independently is

hard. You do that as part of a whole group in second grade but rarely as

independent work.

Coach: What is the reading level of this example from the NECAP (New

England Comprehensive Assessment Program).

Lowry: I think my kids would be able to read this all except for one.

Coach: So they're supposed to have some experience with doing it

independently. I'm wondering if I should give them more experience with this

working independently.

Lowry: You're brave. I don't think they're ready for it. I think they benefit a lot

from watching the model and working with the model and then trying it on

their own.

Elaine pre conference 2.25

Coach: There's a lot of things going on in my head knowing where we need to

be especially for the NECAP. You've done some work with nonfiction text

features. Do you feel like that's okay?

Elaine: They could use some work on it. Some of them initially weren't

putting a lot of effort into it. I'm not sure they saw the reason behind it…the

importance of it. But as we continued they started to see the importance and

started putting some effort into it. So at this point, that is, it was before

vacation… they were doing a pretty good job, but certainly they could use

(more instruction)….. if you're thinking along that line?

Coach: What is the type of questioning that they did? Was it self questioning?

Did they do pretty well with that?

Elaine: Well, they were a little reluctant with some things. What you typically

see is that there's a little reluctance to that, because I'm not sure they see a

value…especially the reluctant reader. And then there is the awesome reader

who's just the minimalist. So those two groups stand out, but the rest of the

students I think are pretty good.

Lil provides similar evidence of reflective thought during initial pre conferences

revolving around clarifying past experience including recounting the experience and

re-evaluating student learning from previous lessons. However, Lil is an exception to

the other teacher in that she embraced the LCP opportunity by seeking out another lab

classroom teacher during the previous school year.

As a result of her early exposure to the workshop model and the comprehension

strategies, Lil moved along the continuum of GRR and into a co-teaching situation

ahead of the other teachers. The coach explained Lil's progress as follows,

Well, Lil has had more opportunities because of the teacher across the hall.

Often Lil would come over (during the 2006 – 07 school year) and watch us

teaching. The teacher across the hall is a lab classroom teacher.

Lil's second coaching cycle, held in early April 2008, was conducted as co-teaching experience. In the pre conference for this cycle Lil is an active co-planner with the coach. Lil and the coach share the lead in this conference. In terms of reflective thought Lil not only recounts earlier experience and provides information as to student learning, she also actively makes suggestions, associates new knowledge with prior experience, draws conclusions and begins to generalize new understanding when considering future instruction. At this point Lil moved toward Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) final stage of reflective thought where outcome and action is central. In addition, there was a clear release of responsibility for planning from the coach to the teacher, which had not been visible with any other teachers to date. The resulting lesson was a compilation of both the coach and Lil's instructional decision making.

The following excerpt from the April 4th pre conference, which focused on prediction and summarization, demonstrates Lil's movement along the GRR continuum. At this point Lil was firmly situated in GRR Stage 2: joint Responsibility for Planning and Teaching. In the following excerpt Lil and the coach co-construct the up coming co-teaching lesson according to the workshop model format. They jointly apply their expertise to this task. As they puzzled through the planning, they both express doubts as well as make instructional decisions. Lil and the coach recount their previous thinking as they have separately prepared for this co planning event. Their thinking then becomes shared experience and re-evaluation of their thinking continued from this point. Both Lil and the coach confirmed each others ideas as well as changed their thinking based on new information.

Lil pre conference 4.3

Coach: Well, let me see. Well, we'll have them add to our chart. Well, first we give the …

Coach: Another thing I was thinking about, which I don't think we talked about was [whether] to confirm or not. And I don't think it would be challenging enough…or teach them enough if we didn't have them confirm. And I'm thinking more in terms of…. I was thinking too many letters and words might be distracting on the anchor chart.

Lil: Well, that could definitely happen.

Coach: I don't know whether we want to have a glue stick, and like the summary would be there for the students to look at to consider. Instead of a summary in words we would copy this [points to picture] and they would look at that. And I was thinking that we could have a big letter 'C' that we could glue up there [on the anchor chart] if it was confirmed.

Lil: Yeah. Yeah. I think that makes sense. That absolutely makes sense… not to confuse… but I want to make sure that… we do need to summarize… but we need to be able to say [to the students], what part of that summary do we need to think about to make our prediction? What part of that… but is that too much for them… so I'm wondering if we can just verbally summarize and then pick out the one or two things.   But I don't know.

Coach: But what's going to go on the chart? The one or two things we need to think about? The one or two things we write down as words?

Lil: Yeah.

Coach: Ok. I was just afraid that the words would be too much. But you're right. At this stage in first grade they should be able to handle it.

Lil: I think they can handle it. But I'm also thinking about taking it to the next level and for them to do it independently with a picture or word. What would we then have them do?

Coach: We could make a chart, and then we have them come up with things to add to the chart. And then we'd have them confirm, and then to send them away. That's the part I don't understand. What are we sending them away to do?

Lil: I was thinking…. if we did that… I was thinking we'd read up to this point (specific page is indicated in the text) which is kind of a bit of the way in. There certainly were other places (to stop for predictions), but this one just worked.

Reflective thought – coaching demonstrations

Although all coaching demonstrations were observed and audio taped, it quickly became apparent that the coaching demonstrations did not provide substantial evidence of reflective thought since the coach and teacher rarely interacted during coach demonstrations. The pattern of interaction between the coach and the teacher during coaching demonstrations was consistently confined to management decisions such as seating arrangements or management of behaviors, space or materials. Overall, during demonstrations the coach was concerned with instructing the students as the teacher observed. Despite the lack of interaction during demonstrations, this shared experience provided a powerful platform for subsequent reflection during the

post conference.

GRR - stage 1 post conferences

During the GRR stage 1 post conference more in depth reflective thought became visible even during the first coaching cycle. This was a marked departure from the pre conferences. For example, it was during the post conferences that the coach and all the teachers were fully engaged in reflective thought including Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) category of reevaluation. As stated earlier, reevaluating includes associating, integrating, validating, appropriating, and consideration of outcomes or possible actions in terms of future instructional decision making.

The following excerpt from Elaine's first observed post conference on February 27th illustrates how the reflective thought during the coach/teacher interactions affects Elaine's instructional decision making. Evidence of reevaluation is present in this initial post conference. In addition, Elaine's next post conference during a second coaching cycle on April 28th provides evidence of reevaluating the experience at a deeper level. At this point Elaine, with the support of the coach's suggestions and questions, moves toward outcomes and actions in the reference to upcoming lessons Elaine planned to teach on her own. Elaine's move toward outcomes and actions, as part of her reflective thought process, signals her progression along the GRR continuum.

Another important pattern, which became part of the GRR Stage 2 interaction, was the coach's decision to release responsibility for problem solving to the teacher. For example, during the April 28th post conference the coach challenged Elaine's thinking in that she did not solve all of Elaine's instructional dilemmas. At one point the coach

states, "I don't know". This is a signal for Elaine to take the lead in the instructional

decision making process.   In these post conferences Elaine freely states her opinion

and asks many questions. Throughout both post conferences Elaine and the coach

move between returning to the experience in order to clarify what actually transpired,

and re-evaluating the experience. In addition, Elaine shows evidence of the final stage

of reflective thought, outcomes and actions (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985) as she

engages in instructional decision making for future lessons.

Elaine post conference 2.27

> Elaine: So before they share out you want to give them the chance to turn and
>
> talk?
>
> Coach: And to verbalize their hard work. You know it is one thing that I'm
>
> going to copy it and then read it, but they didn't get a chance to share.
>
> Elaine: Right, so I'm going to write that down. It's important to share.
>
> Coach: And then I talk about sharing content and process. And so at the end I
>
> didn't have them turn and talk about content or process before they shared out
>
> in the interest of time. And I just want to see what happens myself with that.
>
> It's time to shorten it (lessons) up.
>
> Elaine: Well, do you think it was just as effective? I get the part about the turn
>
> and talk before sharing out.
>
> Coach: It's almost like a rehearsal and then people share their tips they learn
>
> from each other… I guess I thought going around the classroom and having an
>
> opportunity to look at their work… I had a feeling they were on track. I didn't
>
> feel like they were shaky.

Elaine: I think it was good… I hadn't done what you did before. I had them work with their partners. When they're doing independent work with their turn and talk partners…. but you gave them that option… and I like that… because there are some kids that really don't want to work with that partner or just don't like working with a partner.

Elaine post conference 4.28

Elaine: But it (previous lesson with this text) was more of a retelling and that (work done today) is where I wanted to go for this quarter.

Coach: Have you seen the summary response guide in the toolkit? It may actually give them a frame to use to take their notes from that. So then they fill in the content or the text evidence and then their thinking, etc. and then they can discuss what strategies they found themselves using.

Elaine: So would that be my next step with them?

Coach: I don't know.

Elaine: Or should I do that as a whole group lesson using those notes we did today.

Coach: She (researcher) said summarizing is such a hard thing to do…. did we both have the same definition before we started? We talked about it. A summary can be a pretty low level thing to do (according to Goudvis). Like on a book jacket. What she's (Goudvis) doing here is forcing them to have a think sheet and translate into this form here (referring to the think sheet).

Elaine: Yes. So that it's merging their thinking.

Coach: And that they're more likely to come to those big ideas.

Elaine: Before, when I was working on questioning… and one of my students said, "I don't have any questions", and another student said, "when you read nonfiction if you don't have questions you're not going to learn anything". That was just amazing to me in fourth grade. That's a really intuitive way of looking at things. He really understood the analogy and could articulate it.

