THE THEORY OF PRACTICE OF LITERACY COACHES:
DESCRIBING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHING SESSIONS
AND KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE TEACHERS’ BELIEFS AND
INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

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The purpose of this study is to (a) investigate the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, and (b) describe the theory of practice for literacy coaching, based upon the problem-based methodology developed by V. Robinson. I conducted observations and interviews for three cycles of teaching and coaching with four literacy coaches and four classroom teachers. Within each cycle, I observed two guided reading lessons and a coaching session and conducted interviews with each coach and classroom teacher.

The findings of this study are presented through (a) case studies; (b) a description of the complex "shifts with glitches" that were observed in teaching behavior; (c) the characteristics of
coaching sessions associated with changes in teaching behavior; and (d) a description of the goals, constraints and tensions that governed the work of the four literacy coaches. Each teacher's efforts to change their teaching behaviors as a result of the coaching were complicated by the varying, situated contexts of each particular guided reading lesson. Changes in teaching behaviors did occur in this study, and appeared to occur most often in association with coaching sessions where the teacher took an active part in the interaction and where co-produced analyses and evaluation of instructional behaviors occurred.

The improvement of guided reading instruction was identified as an implicit goal of the work of these coaches. Their explicit goal was to maintain positive collegial relationships with teachers. My evaluation of the explanatory accuracy, effectiveness and coherence of the coaches' practice identified
tensions associated with these two goals. I recommended high levels of training and support for literacy coaches and specified important characteristics of that training.
Dedicated to my father, in gratitude

for his lessons of compassion, humor and wisdom.
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Receiving instruction from knowledgeable and skillful teachers is one of the most effective and powerful interventions available for improved student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Current understandings, however, conceptualize teaching as a complex endeavor (Richardson & Placier, 2001) requiring the coordination of a complex set of analyses, decision-making and actions (Lyons & Pinnell, 1999). The “transfer” of instructional understandings from a conference or workshop setting into classroom practice with a specific group of diverse learners is no longer considered to be a secondary goal of staff development, but the heart of instructional reform. There is then, a growing awareness that teachers of all levels of experience continue to be
in need of sustained, in-school support for developing and fine tuning the thinking processes and skills of effective teaching.

This re-conceptualizing of teaching and teacher support has heightened an interest in school- and classroom-based assistance, or coaching, for teachers. Although a large body of educational literature concerning the mentoring and/or coaching of teachers does exist, there are important gaps in the field of education’s knowledge regarding the nature and effectiveness of coaching. The purpose of this qualitative study is to build upon and deepen this body of literature by documenting and describing the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of the work of literacy coaches as well as the relationship between coaching sessions and the beliefs and instructional behaviors of kindergarten and first grade teachers as they teach guided reading lessons.¹

Significance of the Study

Teachers, and the teacher education and professional development programs that support them, matter a great deal (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Reviewing experimental studies on

¹ See appendix A for a description of guided reading lessons.
teacher education and professional development, the National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that where the teacher outcomes of studies show significant improvement, student achievement improves as well. In fact, the quality of the classroom environment implemented by teachers has been shown to have a stronger impact on student achievement than the observed level of home support for literacy learning (Snow, Barnes, Changler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991). Teachers’ knowledge of subject matter, student learning and teaching methods is crucial to instructional effectiveness and is positively affected by teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Furthermore, teacher education or staff development efforts for inservice teachers are often more successful than those for preservice teachers, particularly when staff development programs are long-term, collaborative and inquiry-oriented (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

With a growing awareness of the importance of a strong level of knowledge and instructional skills for teachers, combined with findings that support the development of local, school-based communities for staff development (Pearson, 2001; Richardson &
Anders, 1994), classroom-based coaching for teachers has begun
to gather increased attention. Entry year teachers in states
participating in the Praxis III classroom performance assessment
(Educational Testing Service, 1998), for example, receive support
from experienced classroom teachers who have been trained and

It is important, however, that reliable information
concerning the on-the-ground work of coaches is available to
those educators or policy makers who are counting on coaching
as a significant factor in reform efforts. Although a large
literature on coaching and mentoring does currently exist, this
literature is largely conceptual in nature and lacks a clear
description and consensus concerning what it is that coaches
actually do as they assist teachers. Nor does most of the research
literature on coaching consist of theoretically grounded studies
with well-supported findings.

In order to utilize coaching as an effective component of
current reform efforts, additional knowledge is currently needed
regarding (a) the constraints and contexts within which literacy
coaches function, (b) the goals they work towards and the
decision-making processes used by coaches to meet those goals, (c) the relationship between coaching and the instructional practices of teachers and (d) the training and support needed by literacy coaches in order to be effective. In this present study I address each of these points and present important information for those educators and policy makers who intend to support improvements in literacy instruction through the implementation of coaching programs. The findings of this study are also of importance to coaches themselves, towards their efforts to be more effective in their work with individual teachers as well as to those who provide training and support for literacy coaches.

Statement of the Problem

The coaching and/or mentoring of new teachers has become a promising response to legitimate concerns over teacher retention and teacher shortages as well as instructional reform and staff development efforts. This growing phenomenon, however, is currently based on a high level of enthusiasm for the hoped-for effects of coaching on teacher effectiveness and thus on student achievement. Although mentoring and coaching are both
generally viewed as useful models for teacher support, researchers have also advocated caution regarding reliance on broad, largely unsupported assumptions of effectiveness (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, Parker & Zeichner, 1993). A well-developed strand of research results concerning either the relationship of coaching to teachers' beliefs and instructional practices, or even a clear definition of what it is that coaches or mentors actually do has not yet been accomplished. Indeed, much of the existing literature on either coaching or mentoring consists primarily of how-to manuals, anecdotal information, or is concerned exclusively with the mentoring of preservice or beginning teachers and the goal of teacher induction and retention. Nor have scholars been able to reach consensus around a set of clear and usable definitions of the terms coaching or mentoring. Such weaknesses within the field's base of knowledge become crucial issues as districts and schools design, implement and fund packages of educational reform through teacher education and support.
Purpose of the Study

This study addresses the gaps in our knowledge base concerning literacy coaching by documenting and analyzing what actually occurs in individual coaching sessions between a coach and a kindergarten or first grade teacher and the relationship these conversations about small group reading instruction have on the teachers’ beliefs and instructional behaviors. The coaching sessions investigated in this study generally consist of a preconference where a focus and/or goals have been established, the coach’s observation of a guided reading lesson, and a follow-up conversation concerning the teaching decisions and student responses that occurred during the lesson. Coaching sessions typically last approximately 10 to 20 minutes, with the coach and teacher both referring to notes taken during the lesson itself and typically setting goals together for instructional improvement.

This descriptive study, utilizing three cycles of observations of guided reading lessons and coaching sessions, as well as a series of interviews with both coaches and teachers, is designed to reveal how classroom-based literacy coaching works. My intent
within this study, then, is to analyze for the perspectives of the teachers and coaches participating in the study as well as for the points of tension existing in their interactions.

The study's findings include a set of four case studies, based upon the observed coaching or teaching and statements of four coaches, two kindergarten and two first grade teachers over three cycles of teaching and coaching. In this study, I provide an account of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of four literacy coaches, including descriptions of the constraints under which the coaches functioned and the decision-making they engaged in as they worked to support a teacher's improvement in guided reading instruction.

Central Research Questions

The central research questions this study addresses are:

1. What is the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and kindergarten and first grade teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons?
2. What reasoning processes do literacy coaches articulate, as they describe their work with K-1 teachers?

3. What contextual factors do literacy coaches identify as affecting their coaching decisions and actions?

Theoretical Foundation and Assumptions

The design and data analysis of this study are based upon three theoretical areas of understanding: (a) an interpretive theory of social organization, (b) problem-based methodology (Robinson, 1998), and (c) current beliefs regarding the nature of teaching itself and the knowledge and skills needed by effective teachers. Each of these is briefly described below, in order to frame the findings of the present study.

An Interpretive Theory of Social Organization

The interpretive paradigm assumes that knowledge is socially constructed and that researchers should work to understand the complex reality of lived experience from the point of view of the actors (Mertens, 1998). From this viewpoint, the actions of all participants are inherently meaningful and hold an intentional content that an observer must seek to interpret.
(Schwandt, 2000). Indeed, for interpretive researchers subjectivities count (Howe, 2001). Erickson (1986) emphasizes that the questions attended to in qualitative research on teaching are not trivial:

1. Everyday life can be invisible. Participants often do not recognize the patterns in their actions as they perform them.

2. Determining what is happening in a particular setting requires documentation of the concrete details of practice.

3. Understanding what the participants’ actions mean requires consideration of the set of distinctive, local meanings.

Reading lessons and coaching sessions, then, occur within a specific social and cultural setting that is evolving on a moment by moment basis. Every reading lesson is a highly local adventure, varying along such dimensions as the nature of the text chosen for that lesson and the interaction that occurs between that text and each individual reader.
Interpretive research does not take a traditional objective stance. Rather than viewing knowledge as something accumulated through "an evergrowing and increasingly complex arrangement of passively received observations" (Howe, 2001, p. 202) an interpretive approach views knowledge as actively constructed, and grounded in culture, history, morality and politics. The interpretive researcher acknowledges that "the inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process; each influences the other" (Mertens, 1998, p. 13).