As is apparent in both Lil and Elaine's interactions with the coach, as coaching cycles progressed and these two teachers took on more responsibility for lesson planning and post lesson analysis, a pattern emerged where the coach and teacher moved through the phases of reflective thought as partners without either taking the overall lead. Both the coach and the teachers became highly reflective and analyzed the teaching event by thinking through all aspects of re-evaluation and finally the teachers' movement toward outcomes and actions. At this point the coach/teacher interaction moved into the second stage of 'joint responsibility' of the gradual release of responsibility model (GRR Stage 2).

GRR- stage 2 pre and post conferences

GRR Stage 2 included co-planning and co-teaching events. Of the four participants, Lowry did not advance beyond GRR Stage 1; Lil and Elaine engaged in GRR Stage 2 including full partnership in both co-planning and co-teaching; and Tara advanced partially toward GRR Stage 2. Tara's partial advancement included co-planning conducted as it was in GRR Stage 1, in that the coach took the lead in co-planning and Tara then conducted the lesson. None of the participants moved fully into GRR Stage 3, which is the final stage of the GRR continuum where the teacher is able to assume sole responsibility for planning and teaching. However, in terms of

taking full responsibility for teaching as defined by GRR Stage 3, Elaine provided evidence of full intent to move to this stage before the end of the school year.

The pre and post conferences for the GRR Stage 2 events provided further insight as to how the reflective conversations between the coach and teacher affected teacher instructional decision making. There is evidence of extensive shared reflective thought as the coach, Elaine and Lil collaborated on lesson plans and later engaged in the post conference. The coach, Elaine and Lil moved between all phases of reflective thought during these conversations which supported their joint instructional decisions. The post conferences were highly reflective as the coach and teachers' reflections wove in and out of recounting and re-evaluating the teaching experience. In addition, Elaine and Lil provide evidence of the final stage of reflective thought, outcomes and action, as evidenced by voicing decisions as to future instructional planning.

Tara engaged in one pre conference during GRR Stage 2. Data from the pre conference indicate that Tara's instructional decisions are significantly shaped by her interactions with the coach. The pre conference was lead by the coach and included much of the same patterns of interaction found in GRR Stage 1 pre conferences as described earlier. Despite the GRR Stage 1 co planning similarities, this event has been categorized at a GRR Stage 2 event because it was the co planning for Tara's co teaching experience (a GRR stage 2 event). Tara's movement along the GRR continuum demonstrates the flexibility coaches must assume as they support teacher learning. Although Tara demonstrated the ability to take on the teaching event, signaling GRR Stage 2, she is able to do so only because of the coach's ability to

assess Tara's need for GRR Stage 1 type support during lesson planning, while simultaneously releasing responsibility for teaching. In effect, Tara's instructional decisions are made significantly shaped by the coach's direct input.

As stated earlier, Lil was the first teacher to engage in a co-teaching experience during GRR Stage 2 with the previously discussed pre conference on April 4th. During this event Lil is an equal partner in the planning and analysis. This is accomplished with the immediate expectation of teaching this lesson, thus reaching the final objective of reflective thought in the outcome and action phase. During an ensuing coaching cycle, Lil continues in GRR Stage 2 and takes responsibility for planning and teaching. During the post conference on May 6th, Lil and the coach continue the same pattern of equal partnership during the post conference analysis.

Post conference 5.6

> Coach: So this is a little bit different because you (Lil) weren't watching (me). You were teaching the lesson. So it is a little different perspective.
>
> Lil: Yeah, it is. I really wish I had a big book on motion and balance because that is what we are doing in science. We have a lot of smaller ones. I wasn't sure…I wasn't sold on the fact that to introduce it (the lesson) to read a non fiction book for the sake of reading it. I like the exploration part. So I wasn't sold on that although after seeing what happened I think it would have been a good idea (to model). And the next time I do it….hopefully I will finish it tomorrow…I will be able to (model). But now that I have done the lesson… tomorrow…. even if it is a smaller book (not a big book)…. I will go over and reread a book (and model) and go over the ones we did today as a whole group.

Coach: With that book?

Lil: I'm not sure. I might pick a different book. So I think more exploration tomorrow. Either start with a big or a small book I will need to pick tonight, and then read it, and then focus on the ones we did yesterday and try to draw attention to the ones we haven't gone over yet. And then see if they can find some more (evidence of nonfiction text characteristics). But I have to focus and ask the appropriate questions like: How did you learn that? Why is that interesting to you? What made that stick out? Because they are very interested in saying, 'oh this is what I learned'. And you (coach) had some interesting questions. And I loved that you just jumped in and were able to say (to me)…focus the question better. Because some times I think I lead the question too much. And then I try to ask a question that is so vague that they are not getting it. You know asking just the right way...

Elaine is the one other teacher, in addition to Lil, who moved along the GRR continuum to reach GRR Stage 2. Elaine and the coach participated in a co-teaching experience which was highly co-constructed during the pre conference. In addition, Elaine came to the pre conference having previously attempted to teach summarization, which was a precursor to this lesson on summarization and synthesis. Elaine immediately reflected on her previous lesson by returning to the experience and recounting the event to the coach as she simultaneously re-evaluated the teaching experience based on her assessment of student work. During the post conference on May 16th Elaine further moved toward GRR Stage 3. Elaine focused on outcomes and actions, and took responsibility for future lesson planning, which would be taught

independently. Although it was not possible to observe Elaine's independent teaching events, her intent to do so signals an advanced stage of GRR 2 and movement toward GRR Stage 3.

As Elaine and the coach engaged in pre and post conferences during GRR Stage 2, neither teacher took the lead, but instead engaged equally in reflective thought and instructional decision making. In the May 16th pre conference and the May 17th post conference, the coach and Elaine struggled to understand the concepts of summarization and synthesis, as well as the difficult task of lesson planning around these complex reading comprehension strategies. In addition, the coach sought feedback on the effectiveness of her support as a literacy coach. The conversation included both the coach and Elaine asking for verification of their respective instructional decisions. The following excerpts demonstrate the co- constructed nature of the planning. There is a willingness to experiment and examine various solutions for instructional problems. Elaine had moved firmly into GRR Stage 2 where the coach and the teacher share responsibility for planning. In addition, the May 16th pre conference and the May 17th post conference provided evidence of Elaine's intent to move forward with outcomes and actions consistent with her instructional goals. She made instructional decisions which positioned her to move into GRR Stage 3, as evidenced by her intent to do the first part of this two part lesson independently. The coach supported Elaine's decisions by asking questions which further stimulates discussion, making suggestions and encouraging Elaine to solve instructional dilemmas.

Elaine pre conference 5.16

Elaine: These are some of the materials that the students produced during the actual writing of the summary when we did it whole class. They are definitely getting it.

Coach: Do you think the note taking in the think sheet is helpful?

Elaine: It's helpful in the summarizing especially.

Coach: Oh, really!

Elaine: I'm wondering about the synthesizing because it's helpful and yet….. what happens with the synthesizing is that they (students) need a step before they use that chart (lesson think sheet) and write a couple of sentences to synthesize. There is a lot of thinking that has to go on to take that information from the chart and put it in sentence form and be brief.

Coach: I'm just wondering if the form is helpful or distracting. You're saying it's helpful for summarizing?

Elaine: Yes, it's helpful for both. But I wonder if when they eventually work on their own…. How I can help them get from what's on the chart on that right side…the thinking part… and putting it in sentence form and to be brief? You know what happens. There's an overlapping. And I think I need to see it done. Because when you write the summary, it's the main events. And then when you're doing the synthesizing they need to refer to that part (the summary). So should it (the summary and synthesis) be all in one? So should the summary and synthesis be one paragraph?

As the conversation continues Elaine demonstrates her determination to continue moving toward

GRR Stage 3 - Independence.

> Elaine: And I think that's more authentic, don't you?
>
> Coach: Yes. And yet the sheet almost…. I don't know.
>
> Elaine: I think my next lesson, I need to….
>
> Coach: Do this (referring to think sheet)?
>
> Elaine: Well. My next lesson… I would like to do a new book. Do you think it would be helpful if we flip the columns (on the think sheet)? And so when you're looking at it, the thinking (column) would lead them into (the) evidence (column)?
>
> Coach: Let's try, and we can explain to them we're trying to get to a bigger idea. We're going to try. We think we want to put the columns (on the think sheet) this way. And then model that. Everybody is (other lab classroom teachers and one other district reading specialist) trying to figure this out. Everybody is kind of playing with the same thing. How do we want to go forward with this (summarization and synthesis)? So I think this is a really good idea.

Elaine post conference 5.16

> Elaine: I forgot the first turn and talk. So there you go. So for my next lesson I might write - this is what the kids do and this is what I do, until I get more comfortable with it. I think the turn and talk makes sense in each segment, so I want to do that.
>
> Coach: To forget to have them share their thinking would have been worse because it is so personal.

Elaine: Anything else?

Coach: How do you think it went in terms of my support… in the preparation

of the lesson?

Elaine: I think it was fine. I think you didn't spoon feed me but you gave me

little tips here and there, like having the text readily available. I had thought to

send them back and recall (the text), but for many of them that would have

been a roadblock. I think you gave me what was appropriate for this lesson

because (you) had already done a similar lesson with another book, so the kids

were familiar with the language. What I was disappointed with is… I think

they need a lot more work in collecting the evidence. But look at the details in

there (student work).