Rather than attempting to ensure absolute objectivity, interpretive researchers emphasize confimmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), ensuring that audit trails and narrative descriptions present explicit pictures in support of the researcher's interpretive logic. Interpretive researchers also hold to a transformative view of educational research; that in the long run research should result in a more just and democratic society (Howe, 2001).
Problem-Based Methodology

Robinson (1998), however, in her presentation of the key aspects and importance of a problem-based methodology (PBM) cautions that an explanation of practice requires more than a broadly interpretive approach if it is to have explanatory force, for understanding a practice involves showing how individual or collective reasoning is patterned in such a way that it rules in the observed practices and rules out others.” (p. 20)

Robinson (Robinson & Walker, 1999) characterizes differences between researchers and practitioners as theory competition, and points out the pitfalls of privileging the theories of either party.

Explaining a practice requires researchers to analyze the problem for which it acts as the solution. Robinson (1993) defines a problem as a discrepancy between the actual and desired state of affairs, rather than through the more common definition of a difficulty. In this context, problem is a neutral term - a goal to be achieved rather than necessarily a problematic practice to eliminate. Practice, itself, is defined as actions
informed by beliefs about how to go about achieving educationally important purposes in particular circumstances (Robinson, 1993) or as a solution to a practical problem (Robinson & Walker, 1999). Analyzing and describing a particular theory of practice requires the formulation of (a) a detailed description of that practice, (b) the identification of the full set of constraints that the practice satisfies, and (c) mapping the interrelationships among those constraints. Constraints (Nickles, 1988; cited in Robinson, 1993) are conditions that rule out or make problematic possible solutions; they constrain what counts as an admissible solution to questions of educational practice. Constraints, in this view, include the beliefs, assumptions and values held by participants as well as contextual conditions affecting the choice of practices.

In accordance with PBM, an overall goal of the present study was to produce a detailed description of the practice of literacy coaches. This goal includes the identification of the constraints that the coaches' practice within this study satisfied as evidenced both in their theories-in-use, through observations of coaching sessions, and espoused theories (Argyris & Schön, 1974; cited in 13
Robinson & Walker, 1999), through interviews. Based upon PBM, a set of secondary questions were considered throughout the data analysis for this study:

1. How did coaches formulate the problem(s) underlying their coaching sessions with teachers?
2. What assumptions, values and/or beliefs are evident in the actions or statements of coaches, that appear to have led them to carry out their coaching work in particular ways?

Further, the reasoning of the participant literacy coaches in this study were evaluated through PBM's three criteria of accuracy, effectiveness, and coherence (Robinson, 1998):

1. Have the coaches accurately understood the beliefs, statements and instructional actions of the teachers they work with?
2. How well did the coaches' practices satisfy the constraints that they themselves acknowledge and operate within, towards solution adequacy?

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2 See page 8 for the study's central research questions.
3. Does the practice of each of these coaches constitute a solution to their goals that is compatible with theories of instructional reform and improved student achievement?

*The Nature of Teaching and Teachers' Knowledge*

This study's design and findings are also based upon an understanding of the nature of teaching as a complex endeavor, beyond simply defining a broad set of teaching behaviors which can be expected to be effective within all contexts. "Training in particular practices is no longer the dominant approach to teacher education and staff development; training has given way to education, and the focus is on developing ways of thinking and exposing teachers to many different strategies" (Richardson & Placier, 2001, p. 914). Effective teachers are able, then, to coordinate a complex set of analyses and actions and to engage in decision-making processes on a moment by moment basis (Lyons & Pinnell, 1999).

This study is based on the assumption, then, that the breadth of knowledge needed by teachers is extremely rich and complex, ranging from content and pedagogical content
knowledge to practical knowledge-in-action (Shulman, 1987). Pedagogical content knowledge consists of an amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers: knowing how particular content is organized and represented to a particular group of learners. Teachers must also know, and be able to analyze, the current problem-solving attempts of their students as they read each particular text and the effect their teaching moves are having on students' efforts. The work that the literacy coaches who participated in this study have undertaken, then, is much more than a simple matter of getting the teachers they work with to take on new routines or procedures. Instead, they are attempting to help teachers focus on student responses to reading instruction and the analysis of their own teaching behaviors and effectiveness.

Overview

In this study I document and describe the work of four literacy coaches as they provided coaching sessions to a kindergarten or first grade teacher regarding guided reading instruction, over three cycles of observations and interviews. This
study is grounded in interpretive theory, problem-based methodology (Robinson, 1993), and current views of the nature of teaching.

In chapter two I present a review of literature, describing and characterizing the existing studies concerning both the mentoring and coaching of teachers within which the present study is situated. In chapter three I describe the study's participants, data collection and data analysis. Chapter four presents the study's findings, including the set of four case studies, the description of the relationship between coaching and teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors as well as the description of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) across all coaches participating in the study. Finally, in chapter five I will present a discussion of these findings, as well as the study's implications and directions for further research.
Complete Set of Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and kindergarten and first grade teachers’ beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons?

2. What reasoning processes do literacy coaches articulate, as they describe their work with K-1 teachers?
   • What assumptions, values and/or beliefs are evident in the actions or statements of coaches, that appear to have led them to carry out their coaching work in particular ways?
   • How did coaches formulate the problem(s) underlying their coaching sessions with teachers?
   • Have the coaches accurately understood the beliefs, statements and instructional behaviors of the teachers they work with?
3. What contextual factors do literacy coaches identify as affecting their coaching decisions and actions?

- How well did the coaches’ practice satisfy the constraints that they themselves acknowledge and operate within, towards solution accuracy?

- Does the practice of each of these coaches constitute a solution to their goals that is compatible with theories of instructional reform and improved student achievement?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The existing literature on coaching and mentoring for teachers certainly provides a body of interesting and useful findings. This literature also contains a number of key weaknesses and gaps, however. Scholars, for example have not reached consensus on clear and useful definitions of mentoring or coaching, nor substantially expanded these concepts beyond their use with preservice or new teachers. The concept of mentoring itself was exported from business applications and has not yet gathered a large body of reliable information from within educational contexts or a solid grounding in educational theory. Indeed, much of the literature on both mentoring and coaching (with notable exceptions, as described in this chapter) is based on
conceptual, anecdotal or self-report data. Relatively few studies have investigated what mentors or coaches actually do, or the relationship between the work of coaches and improvement in instruction.

In this chapter I review this literature, with an emphasis on both the key findings and gaps in order to frame the findings of this study and to establish its significance within this field. The first section addresses the issue of the field’s efforts to clarify the definition and roles of mentors/mentoring and coaches/coaching. It is a purposefully detailed and extensive section, as it delineates a number of important issues and tensions that exist within this body of literature and which are relevant to this study’s findings. Following this section, I review the findings of a number of important studies on mentoring and coaching.

Defining the Concepts and Roles of Mentoring and Coaching

A clear definition of the role, functions of and distinctions between mentors or coaches has not yet been fully established in the literature. It is useful, here, to review a few of the approaches to conceptualizing and studying mentors and
mentoring, as well as the dimensions along which coaching has been both merged with and distinguished from mentoring. The purpose of this section is both to present a clear picture concerning how the existing literature on these two concepts has affected the clarity with which existing research studies on mentoring and coaching presently inform practice, as well as to provide a frame for the present study.

**Defining Mentoring**

In a review of several hundred articles, reports or dissertations on the topic of mentoring, Merriam (1983) was not able to identify a precise, agreed upon definition of mentoring. Most of the articles reviewed by Merriam originated in the field of business and were written from a career development perspective. Gray and Gray (1985) concurred with this finding, noting that these business-related studies were primarily concerned with the relationship and match between mentors and protégés.

Out of the 17 references listed by Heller and Sindelar (1991) in their Phi Delta Kappa booklet on mentor programs, seven are business-oriented articles. Kram (1983), for example, identified
four phases in the mentor/protégé relationship within business contexts: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Heller and Sindelar cited these studies as support for assertions that good mentors are people-oriented, even tempered, confident and flexible, or that mentor/protégé relationships develop across a continuum of generalized and predictable stages of development. Although Heller and Sindelar characterized mentor/protégé relationships as “experiential learning” (p. 7), they did not ground their discussion within any specific educational theory.

The enthusiastic importation of a broad concept of mentoring from non-educational contexts has been fueled by concerns over current theory-practice models of teacher education (e.g., Goodlad, 1990), as well as moves towards reflective practices (e.g., Schön, 1987) and school-based staff development. The widespread implementation of mentoring programs has been driven not from teacher interest but policy interests and institutional concerns (Little, 1990). Although these developments quite possibly hold great promise for educational reform efforts, they have also resulted in a somewhat haphazard
and hopeful approach to mentoring and coaching. McIntyre and Hagger (1993), for example, identified "Zero Level" models of mentoring (imported from non-educational fields) that are content-free and concerned primarily with personal relationships. They argued that approaches to mentoring which take a broad viewpoint, unfocused on teaching expertise in particular, must inevitably present a distorted picture of the expertise needed by mentors and serve to deskill teachers.