While both Lil and Elaine's pre and post conferences during GRR Stage 2

demonstrate a high level of reflective thought in the co-construction and final analysis

of the lesson, Tara's pre conference for her co teaching lesson is more indicative of the

pattern of interaction during GRR Stage 1. As has been shown, the pattern in GRR

Stage 1 included the coach taking the lead, and the teacher asking questions and

making suggestions concerning curriculum details and student ability levels. Tara's

post conference for the co teaching event was not formally scheduled and so was not

observed.

In the following excerpt Tara and the coach engaged in a pre conference for a co

teaching lesson which incorporates grade level social studies curriculum objectives, as

well as reading comprehension strategy instruction and use of the workshop model of

instruction. However, the coach and Tara have different instructional objectives in

this pre conference, which stymied the coach's ability to gradually release responsibility for planning. The coach, as always, focused on constructing a lesson which incorporates all aspects of the workshop model of instruction, while also teaching a particular reading comprehension strategy. In this lesson the reading comprehension strategy focus was determining importance. Tara, on the other hand, was only partially focused on the workshop model and the comprehension strategy of determining importance. The second focus for Tara, which was of equal if not more importance, was completing the social studies unit activity. The conflicting objectives compromised the GRR Stage 2 work and also compromised Tara's ability to reach toward the full scale of reflective thought in working toward outcomes and actions. In effect, the coach constructed the lesson in terms of the workshop model format, took responsibility for much of the text selection, and maintained the majority of the focus on reading comprehension strategy instruction. Tara's major focus was on curriculum related information and student assessment information.

Tara pre conference 5.15

> Coach: This is an ABC book and it goes along with the unit that she (Tara) is
> doing in her classroom right now on Rhode Island.
>
> Tara: Okay so this is one page. I'll show you one page that's done by an
> adult…'C' for carousel. So what they (students) have to do… is they have to
> write about a paragraph…tell me what the letter is and provide some type of
> picture. It can be off the Internet or they can draw it. They can get it from
> anywhere. So originally what we thought was that I wanted them to put this in
> their own language, because if you read something from the Internet it's not kid

friendly. I mean a child did not write this. And I find a lot of times they copy from the resource. And this time I'm trying to limit what they pull off of the Internet because I would really like them to start taking notes. And I was hoping with the note taking….they (would) have to put it in their own words. So I said to the coach this would be a great thing…. so put it in my language and then my thinking will come out. But then as we're looking at this today instead of everybody having a letter we thought we'd go back to the old fact question and response think sheet…. and so we will work them in pairs. So we will come up with six to eight letters, and we will have to come up with the research, and we will put it in front of them. Then they will come up with the facts, and questions and responses….

Coach: So they're going to research their own 24 letters? But we are going to bring some material in to them. So we will go look ourselves for things that are appropriate and Tara is going to model doing the letter J. J is for Johnny Cake. So that's a change. She's going to do it all by herself.

Tara: Some of them are past that. Some of them have gone on and done 19. I don't care if they've done one or 19. I figure anything that they can put more of themselves in the better. I think the better off it's going to be for them. Not only for this year, but for when they go on.

Coach: so we're not doing a summary. It's kind of a combination. It's a summary response.

Toward the end of the pre conference the coach took responsibility for more of the pre planning as she offered to construct a model for the lesson and the GLE (grade level equivalent) standards the lesson will address.

Coach: I'll probably do one (letter) myself and bring it in and show it to you…. just because I like to do it to make sure the sheets can work for myself. That's why I'd like to get together one more time before your lesson…. to exchange….I don't think we'll be long. And what I think we'd be doing is bringing in the stuff (text) we found for the kids and the model will be all set up. I don't think we're ready to write the lesson plan yet, but I can start it with the GLE's and get some of the things started and we'll write it out according to the workshop model. And I'll get this started for Monday.

Tara: And I'm going to do J is for Johnny Cake.

Coach: And I said I was going to do B. And I'm going to prepare the think sheet, and I'm going to start the lesson and we're working toward… and we're going to use the word summary response. Not that day, but eventually, we'll use that term.

At the close of the pre conference the following exchange provides further evidence of Tara's primary focus on the social studies unit in shaping the lesson.

Coach: And that's why I think I misunderstood when I first came in because I thought they were each doing one letter.

Tara: They are each doing all the letters.

Coach: I thought they were each doing one letter and then producing a book as a class.

Tara: No. They're all going to have their own book.

Coach: So maybe we can use this model just to show them the type of thinking...

Tara: You know what. This is my whole Rhode Island unit so that I want them all to be responsible for everything. And like I said, we have spent weeks of time already. I've been giving them books. I've been giving them all sorts of resources so they have a lot of information at their fingertips. Now they have to kind of pull it together and make it their own.

As indicated through this discussion of reflective thought, Lil, Elaine, Lowry and Tara progressed along the GRR continuum at varying rates. Furthermore, as teachers progressed through GRR Stage 1 to GRR Stage 2, patterns of reflective thought evolved to include teachers taking more of the lead in instructional decision making from the coach for the pre conference planning and post conference analysis of lessons. The teachers and the coach accomplished this as they engaged in reflective thought processes including returning to experience, reevaluating those experiences in light of their present instructional objective and attending to future outcomes and actions.

As has been demonstrated, Lowry, Tara, Elaine and Lil moved along the GRR continuum at varying rates. In considering this variation the concept of learner goals emerged as a factor which provided further insight into how literacy coaching affected instructional decision making and instructional practices in the classroom. The data suggested that those teachers who consistently focus on specific, clear instructional goals, which were highly compatible with LCP goals, were the same teachers who

were most successful in progressing through the three stages of GRR.   The last section of this chapter will discuss the role of participants' goals in teacher learning. In effect, goal setting enhanced the reflective conversations engaged in by the teachers and the coach and thus affected teachers' instructional decisions. Clear, specific, measurable goals helped teachers to remain focused over time. In a complex environment, where competing demands often threaten to divert attention to non-goal related activity, goals setting may provide an important steadying influence.

Learner goals

The quality of the goals a learner brings to a learning experience has power to sustain and direct focus and effort. According to Zimmerman (1998), goals which are attainable and measurable "provide skillful learners with a personally relevant self-standard for evaluating their personal progress" (p. 6). Boud, Keough and Walker (1985) connect learner goals and reflective activity. Those learners who are categorized as 'deeply' involved in learning as opposed to 'surface' learners are intent on understanding what they are studying, will reflect deeply in order to link new understanding to previously held knowledge, and interact actively within an experience. Deep learners have specific goals for learning and expend effort reflecting on experiences in light of goals. Thus reflective thought is affected by goals.

Throughout this study Lil, Elaine, Lowry and Tara displayed varying goal setting behaviors. Lil and Elaine demonstrated clear and specific goals which were compatible with the LCP goals. These specific goals allowed them to measure their progress through self-evaluation. On the other hand, Lowry and Tara voiced nonspecific goals, which were at times incompatible with the stated goals of the LCP,

and which ultimately hampered their ability to measure progress over time.

Pre interview and goal setting

Each teacher participated in a pre interview designed to gather background information and to identify the teachers' goals for participation in the LCP. The pre interviews were conducted either prior to or during the first coaching cycle in early February, 2008.

Prior to the start of this study, the teachers had attended a one week workshop during the summer of 2007 where the overall district goals for the LCP were presented and extensively discussed. When asked during the pre interview what they hoped to gain from taking part in the LCP, (as well as any specific or general goals for their time in the LCP) teachers varied in their explanations of their goals. Variations were seen in specificity of goals and the compatibility of personal goals with stated LCP goals. Goals also varied in terms of time frame. Some goals were distal and some proximal. For example, Tara and Lowry provided the most nonspecific goals. In addition, there is evidence of incompatibility of the teachers' goals with LCP goals.

Lowry pre interview 3.5

> Lowry: So I have made it a priority to tell my parents this will be the best year of my teaching. I will take everything I have learned about teaching and children and I will extrapolate that for better lessons and more sensitivity… because if I don't do that I don't want to teach any more. So that's why I was invested in developing a math background and now the literacy piece because I feel like there is just never enough. There is not a time you can say I got it now… and the accountability

has just escalated so much that if you don't do things like this (LCP) I don't know how you could meet the expectations. So that's why I do it (LCP). I have ulterior motives. I think it (LCP) will make me a better teacher.

Tara pre interview 3.11

Tara: What I am looking for is more interaction within my classroom (interaction with other teachers). When I first moved here I was in a looped program. I loved it because we (teachers and students) collaborated with other classes….Teachers in the looped program worked together. I like having resource and the reading teacher in my classroom. The other teacher can pick up the slack. I hope that literacy coaching can help with that.

Tara: The goals (of the LCP) are collaborative learning… to use the workshop model, although I'm not quite sure what that is. I teach a mini lesson, the kids work in pairs. This is a lot more collaborative. I don't really know what the workshop model is, but I'm kind of embarrassed to ask at this point.

Researcher: What do you hope to personally gain from taking part in this program?

Tara: My big goal is getting myself ready to open up my classroom. I am very anxious about this…to have all those people in my room makes me really nervous.

Lowry was an experienced teacher who had volunteered to take part in the LCP in order to "be a better teacher". She recognized her need to develop as a literacy teacher in order to provide better literacy instruction. She was also concerned about the ever increasing accountability expectations, which require that she keep pace with new innovations in reading instruction. Lowry's goal was nonspecific and so does not provide the teacher with a standard for evaluating her progress. In addition, the pre interview data do not confirm Lowry's understanding of the goals of the LCP, and thus the compatibility of her instructional goals with those of the LCP.

As evidenced by pre interview data, Tara's first and foremost concern was the possibility of being observed by other teachers during the LCP classroom opening. Lab classroom teachers had historically been required to open their classroom for other teachers to observe a lesson, which would demonstrate the workshop model and a selected comprehension strategy. This requirement was at the forefront of Tara's thinking during the pre interview. Tara expressed confusion as to LCP goals. She mischaracterized the workshop model by stating, "I teach a mini lesson, the kids work in pairs… this is a lot more collaborative". In addition, Tara also mischaracterized the resources she would receive as part of the LCP in terms of classroom instructional support. She hoped the literacy coach would help with meeting the needs of the students in her room and "pick up the slack". She did not understand the role of the coach as a teacher educator and not a traditional reading specialist who might deliver instruction to individual students in a teacher's classroom. Tara ended the interview by summing up her goal by stating her needs: "The real issue is that I need more structure. That's really big for me." While the workshop model does provide a

teacher with a model for instruction and thus structure, the non-specific nature of Tara's goal did not provide her with a standard by which she might have self-evaluated her progress.

While Tara and Lowry did not voice specific goals related to the goals of the LCP or to specific classroom instructional plans, Elaine and Lil were able to link their goals as participants in the LCP to stated LCP goals and to specific classroom instructional plans. In addition, Elaine and Lil articulated specific goals clearly related to classroom instruction. Both Elaine and Lil positioned their specific goals within the framework of their immediate and long term classroom instructional plans. The specific nature of their goals provide clear standards for self-evaluation throughout their time in the LCP. In addition, they clearly linked their instructional learning needs to the stated goals of the LCP (implementation of the workshop model and comprehension strategy instruction). Finally, Elaine and Lil state goals which are measurable in that they are linking to specific instructional practices such as implementation of rituals and routines and use of explicit teaching practices.

Elaine pre interview 2.27

> Elaine: I saw the workshop model as a way to organize instruction. My instruction was not pulled together with spelling, writing and reading. I want to use the workshop model all day and the comprehension strategies can be used all day as well. I need help with the rituals and routines which are part of the workshop model. A big piece of it (workshop model) is the management. I need to systematically prepare the kids and the room.

Lil pre interview 3.15

> Lil: I hope to be more explicit in my teaching. I also hope to be more
>
> well rounded. I want to make students thinkers….So I really want my
>
> kids to become problem solvers and thinkers and I can use the
>
> (comprehension) strategies and also the workshop model processes to
>
> do that. For example, I want the students to take more time to think.
>
> Actually when I read *Reading for Meaning* I thought to myself no way
>
> can first-graders do this… for example use the term schema and then I
>
> tried it and they can use it. What we need to do is teach it explicitly.

During the pre interview Lil identified her desire to become more proficient in the workshop model. Before her participation in the LCP Lil had some limited experience with the workshop model. She believed becoming proficient in the model would help her better organize her instruction. When asked if the workshop model had been of help to her thus far in her teaching experience she emphatically states,

> Yes. It is hard to stick to though. The model, and then guided practice, and the
>
> independent work, and then the coming back and sharing is hard to organize.
>
> The struggle is to focus on one particular thing I want the student to focus on.

Both Elaine and Lil established personal learning goals which were compatible with the stated LCP goals. They demonstrated a firm grasp of the goals of the LCP and structured their personal learning goals in relation to LCP goals. Elaine correctly characterized the workshop model as a way of organizing instruction. In order to implement this model Elaine identified her own learning goal in terms of developing knowledge of "the rituals and routines which are part of the workshop model". She

believed her first need was to set the groundwork for implementation in effective

management strategies. For Elaine this meant teaching students the rituals and

routines which are essential to the successful implementation of the workshop model.

In addition to the clear articulation of goals in the pre interview, Elaine and Lil

sustained this focus on their personal goals throughout the reflective conversations

with the coach. The sustained focus had a positive affect on the teachers' instructional

decision making. It allowed the teachers to maintain focus on goal related activities in

the mist of the many competing demands. For example, in the following excerpts Lil

refers to her stated goal of incorporating guided practice in her lessons, and Elaine

reiterates her goal to implement the rituals and routines associated with the workshop

model. Both of these goals are highly compatible with the LCP goals.

Lil post conference 2.13

>Lil: ….And then they can do it on their own. And then you said you're going
>
>to practice again, where everyone was thinking so that was more of your
>
>model. And then the guided [practice]….
>
>Coach: Yeah. That's what you said you had been most interested in and you
>
>wanted to see.
>
>Lil': Yeah, that jump from one [modeling] to the next [independent work] that I
>
>have been making. I've been making that jump [in instruction].

Elaine post brief 2.27

>Elaine: … I personally feel that I would have been more ready to jump into the
>
>lesson if I had structured my classroom and incorporated all the things (rituals
>
>and routines) that are part of the workshop model into the responsive

classroom so that they (students) were better prepared, and I wouldn't feel so on uneven ground sometimes.

Coach: We don't have to do it all the same. You take what you need, because there's so much to think about.

Elaine: And I'm sure it will come to me. How I want to implement it on my own.

Later in this pre conference Elaine refers to long range instructional plans, which demonstrated her clear focus on specific instructional goals in regard to summarization and synthesis.

Coach: Yes, I'd like to try it (summarization and synthesis as they have planned it in this lesson.) because it's all an experiment. We know we ran into trouble with this and it does not work. So we can see that flipping the thinking and evidence kind of worked out well. What we really want them to do is combine into sentences (the thinking and the facts) so I think this might work. So we'll try it. Also, after you're done you realize some of your thinking is more brilliant than other (thinking). And that not everything you wrote is important. So star a couple that you want to include in your summary. That will enhance the summary.

Elaine: And I think it will be really good for them (students). Once we get to the point when they're writing with me… it will be guided… when they actually do their piece, which unfortunately won't be until June. But when they do their written response, and then they share them with each other…. when they hear good ones they'll see….. because they are in book groups of

four to six kids…. in literature circles. So my final…what I want from them at the very end of this is for them to write a summary and to have some synthesizing going on. And so that's when I think they'll hear each other's and recognize that that's what we're looking for.

Post interview

Goal specificity, or clarity, and personal goal compatibility with the LCP goals is also seen in Elaine and Lil's post interview data. Both Elaine and Lil again comment on long standing personal goals. In the following excerpts Elaine comments on how the coaching model of professional development affected her implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom. Elaine comments on the coach's role in helping her reach her important and long standing personal goal of implementing the workshop model in her classroom through the coach's modeling and acting as mentor. Elaine states during the post interview,

> it's like anything else, if you don't have a reason to use it (instructional practice) you're not going to. I think that if it's not a goal of yours to start implementing something (in the classroom) you don't use it. So I had that goal and I had the resources (LCP)."

Elaine post interview 5.28

> Elaine: And when she (coach) could come in and model a couple of lessons with my class it helped me to see her effectively work through different elements, whether it was turn and talk (a workshop model routine) or different parts of the guided practice. So she worked on many levels for me as a

mentor, but also for her to model a lot of the classroom comings and goings

(rituals and routines).

Researcher: Do you mean the rituals and routines she often mentions? I think

you're referring to the workshop model. Is that correct?

Elaine: Yes. Absolutely.

Lil also refers to her goals in the second coaching cycle in April. Throughout the

pre and post conferences Lil focused on either her use of the workshop model or a

specific comprehension strategy. For example, in the following excerpt Lil refers to

student use of the comprehension strategies.

Researcher: And have you been happy…. or do you see evidence of the keys (7

comprehension strategies) changing the way kids look at and think about text?

Lil: Oh, yes. Just looking through the conversations when I was reading

Miller's book, I just thought there is no way kids will use this language. I'll

never be able to do that, but it sounds interesting, so give it a try. Right now

they're (students) using the words and they're being very explicit. I've heard

them say "I use my schema because it helps me… and my experiences". They

know what inferring is… predicting is. It's not that they're just using the

words. They're actually using the skill, and they can tell you why they're doing

it. So they use it…absolutely…. I don't see them as much doing it

(independently). And I think that is because I don't have enough time to meet

with the kids at their own level of reading.   I do (see kids use the strategies)

when we're with the whole group reading the story. So I don't see that as much

(independent use). I have done some different independent response sheets related to their thinking and it's great. And at home their parents tell me that they're talking about it [strategies] at home. And parents say 'here is this little person in first grade using this term (like schema)'. And so it's really made a difference…without a doubt.

Evidence of Lil's continued focus on her additional goal of including guided practice in her lessons is evident in the following excerpt from May 5th. This post conference followed Lil's co teaching lesson in which the coach and Lil co planned and Lil taught the lesson with minimal coach interaction. The fact that Lil co taught the lesson is, in itself, evidence of her goal focused behavior. Her determination to implement the workshop model including the guided practice component was her main learning goal. Lil is able to reflect on aspects of the lesson which proved to be problematic, and makes the decision to change the next day's follow up lesson to incorporate more explicit modeling and guided practice.

Lil post conference 5.6

> Lil: I really wish I had a big book on motion and balance because that is what we are doing in science. We have a lot of smaller ones. I wasn't sure…I wasn't sold on the fact that to introduce it… to read a non fiction book for the sake of reading it (as modeling portion). I like the exploration part. So I wasn't sold on that (modeling)… although after seeing what happened I think it would have been a good idea…. and the next time I do it….hopefully I will finish it tomorrow…I will be able to (model). But now that I have done the lesson… tomorrow…. even if it is a smaller book (not a big book)…. I will go

over and reread a book and go over the ones we did today as a whole group (to incorporate guided practice).