Even as research and theorizing on mentoring has moved into the teaching arena, however, basic agreements concerning the roles, activities or results of mentor's work have remained unclear across both program implementation and research studies. It is useful, then, to examine several typical ways in which mentors' work has been defined and studied. Field (1994), in common with many writers within this area of study, began her discussion with reference to the story of Mentor, Odysseus and Telemachus as well as the understated comment: "The word 'mentor' needs some explanation" (p. 65). Field emphasized the need for mentors to be reflective, or to articulate such areas of
knowledge as a philosophy of education. This emphasis on reflection is a common theme within the conceptual literature on mentoring (e.g., Frost, 1993).

Describing an ambitious training program for teacher trainers and mentors, Thies-Sprinthall (1986) described the role of mentors as providing clinical supervision and coaching to beginning teachers. Fraser (1990) reported on the results of a coaching course offered to experienced teacher leaders, peer coaches, mentors and administrators. On the other hand, Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn (2000) defined mentoring “as a teaching/learning situation in which the student teachers are cognitively and affectively changed as a consequence of their mentoring experiences (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993; Elliott, 1995; Hawkey, 1997)” (p. 103).

Researchers have defined the term mentor, itself, in widely differing ways. The actual roles and purposes that mentors serve have been difficult to pin down across programs and studies. McIntyre, Hagger and Wilkin (1993), in their introduction to a conceptually-oriented text on mentoring, concurred that operational definitions for mentoring remain unclear. They
identified three widely-utilized connotations for mentors: (a) as a model for classroom management, (b) for general teaching techniques, or (c) as a counselor for novice teachers.

Little (1990), in a review of the literature on mentoring’s connection to the social organization of teaching, characterized mentor roles from a policy viewpoint: as an answer to the challenges of induction and retention of teachers, an incentive and career ladder for successful teachers and in line with a shifting emphasis to local professional development. She also noted that one consequence of the origins of mentor programs is that “demands on the mentor’s competence, character, and commitment are often muted, reduced to formal eligibility criteria and specific job descriptions” (p. 298).

Through a telephone survey of over 100 districts as well as follow up visits to eight of these mentor programs, Wilder (1992) identified three major categories of job descriptions for mentors: professional, technical and personal support for beginning teachers. Wilder also found, however, that little was known at these sites about how well mentoring was working, primarily because the objectives of the programs were not always clear.
Mentors were labeled by these districts in a wide variety of
different ways (e.g., clinical support teachers, buddies, master
teachers, resource teachers, coaches, teacher consultants, or lead
teachers assigned as mentors) despite overall similarities in their
functions.

Wilder (1992) called for a systematic research base on
mentoring, starting with the creation of a framework specifying
questions of the effectiveness of or training needed by mentors.
This useful goal has been complicated by a lack of clarity as to
who programs or research are actually training or observing, and
for what purpose or role(s). In her review of the literature on
mentoring, Hawkey (1997) found studies concentrating on four
distinct approaches to mentoring: roles and responsibilities,
stages in student teacher development or within the mentoring
relationship, or concerning the perspectives, values and
assumptions that mentors bring to their tasks. Hawkey also
commented that the literature on mentoring suffers from a lack of
in-depth analysis or theoretical underpinnings. She
acknowledged that these studies have provided useful frameworks
for understanding mentoring but cautioned that they are, in the
end, of only limited use. Hawkey concluded that mentoring is an extremely complex phenomenon, one that is played out by each individual mentor and student teacher in essentially idiosyncratic ways.

Defining Coaching

Looking across the range of definitions and theorizing concerning the roles and purposes of mentors and mentoring, it is also necessary to attempt to clarify where the concepts of coaches or coaching might fall. Given the challenges faced by the field in attempting to arrive at an agreed upon and useful definition of mentoring, it is not surprising that a clear operational definition of coaching is also difficult to identify. Key differences can be found in the ways that authors either differentiated or merged coaching with mentoring, and along several different dimensions.

Veenman, de Laat and Staring (1998) found several differing concepts of mentoring in the literature, including the expert-novice metaphor, the peer-support framework, the concept of counseling, the master-apprentice model and the coaching analogy. Calling coaching a metaphor for mentoring, Veenman et
al. defined this term as "a form of in-class support for the enhancement of beginning teachers’ craftsmanship through systematic reflection on professional practice (cf. Veenman, Visser, & Wijkamp, 1998)" (p. 6). They also described mentoring as preceding coaching, with the mentoring stage concerned primarily with the survival concerns of the beginning teacher. This concept of coaching as a particular kind, or stage, of mentoring appears to derive from the common assumption that mentors are needed to work exclusively with preservice or entry year teachers. According to this view, mentoring can then develop into coaching at some point in a developmental continuum for each new teacher.

Viewed from a micropolitical interpretation, however, both parties in a mentor/protégé dyad shift in roles along a continuum of interactive relationships (Conley, Bas-Isaac, & Scull, 1995). Taking this view requires theorists to conceptualize mentor/protégé relationships with an eye to the rich and multifaceted set of contexts they occur within. Providing an exemplar for this principle, Conley, Bas-Isaac and Scull investigated mentor/protégé relationships by coding and
analyzing survey and interview data for contrived or collaborative collegiality. They found that relationships that appeared to be contrived (i.e., were initiated from administrators or policy decisions and thus were compulsory) supported the development of collaborative relationships. Mandated collegiality made it possible for teachers to identify and utilize interests which were responsive to their particular settings.

Neubert (1988) defined the role of peer coaches through their provision of on-site assistance, helping with the transfer of a new teaching skill into a teacher's active teaching repertoire. The coach served two major functions; providing feedback on specific methodology as well as personal facilitation. Other researchers and theorists have focused on coaching as collegial coaching (e.g., Delany & Arrendondo, 1998; Herrmann & Pendarvis, 1990), as it is instantiated within professional development schools (e.g., Ariav & Clinard, 1996; Stanulis, 1995), as cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994) or reflective coaching (Bruneau, 1989). Any absolute divide between “mentoring” or “coaching” becomes difficult to discern within most studies. For example, Fairbanks,
Freedman and Kahn (2000) presented evidence of in-class coaching and sharing of craft knowledge between mentor and student teacher at several points in their narrative of results.

Costa and Garmston (1994) defined cognitive coaching as a nonjudgmental and nonevaluative process, built around (a) a planning conference, (b) observation, and (c) a reflecting conference. They stressed that the teacher should determine the focus of observations and feedback, as well as evaluate his or her own performance according to criteria established in planning conferences. "The power to coach is bestowed by the teacher. They 'allow' themselves to be coached because of the respect, the helpfulness, and the leadership qualities of the coach" (p. 14).

Bruneau (1989) defined reflective coaching as a process where "teacher educators actively model both teaching strategies and model thinking about teaching as they engage teachers in a problem-solving process" (p. 2). The overall purpose is to enable teachers to better understand and control their own learning, rather than to cause teachers to implement a set of pre-defined teaching behaviors. Interestingly, however, on-going tensions are evident in Bruneau's report of the process of reflective coaching.
with one kindergarten teacher. The researcher’s narrative includes frequent comments indicating that it was difficult to balance where reflection was well established with the teacher and where teaching needed to improve in particular ways. Bruneau is delineating a challenging tension between coaching for reflection and coaching for improved instruction. Richardson’s (1990) call for practice conceptualized as activity embedded within theory appears to be an important one here, with the content of reflection deeply dependent upon standards of warranted practice.

Bruneau’s study (1989) is both a typical and an atypical example of research within the literature on mentoring. Although the large majority of the literature has been concerned exclusively with mentors’ work with preservice or entry year teachers, the kindergarten teacher in Bruneau’s study had been teaching for 32 years prior to the study. This teacher was interested in incorporating new instructional strategies within her classroom literacy program. Bruneau, however, grounded the study on

The terms mentor and coach, then, have been variously and sometimes loosely defined or distinguished by researchers, theorists and practitioners. Lyons and Pinnell (1999; 2001) present a concept of coaching that is consistent with that used within this present study. Emphasizing coaching as one piece of the complex job of a staff developer, Lyons and Pinnell describe coaching as the process whereby a teacher developer observes and talks with individual teachers during and after their work with children. The focus is on helping the teacher to “apply learning; uncover problems; and develop a plan for working with children that will be operationalized, tested, and revised” (Lyons & Pinnell, 1999, p. 213). Based upon a two-year study of coaching sessions, Lyons and Pinnell (2001) reported that effective coaches can be differentiated along such dimensions as their ability to call attention to critical parts of the lesson observed, to engage teachers in reflection, or to create a trusting relationship.
The term coaching, then, has been variously defined as (a) a particular stage of mentoring (Veenman, de Laat & Staring, 1998), (b) the provision of feedback on specific methodology and personal facilitation (Neubert, 1988), (c) a model for reflective problem-solving (Bruneau, 1989), or (d) as staff developers who help teachers apply their learning to specific instructional contexts (Lyons & Pinnell, 1999). Within the studies reviewed here, the roles and functions investigated under the terms coaching and mentoring overlap considerably along at least two dimensions: (a) the sharing of craft knowledge versus personal support or (b) as reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987) versus the implementation of a set of pre-determined teaching behaviors.

In the next two sections of this chapter, I review and evaluate research findings regarding the effectiveness of mentors and then coaches. Although the field has not yet been able to clearly distinguish between coaching and mentoring, there are several distinct characteristics of these two bodies of work which make it useful to review them separately. I will review the gaps in the literature for both mentoring and coaching as well as those key studies that provide substantial and useful findings. These
studies, as well as those aspects of coaching which have not been well studied, provide the framework within which the present study is situated.

Findings from Empirical Research

The Work of Mentors

Before reviewing studies investigating the work of mentors, it is necessary to reintroduce several important weaknesses in this body of work. In 1983 Merriam found no distinct line of research with respect to mentoring in academic settings and cautioned that "the literature on mentoring is biased in favor of the phenomenon" (p. 169). Merriam criticized the existing literature as relatively unsophisticated in design, without a clear concept of what is being measured and based largely upon testimonials, opinions, surveys or "how to" articles. The Learning from Mentors study conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (2001) added to this view with a statement that most of the research on mentoring to date has focused on programmatic, administrative and role issues, with minimal attention given to either the actual practice of mentors, the
relationship of mentoring to teachers' learning or the influence of context on mentor's practices. My own review of these studies also identified an overall lack of sound, theoretical grounding.

Although there are certainly exceptions to this characterization of the research on mentoring, it also accurately describes much of this literature. Most implementation studies and conceptual articles estimate the influence of mentoring in quite positive terms (Wilder, 1992). Research, however, provides only limited substantiation of such claims. As stated by Little (1990) "rhetoric and action have nonetheless outpaced both conceptual development and empirical warrant. Indeed, a certain 'manic optimism' prevails (Elmore, 1989)" (Little, 1990, p. 297).

*Mentoring's effectiveness for beginning teachers.*

Feiman-Nemser echoed these viewpoints in 1996, stating that "enthusiasm for mentoring has not been matched by clarity about the purposes of mentoring. Nor have claims about mentoring been subjected to rigorous empirical scrutiny" (p. 1). There are, however, exceptions to this characterization. Attempts have been made to assess the effectiveness of mentor programs
through satisfaction level questionnaires, teacher retention rates or performance ratings of teachers with mentors (Little, 1990).

Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987), for example, concluded that the assignment of a support teacher for entry year teachers was likely to have been the most powerful and cost-effective portion of the induction programs investigated across more than 350 schools in over 100 school districts. The data sources for this study included district demographic information, descriptions of each district's induction practices, beginning, middle and end-of-year interviews and an end-of-year questionnaire from beginning teachers. Huling-Austin and Murphy referenced literature on teacher induction and beginning teacher development as the setting for this study.

Identifying a concern that mentors may promote conventional norms and practices rather than supporting reform efforts, Feiman-Nemser (1996) pointed to several important studies that have begun the work of examining "in depth the context, content and consequences of mentoring" (Little, 1990, p. 297). She noted studies that have addressed gaps in the research literature by examining differences in the way mentor
teachers in two different programs conceived of and carried out their work with novices (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992) or of the effects of group mentoring on student teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1991).

Another study referred to by Feiman-Nemser (1996) is the Learning from Mentors study (National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, 2001). This study's purpose has been to investigate what thoughtful mentors do and what novices learn as a result. The study's data have been collected from six research sites across England, the U.S., and China, and included learning logs, interaction logs, interviews and extended conversations. The initial findings of this study emphasized that mentoring is a professional practice rather than solely a social one and that mentor teachers do not automatically serve as a force for change. For mentoring to contribute to educational reform requires a connection to a vision of good teaching and of how novices learn such teaching. Further, role definitions do not help mentors to visualize what they are supposed to do, as do clear statements of purpose linked to specific descriptions of mentoring practices in context. Time and opportunities are important factors in learning
to mentor, not only to allow for sufficient time for mentoring to occur but for mentors to develop their own practice as mentors.

As part of the larger study on learning to teach conducted by The National Center for Research on Teacher Learning at Michigan State, Feiman-Nemser, Parker and Zeichner (1993) investigated the character and quality of the practice of mentoring in one urban school district. This study utilized data collected from a mentor teacher training manual, observations and transcripts of conferences between mentor teachers and secondary English teacher trainees, and interviews with these same participants. The report presented brief, anecdotal descriptions of three of these mentors.

Discouragingly, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1993) found surprising similarities between traditional student teacher and cooperating teacher relationships within the observed mentoring activities. The mentors in this study provided suggestions and materials, but did not provide rationales, principles of teaching, or models of how to think about ways of representing knowledge to learners. “Rather than identifying a basic question or issue to discuss in some depth, they all walked through the lesson,
commenting or questioning the trainee on each part. By talking about so many things, they never probed anything” (pp. 161-162). Feiman-Nemser et al. reviewed literature on mentoring and student teachers, but did not provide an additional theoretical frame in which to place their findings. They described the overall goal of the study as the provision of “a grounded picture of what mentor teachers do and what they talk about with teacher trainees in a particular alternate route context” (p. 163).

Yeomans and colleagues (Yeomans & Sampson, 1994) conducted 12 ethnographic case studies of primary mentors in action through the Teacher Education and Mentorship research project. The authors of one of these studies (Sampson & Yeomans, 1994) found a complex and extensive use of a wide range of strategies operating within a set of specific roles. These strategies included structural (planning and organizing), supportive (as host or counselor) and professional role dimensions (through demonstrating, collaborating, discussion or feedback).
The primary purpose of Sampson and Yeomans’ study (1994) was to describe mentoring programs which had been implemented in response to new mandates for teacher education in the United Kingdom. The authors cautioned that the skills demonstrated by mentors within this set of studies do not necessarily represent effective and skilled mentoring. “There exists only a limited empirical research base from which to make assertions about what primary school mentors in England and Wales should do or from which to build forms of mentor support, including training courses” (p. 1).

Through an “exploratory, emergent, and dialogic” study emphasizing the role of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn (2000) analyzed the ways in which first semester English student teachers had opportunities to learn the discourse, values and skills of teaching through their interactions with a mentor teacher. The 15 mentor and 15 novice teachers functioned as co-researchers in the study, documenting and analyzing their mentoring experiences through monthly workshops. Data collected for the study included dialogue journals, videotapes of conferences, artifacts and
interviews. The participants identified three categories occurring within the data: (a) helping student teachers to survive and to define themselves as teachers, (b) establishing relationships based upon dialogue and trust, and (c) the building of professional partnerships.

Fairbanks et al. (2000) concluded that learning to teach is not easy; that it is situated in practical settings in which student teachers "observe, question, experiment, and reflect on the work of teachers" (p. 110). The mentoring relationships did help the student teachers to be able to define and negotiate the specific form that their legitimate peripheral participation would take throughout their student teaching experience.

*Effects on mentors.*

Another body of research on mentoring has examined the effects of mentoring on mentors, themselves. Stanulis (1995) conducted a study describing how five classroom teachers made sense of their role as mentors for novice teachers. Within the Academic Learning program at Michigan State University, classroom teachers worked as mentors with a novice teacher over
a 2-year period within a professional development school (PDS). The research design for this study utilized stimulated recall and standardized open-ended interviews with five mentor teachers over a 5-month period. Conferences between the mentor teacher and student teacher were observed and field notes were taken during seminars focusing on language arts instruction and student teaching.

Stanulis (1995) reported that four out of the five mentors perceived rich opportunities for participation within the PDS environment of inquiry and growth. One teacher, for example, stated that the videotapes of conferences and stimulated recall interviews themselves helped to construct her style of mentoring. A fifth mentor in the study, however, labeled her own classroom teaching as the most significant source of knowledge for her work as a mentor, reflecting a “learning by doing” viewpoint. Stanulis situated this study within theories on (a) teachers as reflective practitioners working within complex sociocultural contexts, and (b) a social constructivist view of learning. The researcher did not observe for any relationships between the mentors’ work with novice teachers and their actual teaching behaviors for this study.
As is evidenced in the preceding discussion, studies of mentoring are typically concerned exclusively with mentors' work with student teachers or beginning teachers rather than with more experienced teachers. Such studies are also very typically concerned with the relationship between mentor teachers and protégés or on the development of self-reflective approaches.