Conclusion

As the analysis of the data indicates, three main conceptual categories emerged from the grounded theory methods used to guide this study.   Reflective Thought, Gradual Release of Responsibility and Learner Goals have been identified as three essential conceptual categories which "provide a conceptual handle on the studied experience" (Cazden, 2006. p. 3) and as such, set the groundwork for a 'grounded theory' "or an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience" (Cazden, 2006, p. 4).

In summary, the reflective conversation engaged in by a coach and teacher, as part of a literacy coaching cycle, have important implications for teacher learning and teacher decision making. First, the reflective conversations and subsequent instructional decision making engaged in by the coach and teachers may be characterized according to the GRR continuum. Second, learner goals appear to affect teacher instructional decision making and implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom. Goals which are specific, measurable and compatible with the LCP goals seem to positively influence a teacher's ability to transfer new instructional practices to classroom instruction.

The two research questions, which have guided this study, must be considered in light of the affect of reflective thought processes, gradual release of responsibility and learner goals on teacher decision making during reading comprehension instruction. The reflective processes engaged in by the coach and teachers were framed by the

teachers' goals and the LCP goals. The nature of the goals, in turn, seemed to impact the teachers' movement along the GRR continuum. Chapter 5 includes a summary and interpretation of these findings. In addition, limitations of this research and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter is organized into three sections. First, an integrative summary of the results is presented with an emphasis on the relationships which exist among the three conceptual categories discovered in the course of this study. The integrative summary is supported by the presentation of a model of teacher learning within the framework of literacy coaching. Section two includes a discussion of what the findings may suggest for literacy coaching as a professional development model. The third section discusses study limitations and suggestions for future research.

Integrative summary of the results

The intent of literacy coaching as a professional development model is to provide teachers with knowledge of effective literacy instructional practices, and to provide the on-going support system needed to transfer new instructional practices to the classroom (Fisher & Frey, 2008; International Reading Association, 2004; Sweeny, 2003; Toll, 2005; Walpole & Blamey, 2008; Wold, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 2, while the literature on literacy coaching provides insight into literacy coaching practices, more research is needed which specifically relates to how this model of professional development affects teachers' instructional decision making. According to Nowak (2003),

> Little consideration has been given to the discourse in coaching interactions through which teachers and coaches co-construct their understandings about teaching and learning….Consequently, it remains unclear how the actual practice of coaching contributes to teacher change in reform efforts. To bridge

this knowledge gap, researchers must make discourse within coaching

interactions a primary focus of their inquiries

 (p. 8).

The two research questions which have guided this study were designed to address

this 'knowledge gap'. Analyzing the reflective thought engaged in by the coach and

teachers has provided a window into how these teachers learned and made

instructional decisions as they engaged in literacy coaching.

This study's focus on the reflective thought engaged in by the coach and teachers

was positioned as an analysis of the processes involved in reflective thought as defined

by Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985). As stated, reflective thought was positioned as a

fundamental premise of this study. It was a vehicle for teacher learning within the

LCP. As was discussed in Chapter 4, two further concepts emerged during the course

of this study including learner goals and gradual release of responsibility (GRR).

These two concepts were not initially predicted as central to this study.   In addition to

the emergence of these two concepts, the nature of the interaction between the

coach/teacher reflective thought processes, learner goals and gradual release of

responsibility was discovered.

The teacher learning grid (see Figure 11) provides a model of teacher learning,

which indicates that learner goals, and movement along the GRR continuum, exists

within a sphere of reflective thought. The model suggests that teacher learning is

facilitated through coaching (as evidenced by movement along the GRR continuum)

when learner goals are specific, measurable, and consistent with the goals of the LCP.

Figure 11. Teacher Learning Grid.

Characteristics of Learner Goals:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Consistent with LCP goals

REFLECTIVE THOUGHT

L
E
A
R
N
E
R

Elaine
Lil

A

B

GRR STAGE 1   GRR STAGE 2   GRR STAGE 3

C

D

Lowry

Tara

G
O
A
L
S

Characteristics of Learner Goals:
- Nonspecific
- Not measurable
- Inconsistent with LCP goals
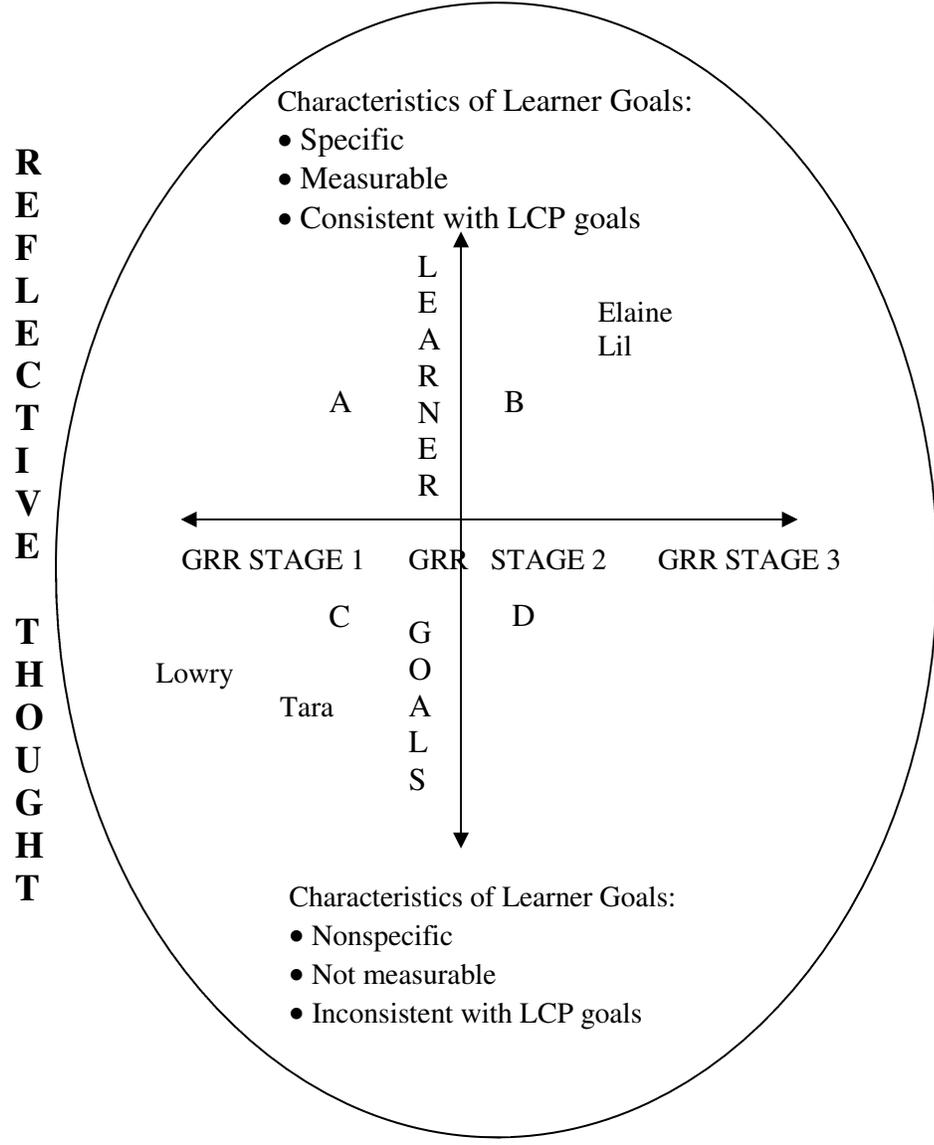
The model utilizes a four quadrant grid to delineate teacher learning within a sphere of reflective thought. The vertical axis describes the learner goals. At the top end of the learner goals axis, goals are described as specific, measurable, and consistent with LCP goals. Inversely, at the bottom of the learner goals axis, goals are described as nonspecific, not measurable, and inconsistent with LCP goals. The horizontal axis refers to the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) continuum. The GRR continuum moves from left to right through the three stages of gradual release of responsibility as defined by Sweeny (2003). By intersecting these two axes, the grid shows four quadrants (A, B, C, D), which represent four possible learner positions.

Each quadrant includes specific characteristics which may be applied to a particular learner. For example, in Quadrant A the learner has set particular goals, and is in stage 1 of the GRR continuum. This may describe a teacher who has established specific, measurable learning goals which are consistent with the goals of the LCP. In addition, this teacher may be initially engaged in the literacy coaching program and thus is reliant on the coach to demonstrate instructional practices and take the lead in pre and post conferences. A teacher in Quadrant B would have established similar goals as those in Quadrant A. Additionally, the Quadrant B teacher has now moved along the GRR continuum to either Stage 2 or 3. Teachers in Quadrant C may not have set any goals, or may have goals which are nonspecific, not measurable, and/or inconsistent with the goals of the LCP. Quadrant C teachers are in the first stage of GRR where the coach is taking the lead for pre and post conferences and demonstration lessons. Finally, teachers in Quadrant D have goals which are similar

to those in Quadrant C. These teachers have moved along the GRR continuum to Stage 2 or 3.

Since each of the four participant teachers in this study have been located in a particular quadrant based on characteristics of their learning goals and position along the GRR continuum, it is then possible to discuss each teacher's demonstrated reflective thought processes within a quadrant, and in relation to the concepts of gradual release of responsibility and learner goals.

Elaine and Lil have been positioned in Quadrant B of the teacher learning grid based on the characteristics of their goals, and their position along the GRR continuum at the end of the data collection period. These two teachers set specific, measurable goals, which were compatible with the goals of the LCP. In addition, these teachers successfully moved along the GRR continuum to a minimum of Stage 2.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Lil and Elaine were two teachers who demonstrated goals characterized as specific, measurable, and compatible with the stated goals of the LCP. In addition, both of these teachers moved along the GRR continuum to GRR Stage 2, where they successfully engage in co planning and co teaching activities.