**Issues of methodology.**

In the preceding sections I have reviewed some of the key studies relating to educational mentoring. There remain, however, a large number of studies that I have not reviewed here due to substantial issues of methodology and thus of confidence in the trustworthiness of their results. A significant portion of the findings presented in research on mentors is based largely on testimonials or opinions, or is attached to survey or questionnaire data with questionable support for conclusions. Without attempting to report on the entire set of such studies, I will describe two illustrative examples.
Lemberger (1992), for example, reported on an analysis of a set of interviews with 17 mentors. The researcher concluded that mentoring occurred on three levels, from strongly assertive to weakly assertive. This typology was derived from the mentors' responses to the interview question, "What kinds of things do you think mentors should do?" (p. 15) rather than on any observation of actual practice or on any effects for the teachers they worked with. In order to determine the degree of assertiveness, the mentors' replies were differentiated according to three criteria: the mentor's willingness and ability to exert expertise and authority, to interact with colleagues in the classroom and commitment to interactions with colleagues of adequate intensity and duration. From the anecdotal information presented in the report, it is difficult to conclude with confidence that the researcher has been able to accurately and clearly delineate each individual's approach to mentoring. Lemberger grounded her study within three themes: the leadership vacuum in schools, the cellular nature of schools, and teacher egalitarianism.
In another example, Ganser (1994; 1996) interviewed 24 mentors who were working with beginning teachers. He then later collected a weighted ranking from each of the mentors for the 55 elements that had been collectively identified from an analysis of the interviews. The mentors ranked six aspects of their roles highly, including providing beginning teachers with support and encouragement and meeting with them regularly. The last category which was identified within the top six roles was to help beginning teachers with teaching skills. The mentors also ranked the elements that constituted obstacles, including the lack of time for meetings and classroom visits, other responsibilities interfering with their mentoring role, and tensions regarding the teaching assignment or ideology. Ganser’s overall conclusion from this study, that mentoring is especially beneficial for both the beginning teacher as well as mentors, is not well supported by this data.

The research literature on the work of mentors, then, holds both highly useful and applicable findings, as well as key gaps and confusions. This body of research has focused almost exclusively on mentors’ role with beginning teachers, or on the
effects of mentoring on mentors themselves. The conclusions of researchers in this area have not always been well supported by reported data, nor a result of close examination of what it is that mentors actually do or of the results of mentoring. The most commonly cited theoretical foundations for studies of mentoring are (a) beginning teacher development, (b) reflective practitioners, and (c) reviews of the conceptual and empirical literature on mentoring. The primary areas of need, in order to extend and clarify the field's level of knowledge concerning mentors are (a) detailed information on what it is that mentors actually do, (b) analyses of mentoring which are well grounded within educational theory, and (c) examinations of the results of mentoring on instruction and student achievement.

**The Work of Coaches**

The research literature on coaching is less extensive than that of mentors or mentoring. In contrast to research on mentoring, research on coaching is typically concerned with issues of staff development and/or educational reform. Since the
1980's coaching has been conceptualized in widely varying ways, from a simple matter of assistance for "transfer" to a complex job lying at the very heart of effective teaching.

Reviewing research on effective staff development training in 1980, Joyce and Showers speculated that "coaching for application" could be an essential component and that many teachers need direct coaching on how to apply new skills and models within their teaching. In a conceptual article describing one English department's move into an alternative teaching approach, Joyce and Showers (1982) emphasized the need for coaching to ensure that teachers are able to develop the "executive control" that allows the new teaching approach to be fitted into the instructional repertoire. Joyce and Showers (1980) also stated, however, that they found few studies on coaching to support their claims and cited two studies on "lengthy follow-up feedback" (p. 381) instead.

Utilizing a mixed design of between groups and within subjects comparisons, Showers (1984) investigated whether teachers can be trained to coach their peers, whether teachers coached by peers are able to transfer their training at a greater
rate and whether the students of peer-coached teachers perform better. Showers defined transfer of training as “a complex measure comprised of skill level attained, appropriateness of use of newly-learned strategies, comfort of students with the new strategies, and practice with the trained models of teaching” (p. 31). Instrumentation for the study included a paragraph completion method for measuring the conceptual level of teachers, transcripts of coaching conferences, observations of classroom teaching, artifacts, interviews and student measures.

Twenty-one middle or junior high school teachers participated in Showers’ 1984 study, as well as six peer coaches. The peer coaches were selected from teachers who had earlier experience with the training program. Showers concluded that “there seems to be little doubt that peer coaches can be trained in a relatively brief period to provide follow-up training to other teachers” (p. 18). The presence of peer coaching did increase transfer of training for coached teachers to a greater degree than for uncoached teachers. Specifically, although uncoached teachers did practice the new strategy as often as coached teachers did, their practice did not result in increased skill or
more appropriate use of the new teaching model. The students of coached teachers performed better on a model-relevant concept attainment measure than did students of uncoached teachers. Showers concluded that students of coached teachers understood the newly taught model well enough to utilize it independently, but students of uncoached teachers experienced difficulty and heightened anxiety when attempting to utilize the new model.

Throughout their research and conceptual writing, Joyce and Showers (Joyce & Showers, 1980; 1982; Showers, 1984) emphasized the issue of “transfer” of teachers’ understandings of a newly introduced teaching approach. Showers (1984) noted differences in the degree of collegiality that occurred within the coaching relationships, and that those teachers who successfully learned how to receive feedback from a peer were then able to reach a state of inquiry so that they could elicit suggestions regarding the use of the new strategy from the peer coach.

More currently, Veenman, de Laat, and Staring (1998) used an untreated control group design to investigate the degree to which Dutch primary school mentors participating in a training program on the skills needed to coach would implement the
target coaching skills and whether or not the coached teachers then perceived a change in the coaching skills of the mentors. Audiotapes of coaching conferences before and after the training program were rated by experts and the beginning teachers were asked to estimate the effects of coaching on their own instructional behavior. The researchers determined that the training had a marked effect on the mentors’ coaching skills. As measured against the training program’s list of specific coaching behaviors, significant differences were found on pre- and post-test measurements for autonomy, feedback and the encouragement of self-reflection. The coached beginning teachers did not rate the trained and untrained mentors differently, however, and changes in teachers’ beliefs or instructional practices were not measured.

Veenman et al. (1998) recognized the complexities involved in the job of coaching and postulated that coaches do need training in order to be effective. The researchers defined coaching as in-class support for the enhancement of beginning teachers’ craftsmanship through systematic reflection on professional practice. The training program used for the study was based on such objectives as the establishment of mutual trust,
the improvement of instructional practice through feedback and stimulation for reflection, as well as an enhancement of beginning teachers’ self-improvement plans. This definition of the role of coaching is considerably more complex and delineated than simply “transfer.” Veenman et al. based their study design and discussion on the issues of teacher retention and the difficulties faced by beginning teachers.

Ponticell (1994) described the results of a teacher-designed, professional development project which used peer coaching and videotaping to increase the opportunities for 10 urban high school teachers to engage in self-analysis and problem-solving dialogue. These experiences increased the teachers’ perceptions of how much and what they needed to improve in their teaching practices:

Findings in this project suggest that videotaping and peer coaching, together with substantive, problem-solving oriented discussions about teaching, provided sustained collegial interactions that enabled teachers to move past the phase of validation into challenging the routines of practice.

(p. 170)
The data collected for this study included (a) inventories, (b) participant-analyzed videotapes, (c) researcher field notes from observations of peer coaching conferences and seminars, and (d) exit interviews.

Ponticell grounded this study in three related theoretical perspectives: (a) how individuals grow and learn, (b) the norms and nature of teaching, and (c) the necessary conditions for learning and growth. The author concluded that videotaping, combined with peer coaching, can be a powerful tool for empowerment and teachers’ perception of their own instrumentality. Ponticell attributed the teachers’ increased awareness of their professional isolation and growing sense of efficacy to both the videotaping and peer coaching, without attempting to disaggregate any effects of these two treatments.

Lyons and Pinnell (1999; 2001), in conjunction with the University of Chicago Center for School Improvement, conducted a two-year study of teacher decision making and pedagogical reasoning. The study investigated how teachers’ knowledge and characteristics of their instruction were related to student achievement levels and the ways in which literacy coaches can
make a positive impact on the work of teachers. Lyons and Pinnell described the role of literacy coaches as extremely complex, involving an ability to size up the instructional situation, connect it to a broad, deep knowledge base and make on-the-spot decisions about what will help a teacher most at a particular moment.

The research on coaching, then, is less extensive than that for mentoring and focused primarily on staff development and instructional reform. Within this literature the characterization of the role of coaches has evolved from (a) assistance in the transfer of new teaching skills to classroom implementation, to (b) in-class support for improvement in teachers’ craftsmanship, and to (c) assistance for teachers’ decision-making and pedagogical reasoning. The theoretical underpinnings of these studies included transfer into practice, beginning teacher development and retention, individual growth and learning, constructivism, and the nature of teaching and effective staff development.
Summary of Literature Review

Several aspects of the literature reviewed in this chapter are striking. There appears to be a strong need for the research on mentoring and coaching to catch up with the degree of enthusiasm for and implementation of existing programs. The confused and overlapping definitions for the roles of mentors and coaches, as well as the goals such programs are expected to achieve, do not well serve either researchers or practitioners. Certainly, a need for information regarding the on-the-ground work done by mentors and coaches as well as the results of that work on instruction and student achievement, emerge from this review. The literature on both coaching and mentoring is also in need of a stronger grounding in theories which provide a framework for analyzing the roles and effects of mentoring and coaching. An early tendency towards simpler views of mentoring and coaching, based originally on functions and roles not specific to teaching, has appropriately evolved into a more enriched understanding of the need to make deep and rich connections between mentoring, coaching, classroom teaching and teachers.
themselves. Research is needed which builds upon this evolution, and clarifies the constructs, goals and effects of mentoring and coaching.

The present study is well situated within this body of literature, and adds important information concerning the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of literacy coaches and relationship to teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors. I will present a detailed description of the actual work of four literacy coaches as they assist kindergarten and first grade teachers in improvements in their instruction for guided reading lessons. Through these findings, I will delineate (a) the relationship between coaching sessions, instructional behavior and teachers' beliefs; and (b) the goals, constraints and reasoning processes that literacy coaches identified and demonstrated in their work. This delineated theory of practice holds important information for coaches, as well as the policy makers and teacher educators who fund and support them, and is also a crucial addition to the existing body of literature on mentoring and coaching.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Qualitative research is a situated activity, consisting of interpretive and analytic practices that not only make the world visible but hold the possibility of transformation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Doing qualitative research requires passion: “Passion for people, passion for communication, and passion for understanding people” (Janesick, 2000, p. 394). Qualitative research must also, however, inspire confidence in the results, with audit trails that establish trustworthiness, credibility and confirmability. These characteristics should permeate the design, analysis and findings of qualitative research on teaching.
A major purpose of this study was to identify the ways that coaches formulate the problems they address, as well as the reasoning processes and constraints that appear to underlie their coaching practices. I conducted observations and interviews for three cycles of teaching and coaching with four literacy coaches and four classroom teachers. My data collection and analysis documented what actually occurred in individual coaching sessions between a coach and a kindergarten or first grade teacher and the relationship these conversations about small group reading instruction had on teachers’ beliefs and instructional behaviors.

For any study, the choice of methodology and accompanying methods governs the type of findings that can result. The goals and focus of this study, as described above, were best served by adopting a qualitative and interpretive stance. This choice allowed for the complexities involved in coaching to be identified within the study, rather than eliminated as confounding variables. I was able, then, to make the world of in-school, primary grade literacy coaching more fully visible to
researchers, administrators and practitioners through this study. My findings include descriptions of the goal-setting, decision-making and reasoning within the practice of literacy coaches, as well as of the relationship between the work of coaches and teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices.

I begin this chapter by describing the procedures that were followed for access to the research sites and identification of the participants of the study. Next, I delineate the researcher’s role, and methods of data collection. The data analysis procedures followed in this study are then described as well as the procedures used to establish credibility. I conclude the chapter with a time line of the research activities conducted for this study.

Site Selection and Access

A small urban school district that has implemented the Literacy Collaborative®, a long-term professional development program for literacy instruction, was selected as the site for this research. A purposeful, critical case sample (Patton, 1990) was obtained for this study. The literacy coaches in this district, as do

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3 See appendix B for a description of the Literacy Collaborative.
all of the literacy coordinators within the Literacy Collaborative, completed seven weeks of university training over a one-year period. The focus of this professional development program is on developing each literacy coordinator's ability to (a) implement an effective, research-based framework for K-2 literacy instruction in his or her own teaching; and (b) design and present staff development class sessions and in-class assistance or coaching for the K-2 teachers at their own school site. Each literacy coordinator within this district also continues to teach children for at least 90 minutes daily.

This school district was determined to be a suitable site for the study because the training and on-going support provided to each of these literacy coaches constituted a strong foundation for their coaching work. All of the potential participants had already completed their initial training year plus a field year in their new roles. This site was judged to hold the potential to yield a rich set of information regarding literacy coaching under very strong conditions of training and support, providing an opportunity for critical case sampling.
The school district readily provided permission for me to approach individual literacy coaches with a request to participate in the study. In October 2001, after obtaining approval for the study from the Behavioral and Social Science Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB), I made a presentation regarding the purposes and procedures for the study at a meeting of the district’s literacy coordinators. I then requested individual meetings with each of these literacy coaches in order to further explain the program and request their participation. At these individual meetings, each literacy coach had opportunities to ask questions and received a copy of the summary sheet approved in the IRB application. A number of the district’s literacy coaches declined to participate. The two primary reasons given were (a) the amount of stress that participation in the project would be likely to cause for a classroom teacher working with them, or (b) a lack of time to take on any extra responsibilities. Although not stated by any of the literacy coaches, it is also likely that some were not comfortable with the thought of being observed during their coaching.
Four literacy coaches did agree, however, to participate in the study and were each able to recruit a kindergarten or first grade teacher that they were currently coaching to participate as well. The choice of this classroom teacher was left up to the coaches. I then met with each nominated classroom teacher, explained the purpose and procedures of the study and provided each one with a copy of the summary sheet approved through the IRB application. On the first observation visit, each participating coach and classroom teacher signed and also kept one copy of the IRB consent for participation form.

Participants

Four literacy coaches, two kindergarten and two first grade teachers participated in this study. Given the small number of participants in this study and the coaching’s overall goal of improved instruction, I acknowledge that the study contains a degree of risk to participants’ professional reputations. Accordingly, I have written this report to minimize the threat to the well-being of all participants and make it less likely that any individual could be readily identified. I have used pseudonyms...
and made other changes in identifying information in this report. I have also, however, made these changes carefully so as not to substantially alter the weight of interpretation or findings.

The two first grade teachers in this study were both in their second year of teaching. One of the two kindergarten teachers in this study had eight years of teaching experience, but only three of those were in kindergarten classrooms. The second kindergarten teacher was an experienced teacher with 25 years of teaching experience, including 18 years in kindergarten. Both kindergarten teachers had not, themselves, taught small group reading lessons on a regular basis until the year this study was conducted.

The four literacy coaches participating in this study had between 12 and 31 years of experience. Each of the coaches applied for the position of literacy coordinator in the district and completed seven weeks of intensive training for this position during the 1999-2000 school year. During the 2000-2001 school year they completed their field year as a literacy coordinator. Their role during the field year included (a) providing a 40-hour,

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4 See appendix B for a description of the literacy coordinators' training program.
on-site class on literacy instruction for the K-2 teachers at their own school sites; (b) in-class assistance or coaching to K-2 teachers; and (c) continuing to teach children for at least 90 minutes per day. The year that this study was conducted was each literacy coach’s third year in the literacy coordinator role. They were currently responsible for providing a 40-hour course in literacy instruction for any new K-2 teachers at their school site, a 20-hour course for continuing K-2 teachers, as well as continuing in-class assistance for all K-2 teachers and teaching children themselves for at least 90 minutes per day.

Researcher’s Role

A researcher’s role during the time spent in the field can vary along a continuum from complete immersion in the setting as a full participant, to a complete separation from the setting as a spectator (Patton, 1990). These distinctions can change across the various activities of a study as well as over the time period of the study. Studies also vary in the degree to which the researcher’s role and the purposes of the study are revealed to or hidden from participants.
The true purposes and roles of the researcher in this study were overtly and explicitly discussed with each participant, both in conversations and through documents. My role during observation of each of the 24 guided reading lessons and 12 coaching sessions was as a non-participatory spectator. While video taping guided reading lessons, an individual student not involved in the lesson itself would occasionally ask me to listen to his or her reading of a writing product. As a coaching session was concluded and the tape recorder turned off, either the teacher or coach would occasionally engage me in a brief conversation (typically concerning an individual student). I responded in only very general terms to these types of interactions, without participating in any direct way in either the guided reading lessons or the coaching interactions. All observations were overt and prescheduled, with the camera or tape recorder visible to all participants. My role altered somewhat, of course, for each of the interviews. I continued to function, however, as a non-participant during these interviews, asking for participants’ perspectives without offering suggestions.
Data Collection

Three cycles of observations and interviews were conducted in the period between November, 2001 and April, 2002 with four coach/classroom teacher dyads. Each cycle of observations and interviews consisted of the following activities:

1. Observation and video recording of a classroom guided reading lesson.

2. Observation and audio recording of a coaching session between the literacy coach and classroom teacher. The coaching session always occurred during the same visit as the first guided reading lesson, either immediately or shortly after the lesson.

3. Observation and video recording of a second guided reading lesson. This second guided reading lesson typically occurred on the next school day.

4. Separate interviews were then conducted with the classroom teacher and coach, occurring on the same visit as did the observation of the second guided reading lesson. These interviews were audio taped.
The three data collection cycles with each of the four coach/classroom teacher dyads occurred approximately one month apart from each other, except where the school's winter or spring vacation interfered. The units of analyses for this study included (a) the 12 individual cycles across the coach/classroom teacher dyads, (b) four cases consisting of all three cycles for each coach/classroom dyad, and (c) cross case analyses.