Both of these teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of the goals of the LCP, and expressed personal goals which were compatible with LCP goals. In addition, Elaine and Lil expressed learning goals which were specific and measurable. For example, Lil's stated goal of learning to incorporate guided practice into reading comprehension lessons was corroborated during a pre interview conversation with the

coach. As part of the workshop model, implementation of guided practice would be highly compatible with the goals of the LCP. The coach states,

> she [Lil] would model and tell the kids to do something and then noticed that it wasn't going well. She figured that out on her own and then she asked for help [from the coach]. The guided practice didn't go well…She knew she was doing too much modeling and not enough guided practice.

During the post interview Elaine expressed her continued goal of learning specific instructional practices necessary to teach students the reading comprehension strategies. Elaine entered the LCP with the specific goal of "embedding those strategies [7 key comprehension strategies] into what our daily work is…not to set them apart. But to create…a more authentic situation for using the strategies and for assessing how well the kids are using the strategies."

At the close of Elaine's experience in the LCP she looks to the future and has set specific goals for the following school year as she refers to the comprehension strategy of summarization in the following excerpt.

> I feel like there is no real formula for it [summary response], and we're still tweaking it. Next year, I would like us [coach and Elaine] to be working on it [summary response]. She's [coach] happy with what we have and I think I am too. But they [students] haven't done any independent work yet. I'm still guiding them. When they give me a finished piece that's done on their own then I'll know maybe where I need to go back and re-teach or teach differently…

Elaine and Lil were successful in their attempts to focus on goals which were specific, measurable, and compatible with the goals of the LCP. As a result, they effectively utilized the significant learning opportunity present in the LCP.

Lowry and Tara have been positioned in quadrant C of the teacher learning grid based on the nature of their goals and their movement along the GRR continuum. Lowry and Tara's pre and post interview data suggested these teachers approached their participation in the LCP as a potentially valuable professional development experience, and one which would enable them to develop skills in literacy instruction. They did not, however, demonstrate a clear understanding of the stated goals of the LCP.

In Tara's case there was significant confusion as to the goals of the LCP. As has been discussed in Chapter 4, Tara's goal for participation in the LCP was incompatible with the goals of the LCP. For example, Tara entered the LCP in order to realize additional assistance with instruction in her classroom. She did not focus on teacher learning as the major goal of the LCP. Tara wanted someone to "pick up the slack" in terms of meeting student reading comprehension needs in her classroom. Tara may have been under the impression that the literacy coach would act as a traditional reading specialist and provide one-on-one and small group reading instruction in the classroom. As a result, Tara was not able to realize the full potential of the support offered through the LCP. Despite this confusion, Tara did move partially out of GRR Stage 1 to GRR Stage 2. This partial movement included co planning in which the coach took the lead (as is indicative of GRR Stage 1). Although the coach took the lead in lesson planning, Tara took the major responsibility for instruction during a co

teaching event. As is depicted in the teacher learning grid, Tara straddles GRR Stage 1 and GRR Stage 2. She is positioned slightly to the right of Lowry because of the lead she takes in instruction during the co teaching event, but does not realize full GRR Stage 2 because of the nature of the coach's support during co planning.

Lowry seemed unclear as to the exact nature of the LCP goals and, in addition, she expressed goals which were non specific, and thus did not provide a standard by which she could measure her own learning progress. Lowry wanted "to become a better teacher"; a goal, which because of its nonspecific nature, did not provide a standard for measurement. In terms of movement along the GRR continuum, Lowry did not engage in a co planning and co teaching event. As a result, she remained in the first stage of GRR where the coach took the lead in lesson planning during pre briefs and also taught each lesson while Lowry observed.

The nature of the reflective thought engaged in by Lowry, Tara, Elaine and Lil may be described in terms of their position within a particular quadrant. As Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) model of reflective thought indicates (see Figure 2), there are multiple phases of reflective thought including returning to experience, attending to feelings, and re-evaluating experience.

All four teachers engaged in various aspects of reflective thought as outlined by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) regardless of their location within a particular quadrant. The aspects of reflective thought shared by all four teachers included returning to experience and, to varying degrees, re-evaluating experience as part of their reflective conversations with the coach during GRR Stage 1 and Stage 2. For example, the teachers and the coach routinely recounted past experiences during pre

and post conferences. This pattern of interaction was consistent for both shared experiences, such as demonstration lessons where both the coach and teacher were present, as well as non-shared experiences, such as lessons a teacher had conducted without the coach being present.

All four teachers and the coach engaged in re-evaluation of experience in both pre and post conferences, but to varying degrees. For example, as part of re-evaluating experience the teachers might associate new understanding of a comprehension strategy with past instructional experiences. In addition, the teachers and the coach often started the re-evaluative process by integrating and validating their understandings through such means as analysis of student work or reference to research or personal experiences. The characteristic which delineated one teacher from another in terms of re-evaluative reflective thought centered on whether the coach or the teacher took the lead and assumed the majority of the responsibility for the instructional decision making. It was the act of taking the lead and the assumption of the responsibility for the activity, which clearly marked a teacher's movement along the GRR continuum.

For example, during their second coaching cycle both Lil and Elaine took the lead during the pre and post conferences by immediately re evaluating the lesson experience as they analyzed student work.

The following excerpt illustrates Lil's ability to take the lead and assume responsibility for reevaluating experience by assessing student learning. On this occasion Lil started the post conference with the following observation.

I sat down with Paul [student] in the beginning. He was having a lot of

difficulty. He needed more practice doing it as you can see on his paper here.

This is a question we came up with together. It's interesting because he's a

great thinker in general, but when it's so focused [he has difficulty]. I don't

know if that was because of the book. I'm not sure.

Elaine also demonstrated her ability to take the lead during the post conference. In

the following excerpt Elaine clearly evaluates learning outcomes in relation to the text

selection used in the lesson.

I know you [coach] said that Scholastic News was too dense, but I'm amazed at

how they read… that they [students] bring so much background knowledge to

everything we read and to -- depending on the piece, something like that

[Scholastic News]… I think it is fine. And it really grabs their attention and…

is so aimed at their needs anyway.

Those teachers who took the lead during the pre and post conferences were, in

effect, taking responsibility for the instructional decisions required for lesson

planning, teaching, and assessment. As Lil and Elaine took the lead and assumed

more of the responsibility for the instructional decision making, they moved along the

GRR continuum to GRR Stage 2 (joint responsibility). In this process Lil and Elaine

also moved into Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) final phase of reflective thought

where outcomes and actions are characterized by 'changes in behavior and beliefs'

and a willingness to commit to action.

In Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) model of reflective thought, personal

appropriation of new knowledge is an important element of reflective thought and

precedes the final stage of reflection where outcomes and action are central. Once a learner has reached a stage of appropriating, Boud, Keogh and Walker suggest the reflective process is not complete until the learner tries new ways of acting or believing. This 'trying on' of new beliefs, or actions, happens during the outcomes and actions phase of reflection, and is positioned as the culmination of the reflective process.

The integration and validation of new ideas or beliefs was demonstrated by Elaine and Lil as they moved into GRR Stage 2 and took the lead in instructional decision making for lesson planning and instruction. Integration requires the learner to position new ideas and beliefs into a new 'whole' where "a new pattern of ideas and attitudes develops (Boud, Keough & Walker, 1985, p. 32). Validation offers the opportunity to 'reality test' our newly integrated ideas and/or beliefs. Elaine and Lil demonstrated this reflective thought as they took responsibility for the instructional decision making necessary for effective lesson planning, teaching and assessment during GRR Stage 2. Lowry and Tara did not fully move into this phase of reflective thought and did not move into GRR Stage 2 and take joint responsibility for planning and teaching with the coach.

What do these findings suggest?

Research questions:

1. *How does the coaching model of professional development affect the teacher's implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom?*

2. *How does the discourse during teacher/coach pre and post observation conferencing affect teacher learning and subsequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction?*

Findings from this study do not provide sufficient data to address the second research question. There is not substantial evidence as to how the discourse during teacher/coach pre and post conferencing may affect teacher learning and subsequent instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction. However, the first research question is addressed through the emergence of Learner Goals and GRR. These two concepts suggest that literacy coaching may affect a teacher's instructional decision making during reading comprehension instruction under certain conditions.

As the teacher learning grid indicates, there seems to be considerable variation in how quickly and thoroughly teachers assume responsibility for transfer of new instructional strategies to their classroom instruction. Teachers who engage in reflective conversations with a literacy coach, based on specific, measurable learning goals, which are compatible with the goals of a literacy coaching program, seem to assume responsibility for implementation of new instructional practices in their classrooms to a greater extent than teachers who do not fit this profile.

This finding is supported by the experience of all four teachers. Elaine and Lil formulated specific instructional goals as part of the LCP. In turn, the specific nature of the goals allowed these teachers to measure their progress toward their goals. Elaine explicated verbalized her goals of incorporating the rituals and routines of the workshop model and the comprehension strategies, which were the focus of the LCP.

Lil was also focused on specific goals as part of the LCP. She wanted to incorporate guided practice, as part of the workshop model, into her reading comprehension instruction. Throughout the five month period of data collection, both of these teachers maintained focus on their respective goals, and made progress toward transfer of new instructional practices to the classroom, as indicated by their movement along the GRR continuum.

Inversely, Lowry and Tara did not focus on specific, measurable goals during their experience in the LCP, and did not realize similar transfer of new instructional practices to the classroom, as indicated by their movement along the GRR continuum. Lowry had the nonspecific goal of becoming a better teacher, and thus positively impacting the learning environment in her classroom. The nonspecific nature of this goal did not provide a strong basis for self-evaluation of progress toward the goal. Tara also had nonspecific goals, which were incompatible with the goals of the LCP, including working with the coach in a manner which was inconsistent with the goals of the LCP. Tara also could not benefit from self-evaluation toward her goals.

Given that the goal of a literacy coaching program is to affect teacher implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom, it is important for literacy coaching programs to incorporate explicit goal setting activities as part of their program design. Goal setting activities should include explicit discussion of the overall literacy coaching program goals. In addition, literacy coaching programs should consider activities which encourage the development of individual learning goals on the part of each teacher. Both overall program goals and individual teacher learning goals should be compatible.

In addition, literacy coaching program design should address the characteristics of effective goals as indicated by the literature on goal theory (Bandura, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002; Zimmerman, 1998). Effective goals would include characteristics of specificity and measurability, if they are to positively impact teacher learning and implementation of new practices in the classroom. Possibly literacy coaching programs should consider including opportunities for teachers to develop an understanding of goal theory, and especially the characteristics of effective goals.

Finally, literacy coaching program design should consider the interplay of reflective conversations and the concept of gradual release of responsibility for adult learners. Reflective conversations drive teacher learning during literacy coaching (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Nowak, 2003). As this study indicates, there is a relationship between the characteristics of reflective thought and the stages of gradual release of responsibility as defined by Sweeny (2003). Possibly literacy coaching program design should also include explicit instruction in characteristics of reflective thought, which lead to outcomes and actions, as necessary for teachers to successfully reach Stage 3 of the GRR continuum.

As this research indicates, the LCP had explicit overall goals for teacher learning, which were clearly presented as part of an extensive five day professional development experience. Nevertheless, individual teachers seemed to understand and embrace program goals to varying extents. This study suggests that those teachers who clearly understood and embraced LCP goals and, in addition, developed personal goals which were compatible with overall LCP goals were most successful at transferring instructional practices to the classroom.

Limitations of this research

The design of this qualitative study included the use of interviews, observations and document analysis. According to Patton (2002) limitations may be found in data resulting from any of these sources. For example Patton (2002) indicates limitations of observations and interviews as:

Observations:

- The observer affecting the situation being observed resulting in participants acting in "atypical ways";

- The observer focusing on one point to the exclusion of others. An observer cannot focus on all aspects of the setting at all times. Thus the act of selecting particular points of focus may distort the data;

- Observations will rely on the external words and actions of the participants; and

- Observation data might be limited by nature of the frequency of the observations.

Interviews:

- Interviewee error in recall;

- Personal biases or emotional state of the interviewee; and

- Reactions to the interviewer.

First, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) professional experience may be an important source of understanding. "This knowledge, even if implicit, is taken into the research situation and helps you to understand events and actions seen and heard" (p. 42). My reliance on personal professional experience with literacy coaching and

classroom literacy instruction over the course of a career as an elementary level, public school teacher provided a rich source for understanding of the setting.

Second, while limitations of data sources, as noted above, may be unavoidable, attempts were made to mitigate limitations by using multiple data sources. According to Patton (2002), "by using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and crosscheck findings" (p. 306). Using a combination of data types increases the validity of the study by emphasizing the strengths of each type and minimizing the weaknesses of any single source (Patton, 2002: Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this study, as an example of attempts to triangulate data, pre interview data were used to identify teacher goals, while post interviews, pre and post conference transcript analysis, and field notes of observations were used to check the genuineness, or personal authenticity, of the goals. Also, teachers' reflective thought as gleaned through tape recordings and transcript analysis was checked through observations of teachers as they interacted with the coach in their classrooms.

Third, in regard to the limitations of observations as a data source, the effect of the observer within the teacher coach interactions was of particular concern. To mitigate this effect I first attended a week long professional development workshop, which provided an introduction to the LCP for potential LCP participants. This action was taken in order to establish rapport with the prospective study participants, familiarize participants with my presence, and thus ease my entrance into the setting. In addition,

observations spanned the course of five months and so allowed for repeated presence in the schools lending an air of familiarity such as would be found with a co-worker.

While discussion of study findings were conducted with two dissertation committee members, inter-rater reliability was not established. These discussions did confirm the directions of the analysis, and positioned the finding within the literature on teacher learning and literacy coaching in particular. These discussions lent credibility to the findings as the analysis continued. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), technical literature "can be used as supplementary validation….you can reference the literature in appropriate places to give validation of the accuracy of your findings" (p. 52). In addition, data were analyzed repeatedly over the course of the six month data collection period and the subsequent period of analysis and writing. Codes and categories were checked and rechecked in an effort to establish reliability throughout the coding scheme.   In order to avoid the absence of inter-rater reliability in future studies, the initial study design should include provision for resources dedicated to support the time and training necessary for establishing inter-rater reliability.

As an integral component of grounded theory, memo writing was consistently used as a method for asking questions of the date, comparing data, and tracking of the emerging theory. While memos are not provided explicitly, the analysis presented in this discussion is based on multiple memos written over the course of this study.

Finally, limitations are present due to the contextual factors peculiar to this setting and the small number of teachers who participated in the study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) grounded theory is a research method which attempts to "specify the conditions which give rise to specific sets of actions/interactions pertaining to a

phenomenon ….it is generalizable to those specific situation only" (p. 251). The findings should be considered in light of present research on literacy coaching and as a source of direction for future investigation.

Future directions for research

As discussed in Chapter 1, researchers have called for more investigation into how teachers learn (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000). This general call has been reiterated by educators concerned with how teachers learn within a literacy coaching model of professional development (Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Nowak (2003) calls for a research focus on the reflective discourse engaged in by coaches and teacher.

This study has been designed to address the need for greater understanding of teacher learning by investigating teacher learning during literacy coaching. Reflective thought has been positioned as a fundamental premise of this study. As has been discussed, two additional concepts emerged as the study unfolded including Learner Goals, and Gradual Release of Responsibility. As a result of the emergence of these concepts, this research suggests three important points for those engaged in literacy coaching to consider for future research and practice.

First, reflective conversations between coaches and teachers may have the potential to lead teachers to greater understanding of new instructional practices, and may be considered as a fundamental premise of teacher learning during literacy coaching. Both coaches and teachers may benefit from explicit instruction in the components of reflective thought as they relate to teacher learning. Second, teacher learning may be facilitated by goal setting activities. Goal setting may facilitate and/or accelerate learning as indicated by the GRR continuum, and thus positively impact the transfer of

new practices to the classroom. Teachers and coaches should consider the characteristics of effective goals as they engage in literacy coaching activities. Again, explicit instruction in aspects of goal theory may result in the establishment of specific, measurable goals, which are considered in light of the goals of the literacy coaching program. Third, considering teacher learning within a model of gradual release of responsibility for adults (Sweeny, 2003) may provide a platform for discussion of the process of literacy coaching and transfer of instructional practice to the classroom. Teachers of reading may be familiar with the principles of gradual release of responsibility from the perspective of teaching children. This background knowledge may facilitate understanding of gradual release of responsibility for adults.

This qualitative study suggests possible connections between reflective thought, gradual release of responsibility and goal setting. More research needs to be conducted, which confirms these relationships and provides further direction for coaching practice. As Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) conclude in their synthesis of research on teachers' reflective thinking, we need to design learning experiences for teachers at all levels which are based on mutual inquiry "into the mysterious process of reflective professional thinking" (p. 43).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

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Research Focus: Adult Learning in the Literacy Coaching Process

Time Frame: January through June 2008

Research Tasks: I will observe literacy coaching activities as teachers and coaches interact during the literacy coaching process. Observation and interactions with coaches and teachers will include:

- Teacher/Coach Conferences
- Lesson demonstrations by coaches
- Lesson demonstration by teachers
- Informal conversations between coaches and
- teachers
- A 30 minute teacher interview in February and June

Research Tools: I will take field notes of all observation and interviews. In addition, I will audio tape all observations and interviews.

Assurances of Confidentiality: Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms and data will be coded by pseudonym or numbers only. Efforts to ensure confidentiality include a password protected database, strict use of pseudonyms, and secure storage of all tapes, transcripts, interview notes, and field notes. Consents and data are to be secured in the office of Dr. Diane Kern, 708 Chaffee Bld, University of Rhode Island. Consents, data, and tapes will be retained for three years after the completion of the study and then destroyed.

    The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. If you wish to quit, simply inform Jane May.