Data Sources

The data sources for this study consisted of observations and recordings of guided reading lessons and coaching sessions, plus interviews with each classroom teacher and literacy coach. Each of the 24 guided reading lessons observed for this study was video taped and transcribed. Each of the 12 coaching sessions and 24 interviews was audio taped and transcribed. Each transcript was re-checked for accuracy.

The first section of each interview with both coaches and classroom teachers was structured as stimulated recall (Bloom, 1953; cited in Keith, 1988), with a second set of questions in a
standardized open-ended interview format (Patton, 1990). Stimulated recall is a technique for gathering retrospective reports of verbal and nonverbal thought processes using explicit and informationally rich cues around a specific event (Shavelson, Webb, & Burstein, 1986). For the stimulated recall section of each interview in this study, a short segment of the videotape of the classroom teacher’s guided reading lesson or audiotape of the coaching session from that same cycle was played for the teacher or coach as follow:

1. **Cycle 1 Interviews:**
   - Teacher: Guided Reading Video Segment
   - Coach: Guided Reading Video Segment

2. **Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Interviews:**
   - Teacher: Guided Reading Video Segment
   - Coach: Coaching Session Audio Segment

Each video segment chosen was indicative of a teaching practice that had been discussed during the preceding coaching session.

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5 See appendix C for the full set of interview questions.
The audio segments played for each coach were representative of the content and interaction between the teacher and coach for that coaching session.

Keith (1988), in a critical review of stimulated recall interviewing cautions that the statements resulting from such interviews should be viewed as retrospective reports of teachers' professional craft knowledge rather than as an accurate and complete recall of a teacher's decision-making. In order to avoid distortion, Keith recommends that the probes used for stimulated recall interviews be general in nature. In this study, I asked the participant to talk about his or her thinking and decision-making for the lesson or coaching session as the first question in the interview. It is possible, and even likely, that the stimulated recall interview technique itself had an effect on either the teaching or the coaching behaviors within this study. In order to minimize this possibly confounding effect the interviews always occurred as the last step within each of the three cycles of data collection, with approximately one month occurring between cycles for each coach/classroom teacher dyad.
The second segment of each interview consisted of a set of questions designed as a standardized open-ended interview. I asked the same basic questions, in each cycle, of each coach and classroom teacher. As the first two cycles of interviews were completed, I examined each interview transcript for sufficiency of content and completed an interview content matrix chart for both coaches and classroom teachers. I used this analysis to design the next cycle's interview questions. In each interview I also utilized probes on an individual basis where needed to clarify or extend the participants' statements.

Data Analysis

All video tapes and audio tapes collected for this study were transcribed and the transcripts were checked for accuracy. I conducted the data analysis for this study in three overlapping phases, including (a) an in-depth search for any changes in teaching behaviors or teacher beliefs across cycles for each case, as well as of the content and interaction occurring within each coaching session; (b) an analysis of the interaction patterns of those coaching sessions associated with changes in the teacher's
instructional behaviors; and (c) a content analysis across the coaching sessions and interviews in order to build a description of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of these literacy coaches.

**Phase One of Data Analysis**

For the first phase of data analysis, I took the following steps:

1. The coaching session transcripts were entered into a computer program, NU*DIST Revision 4 (QSR, 2000), for a preliminary analysis and coded for statements about goals for improvement.

2. The 24 guided reading lessons were transcribed and analyzed, with a focus on three specific areas: student engagement, helping readers to construct and extend the meaning of texts, as well as the goals arising from the current coaching session for that coach/classroom teacher dyad.

3. I then compared the first and second guided reading lessons within each cycle and for each dyad for changes in teaching behaviors along the three
dimensions of student engagement, establishment of story meaning, and issue(s) raised in the coaching session.

4. I also examined each guided reading and teacher interview transcript for explicit and/or implicit statements of each teachers' beliefs about teaching.

Each guided reading lesson was digitally video recorded, entered onto iMovie on an iMac computer and transcribed. I viewed the video of each guided reading lesson multiple times, both across the whole lesson and within each portion of the lesson. The digital format allowed me to easily review any particular section or to search the file visually for specific teacher or student actions, constituting a detailed "line-by-line" analysis. It was possible, for example, to determine the exact time elapsed between when the first student in the group and the last student in the group were each given permission to start their independent reading of the text.
Through a minimum of four complete viewings plus extended replaying of specific sections, I summarized each particular reading lesson along three dimensions. The first two of these are adapted from the Scales for Analysis developed by Lyons and Pinnell (2001):

1. To what degree did the teacher work to engage the children in the designated guided reading task, holding their interest and attention throughout the lesson? Did the teacher appear to sense the degree to which students were engaged and then actively adjust pacing, content and activities?

2. To what degree did the teacher work to help readers construct and extend the meaning of the text? How did the teacher help students to make connections between the text and their experiences and background knowledge, or to problem-solve difficult words in the text with reference to the text’s meaning?
3. To what degree has the teacher demonstrated those specific teaching behaviors that were overtly discussed as goals for improvement within the recent, associated coaching session?

A narrative analysis of each of these dimensions was completed for each guided reading lesson. The teaching behaviors within each guided reading lesson were described in depth in order to identify any differences which had occurred from the first to second lesson. (See appendix D for an example of the book introduction section summary analysis from one lesson, analyzed for the “constructing and extending meaning” dimension.)

I then extended the summary analysis by rating each lesson on a six-point scale across each of the three dimensions described above. The rubric scale was adapted from Lyons and Pinnell (2001) and is listed in figure 3.1. I utilized these rubrics as a set of tentative tools, in exploration of ways to usefully identify instructional shifts within guided reading lessons. The rubrics also served to assist and extend my thinking, as well as for methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978). My use of the rubric scoring was not conducted, however, with the intention of
Rubric Scale for Guided Reading Lesson Analysis

0. There is no evidence of teaching for this function.
1. There is minimal evidence of teaching for this function.
2. There is moderate evidence of active teaching for this function in one or two parts of the lesson, only. The teacher may not be teaching often to this dimension or is working to control an instructional strategy that is new to his/her teaching repertoire or in conflict with the teacher's orientation to reading instruction. Some awkwardness or struggling is evident in the teacher's behaviors in regards to this teaching.
3. There is moderate evidence of active teaching for this function within a portion of the lesson. The teacher is still working, however, to control an instructional strategy that is new to his/her teaching repertoire or in conflict with the teacher's orientation to reading instruction. Some awkwardness or struggling is evident in the teacher's behaviors in regards to this teaching.
4. There is ample evidence that the teacher is actively teaching to this function in most portions of the guided reading lesson. The teacher is becoming much more comfortable with the incorporation of this teaching into his/her repertoire for at least some lesson components.
5. There is ample evidence that the teacher is actively teaching to this function across the lesson, but also encountering difficulties or complexities related to this particular teaching context. The teacher, however, is beginning to smoothly integrate this teaching behavior within and across the lesson, for this particular text and group of students.
6. Across all parts of the lesson, there is high evidence of active teaching for this function. The teacher appears to be at ease in regards to the teaching of this function, and has a repertoire of appropriate teaching strategies available to teach this function well.

Figure 3.1: Rubric Scale for Guided Reading Lesson Analysis.
establishing cause and effect relationships between the specific characteristics of coaching sessions and changes in instructional behavior. Rather, I utilized the rubric scoring as a way of determining and describing change along an identified continuum of characteristics.

I also conducted a NU*DIST coding and narrative analysis for teachers’ beliefs regarding guided reading instruction, as expressed within the teacher interviews. I then re-read across these analyses in order to identify (a) any common themes in teachers’ beliefs or assumptions, (b) where the beliefs and assumptions of teachers appeared to be in conflict with their coach’s advice, and (c) how these beliefs or assumptions changed or were resolved over the three cycles of this study. From these analyses, I wrote case study descriptions of the beliefs about guided reading instruction expressed by each of the four teachers who participated in this study.