Appendix B

The University of Rhode Island   Department of: Education
Title of Project: Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher
                Decision Making

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

   You have been asked to take part in a research project entitled, Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher Decision Making. You should feel free to ask questions at any time. In addition, if you have more questions later, Jane May, the person mainly responsible for this study, (401-849-8888), will discuss them with you.
   The purpose of this study is to analyze the interactions between coaches and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle including coach/teacher conferences, coach in-class demonstrations of instructional practices, and teacher try outs of instructional practices in the classroom.
   If you decide to take part in this study there are a number of events which will happen. First, I will interview you for approximately thirty minutes in order to discuss the literacy coaching program. Next, I will observe the interactions between coaches and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle. This will include observing and audio taping the coach/teacher conferences, the coach's in-class demonstrations, and the teacher's try outs of instructional practices in the classroom. At the end of this study I will conduct a thirty minute interview with each teacher and coach.
   It is not expected that any participants will experience any risks or discomforts as a result of participation in this study. Benefits from participation in this study could reasonably include additional information on the educational research on literacy coaching as a professional development model as well as insight concerning effective reading comprehension instruction.
   Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. Data will be coded by pseudonym or numbers only. Efforts to ensure confidentiality include a password protected database, strict use of pseudonyms, and secure storage of all tapes, transcripts, interview notes, and field notes.
   The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. If you wish to quit, simply inform Jane May at pjanemay@cox.net or by phone at 401-849-8888 or her major professor, Dr. Diane Kern, at dkern@uri.edu or by phone at 874-9490 of your decision.
   If you are not satisfied with the way this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints with Jane May. In addition, you may contact the office of the Vice President for Research, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your signature on this form means that you understand the information and you agree to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

_____   _____
Typed/printed Name   Typed/printed name

_____   _____
Date   Date

The University of Rhode Island   Department of: Education
Title of Project: Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher
                        Decision Making
 KEEP THIS FORM FOR YOURSELF
Dear Participant:
You have been asked to take part in the research project described below. If you have
any questions, please feel free to call Jane May who is the person responsible for this
study at 401 849 8888 or email at pjanemay@cox.net.

   The purpose of this study is to analyze the interactions between coaches and
teachers as they move through the coaching cycle which includes coach/teacher
conferences, coach in-class demonstrations of instructional practices, and teacher try
outs of instructional practices in the classroom.

   If you decide to take part in this study there are a number of events which will
happen. First, I will interview you for approximately thirty minutes in order to discuss
the literacy coaching program. Next, I will observe the interactions between coaches
and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle. This will include observing
and audio taping the coach/teacher conferences, the coach's in-class demonstrations of
instructional practices, and the teacher's try outs of instructional practices in the
classroom. At the end of this study I will conduct a thirty minute interview with each
teacher and coach.

   It is not expected that any participants will experience any risks or discomforts as a
result of participation in this study. Benefits from participation in this study could
reasonably include additional information on the educational research on literacy
coaching as a professional development model as well as insight concerning effective
reading comprehension instruction.

   Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be
protected by the use of pseudonyms and data will be coded by pseudonym or numbers
only. Efforts to ensure confidentiality include a password protected database, strict
use of pseudonyms, and secure storage of all tapes, transcripts, interview notes, and
field notes.

   The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate.
If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. If you wish to quit,
simply inform Jane May at pjanemay@cox.net or by phone at 401-849-8888 or her
dissertation chair, Dr. Diane Kern, at dkern@uri.edu or at 874-9490 of your decision.

   If you have other concerns about this study, you may contact the University of
Rhode Island's Vice President for Research, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, URI,
Kingston, RI, (401) 874-4328.

   You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your
signature on this form means that you understand the information and you agree to
participate in this study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

_____   _____
Typed/printed Name   Typed/printed name

_____   _____
Date   Date

Appendix C

The University of Rhode Island   Department of: Education
Title of Project: Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher
                  Decision Making

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO TAPING

You have been asked to take part in a research project entitled, Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher Decision Making. You should feel free to ask questions at any time. In addition, if you have more questions later, Jane May, the person mainly responsible for this study, (401-849-8888), will discuss them with you.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the interactions between coaches and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle including coach/teacher conferences, coach in-class demonstrations of instructional practices, and teacher try outs of instructional practices in the classroom.

If you decide to take part in this study there are a number of events which will happen. First, I will interview you for approximately thirty minutes in order to discuss the literacy coaching program. Next, I will observe the interactions between coaches and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle. This will include observing and audio taping the coach/teacher conferences, the coach's in-class demonstrations, and the teacher's try outs of instructional practices in the classroom. At the end of this study I will conduct a thirty minute interview with each teacher and coach.

It is not expected that any participants will experience any risks or discomforts as a result of participation in this study. Benefits from participation in this study could reasonably include additional information on the educational research on literacy coaching as a professional development model as well as insight concerning effective reading comprehension instruction.

Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. Data will be coded by pseudonym or numbers only. Efforts to ensure confidentiality include a password protected database, strict use of pseudonyms, and secure storage of all tapes, transcripts, interview notes, and field notes.

The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. If you wish to quit, simply inform Jane May at pjanemay@cox.net or by phone at 401-849-8888 or her major professor, Dr. Diane Kern, at dkern@uri.edu or by phone at 874-9490 of your decision.

If you are not satisfied with the way this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints with Jane May. In addition, you may contact the office of the Vice President for Research, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your signature on this form means that you understand the information and you agree to participate in this study.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

_____   _____

Typed/printed Name   Typed/printed name

_____   _____

Date   Date

The University of Rhode Island   Department of: Education
Title of Project: Literacy Coaching: The Role of Reflective Thought in Teacher
Decision Making
 KEEP THIS FORM FOR YOURSELF
Dear Participant:
You have been asked to take part in the research project described below. If you have
any questions, please feel free to call Jane May who is the person responsible for this
study at 401 849 8888 or email at pjanemay@cox.net.

   The purpose of this study is to analyze the interactions between coaches and
teachers as they move through the coaching cycle which includes coach/teacher
conferences, coach in-class demonstrations of instructional practices, and teacher try
outs of instructional practices in the classroom.

   If you decide to take part in this study there are a number of events which will
happen. First, I will interview you for approximately thirty minutes in order to discuss
the literacy coaching program. Next, I will observe the interactions between coaches
and teachers as they move through the coaching cycle. This will include observing
and audio taping the coach/teacher conferences, the coach's in-class demonstrations of
instructional practices, and the teacher's try outs of instructional practices in the
classroom. At the end of this study I will conduct a thirty minute interview with each
teacher and coach.

   It is not expected that any participants will experience any risks or discomforts as a
result of participation in this study. Benefits from participation in this study could
reasonably include additional information on the educational research on literacy
coaching as a professional development model as well as insight concerning effective
reading comprehension instruction.

   Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be
protected by the use of pseudonyms and data will be coded by pseudonym or numbers
only. Efforts to ensure confidentiality include a password protected database, strict
use of pseudonyms, and secure storage of all tapes, transcripts, interview notes, and
field notes.

   The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate.
If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. If you wish to quit,
simply inform Jane May at pjanemay@cox.net or by phone at 401-849-8888 or her
dissertation chair, Dr. Diane Kern, at dkern@uri.edu or at 874-9490 of your decision.

   If you have other concerns about this study, you may contact the University of
Rhode Island's Vice President for Research, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, URI,
Kingston, RI, (401) 874-4328.

   You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your
signature on this form means that you understand the information and you agree to
participate in this study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

_____   _____
Typed/printed Name   Typed/printed name

_____   _____
Date   Date

Appendix D

Teaching Experience and Professional Development Pre-Interview

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Background Information
B1. Teacher #

B2. Main Position/Grade Level

B3. Full/Part Time

B4. Degrees completed

B4. How many years of teaching experience do you have?   Grade Levels?

B5. Best days and times to reach you in case of questions.

B6. Do you engage in any other duties in the school other than your main assignment?

B7. How would you describe your classroom? (collaborative, multi-level, self-contained)?

Professional Development Background

P1. How did you come to be involved in the literacy coaching program?

P2. From what you understand, what are the goals of the literacy coaching program?

P3. Have you engaged in any professional development activities focusing on the literacy coaching program? What kinds of activities did you engage in? (Probe, if necessary: have you worked with the literacy coaches or other trainers? What did you do with them?)

P4. In the last few years have you taken part in any other literacy related professional development activities?   Please describe. (ex. focus, duration, impact on instruction).

P5. What do you hope to gain from taking part in the literacy coaching program? Do you have any specific or general goals for your time in the program?

Background Knowledge of Program Specific Literacy Strategies: Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional Knowledge

Declarative:
D1. What is your understanding of the following reading comprehension

strategies: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

D2. What is your understanding of the workshop model of instruction?

Conditional:
C1. How does a reader use: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

C2. How do you think a teacher might use this model in the classroom?

Procedural:
P1. When does a reader use: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

P1. When do you think this model may be appropriate to use in the classroom? (reading instruction, content instruction).

Appendix E

Teaching Experience and Professional Development Post-Interview

---

Background Information
B1. Teacher #

B2. Main Position/Grade Level

B3. Full/Part Time

B4. Degrees completed

B4. How many years of teaching experience do you have?   Grade Levels?

B5. Best days and times to reach you in case of questions.

B6. Do you engage in any other duties in the school other than your main assignment?

B7. How would you describe your classroom? (collaborative, multi-level, self-contained)?

Professional Development Background

P2. From what you understand, what are the goals of the literacy coaching program?

P5. What have you gained from taking part in the literacy coaching program? Do you have any specific or general goals you have met because of your work in the literacy coaching program?

Background Knowledge of Program Specific Literacy Strategies: Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional Knowledge

Declarative:
D1. What is your understanding of the following reading comprehension
     strategies: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing
     inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

D2. What is your understanding of the workshop model of instruction?

D3. Has your understanding of sensory imaging (background knowledge, questioning, drawing inferences, determining importance, synthesizing, fix-up strategies, the workshop model) changed since your started in the literacy coaching program?

Explain. (Probe: Do you believe you are more competent in your teaching? More confident? Better organized?)

Conditional:
C1. How does a reader use: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

C2. How have you use the workshop model in the classroom?(Probe: organization, time of day, subject areas)

Procedural:
P1. When does a reader use: sensory imaging? background knowledge? questioning? drawing inferences? determining importance? synthesizing? fix-up strategies?

P1. When do you think this model may be appropriate to use in the classroom? (reading instruction, content instruction).

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