I analyzed the transcript of each coaching session, coding for both content and interaction. The content analysis was based primarily on a priori codes and included such lesson components as prompting during independent reading, the book introduction
section, or the use of resources. The coding for interactions during coaching sessions emerged through multiple, line-by-line readings of transcripts and is described in figure 3.2. Working from NU*DIST-produced reports showing coding stripes for the interaction coding within each coaching session transcript, I then produced diagrams which visually represented each participant’s utterances across the time span of each conference. Figure 3.3 presents an example of one of these diagrams. The purpose of these diagrams was to present a visual picture of the interaction patterns occurring within each cycle and each case, in order to aid both in the analytic process as well as the presentation of findings. I also utilized NU*DIST to calculate the percentages or ratios within each coaching session at several points of interest: the ratio of teacher talk to coach talk, and the percentage of talk coded as questions asked, telling, or replaying by either the coach or classroom teacher. I produced a matrix through NU*DIST, showing the points of intersection at each of these coding nodes for each of the four cases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Coach/Teacher</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replaying</td>
<td>Replaying the teacher's instructional moves or student responses from the lesson.</td>
<td>T: From yesterday's reading they were very fluent and the book seemed easy. This was the same level and type of book. They seemed to be not as fluent today and I did forget to have them take their fingers away to help their fluency when they were reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Posing evaluative, general inquiry, why, or “how to” questions.</td>
<td>C: Now, thinking about that book, were there some things in that book that were really difficult for the children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>Providing suggestions for subsequent teaching. Telling how particular teaching could be done, or why it should be done.</td>
<td>C: That might be better, to say go to the chart, can you find it there? Get them to say the word, shovel, and then, start this word like shovel. Might be a way to get it. So, to see what they would, so that we're not isolating that too much. Can you make this word start like shovel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-Making</td>
<td>Replaying previous coaching discussions or goals established. Summing up any goals resulting from the present coaching session. Asking questions about what teaching goals should be set next. Making statements regarding aspects of teaching that are difficult.</td>
<td>C: Okay. So, you're going to find an appropriate book, match it to their experiences, and then you're going to be thinking about your prompts and help them with their sense of story and going back to that meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2: Coaching Session Interaction Codes.
Figure 3.3: Sample Diagram Showing Coaching Session Interaction.
I then carried out an additional reading of each coaching session transcript, making marginal notes within four categories: (a) coaching for shifts in behavior, (b) coaching for analysis and reflection, (c) the coach’s apparent theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974), and (d) the degree of co-construction. Figure 3.4 shows a sample of these marginal notes. The first two categories used to structure my analysis were adapted from Lyons and Pinnell (2001). Several questions relating to each of these categories assisted my analysis:

1. Coaching for Shifts in Behavior. Were the teacher and coach analyzing and replaying what occurred in the lesson in order to show how to improve the teacher’s instructional behaviors? Did the coach and/or teacher present alternate ways to teach for particular points? Were specific plans for tomorrow’s teaching developed?

2. Coaching for Analysis and Reflection. Did the coach model and help the teacher to establish the thinking
Partial Coaching Session Transcript, Cycle 1

T: I've been saying you know reread and think about what's happening in the story, and doing, you know where she's just getting real overwhelmed with it.
C: /um hmm/
T: So today I concentrated more on just, you know go back and re read or...
C: um hmm
T: So there wasn't a lot of different ones that I brought in because I think she was overwhelmed because she was so visually bound that it was difficult for her to comprehend all of those strategies.
C: Okay
T: So I need, I think concentrate on one at a time.
C; Well, I'm thinking that where you, right in the very beginning, you prompted her to think about what's happening in the story and when she had difficulty with the names you popped right in there and provided that support for her so she wasn't stuck on trying to sound out Michael and Anna. You prompted her to try that again, when she got to the word looked. Because she knew look, she covered up the ED chunk and she said "that's look." And you asked her, you know does it look and sound right?

Coaching for shifts in behavior, analysis and reflection.
The coach confirms the teacher's analysis, adding a replaying of student's responses as confirmation.
The coach is presenting an argument against, or a broadening of the teacher's proposal, one at a time. But not directly. The coach is modeling the use of evidence and analysis for the teacher. The coach is modeling evidence analysis for the teacher.

C's Theory in Use
The teacher raises an issue of kind of prompting has been using and moves to an hypothesis.....
"one at a time"
The coach replays the prompting provided to the student in some detail.

Degree of Co-Construction
Coach and teacher both appear to be participating fully. The replaying comes from both teacher and coach and occurs primarily in the first half of this session.
Both coach and teacher pose questions, with the teacher asking for how-to suggestions.

Figure 3.4: Sample of Coaching Session Marginal Notes.
patterns of analysis and reflection that could lead to improved instruction? Did the coach and teacher analyze the results of the teaching?

3. The Coaches’ Theory-in-Use. Did the coach work to understand what the teacher knows or believes about guided reading instruction? What causal reasoning, assumptions or values did the coach appear to be operating from?

4. The Degree of Co-Construction. Did both the teacher and coach make statements, ask questions, and engage in analysis within this coaching session? Did either the coach or the teacher interrogate the other? Were both the teacher and coach able to share experiences and hunches, and clarify points of discussion for each other?
Phase Two of Data Analysis

Using the results of the procedures described above, I examined the characteristics of those coaching sessions that were associated with changes in teaching behaviors and those that were not. This analysis was directly related to research question one:

What is the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and kindergarten and first grade teachers’ beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons?

This comparison was considered at the levels of individual coaching sessions, within cases and across cases.

Phase Three of Data Analysis

The third phase of data analysis for this study entailed a content analysis of the interview transcripts across the four cases in order to build a description of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of these literacy coaches. This phase of analysis was directly related to the following research questions:

1. What reasoning processes do literacy coaches articulate, as they describe their work with K-1 teachers?
2. What contextual factors do literacy coaches identify as affecting their coaching decisions and actions?

I entered the transcripts for all interviews into the computer program, NU*DIST, and coded at a set of hierarchical nodes along three dimensions: content, constraints and the coaches' reasoning or decision-making (see figure 3.5). The coding at the parent node for constraints is described in figure 3.6 with examples provided from the interview transcripts. In order to analyze for the reasoning and decision-making processes of the coaches, I conducted a narrative analysis of each coach interview along two categories: (a) the coach's explicit statements about decision-making for the purposes of coaching for analysis and reflection, and (b) implicit evidence of the coach's assumptions or beliefs. From this analysis, I then wrote case study narratives, describing each coach's apparent beliefs and assumptions, as well as articulated reasoning processes and decision-making.

Summary of Data Analyses Procedures

The three phases of data analysis that I conducted for this study are summarized in figure 3.7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Codes</th>
<th>Constraint Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Moves</strong></td>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompting</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cues</td>
<td>Teacher-Based Constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Components</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concerns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Selection</td>
<td>Expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Introduction</td>
<td>Growth Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Points</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Routines</td>
<td>How Learned to Teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer's Workshop</td>
<td>Influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Writing</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Independent Learning</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coach-Based Constraints</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adult Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>Adult Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5: Interview Coding Tree.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>C: It's T-I-M-E all the time. You know, you're just feeling that, even when you take little snatches of time from people, and some part of that is life-long. Myself, you know that I'm worried that this is going to be in, you know, impinging on the time, that they are halfway listening to me and halfway thinking about what they were doing before I came in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>C: So we're, we're working at it. I, and unfortunately with proficiencies coming up, we're not going to get, take off as I had hoped to. Because we'll have one week and then it's break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>C: I mean, anytime that I have called [district coordinator] about any little problem he has either called or emailed me. And the [superintendent] has been very supportive. They are out in the building, just as quickly. You know, how's it going?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Based Constraints</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>T: Now a question that's now in my mind is that, if I shouldn't be teaching vowels now when should I bring them in? And I'm very confused about that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>C: And I think just not really being sure what word work is. To say okay this is what I do here. Because they really have to be familiar with the books and the children. You can't just pick something out and say, okay, this is what I'm going to do word work on today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach-Based Constraints</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>C: I'm much more aware of where the teachers are. And I guess, I don't know if I'm more observant but I listen more to their agenda than I did before. And I'm much better at finding the positive even if you have to dig for that positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>C: I'm thinking of that spiral and where these teachers are in their own learning. My ultimate goal would be them, to have them be self-reflective and be able to make those teaching decisions and be confident with them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.6: Interview Coding for Constraints.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Analysis Phase</th>
<th>Research Question(s):</th>
<th>Procedures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One                | 1. What is the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and kindergarten and first grade teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons? | • Examining instructional behaviors; narrative analyses of lesson video tapes.  
• Analyzing for teachers' beliefs; NU*DIST coding, and narrative analyses.  
• Analyzing for characteristics of coaching session interactions; content and interaction NU*DIST coding and marginal notes.  
• Case study narratives written. |
| Two                | 1. What is the relationship between literacy coaching sessions and kindergarten and first grade teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors for guided reading lessons? | • Comparison of characteristics of coaching sessions which were or were not associated with differences in instructional behaviors. |
| Three              | 2. What reasoning processes do literacy coaches articulate, as they describe their work with K-1 teachers?  
3. What contextual factors do literacy coaches identify as affecting their coaching decisions and actions? | • Coach interviews coded and analyzed for content, constraints and coaches' reasoning or decision-making processes.  
• Narrative analyses of coach interviews for decision-making of coaching for analysis and reflection, plus apparent assumptions and beliefs.  
• Case study narratives written. |

Figure 3.7: Summary of Data Analysis Procedures.
Establishing Credibility

Establishing the credibility of qualitative analysis requires confidence in the processes used for gathering and analyzing data as well as for the expertise and trustworthiness of the researcher herself (Patton, 1990). In this section I describe the techniques and methods I used in order to ensure that the study's findings are based on accurate data and that the interpretive processes used have integrity and validity. I also discuss my relevant qualifications and experience.

Credibility of Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data analysis must be "analytically rigorous, mentally replicable, and explicitly systematic" (Patton, 1990, p. 462). I have worked to establish the dependability and confirmability of this study's interpretive logic and findings through the provision of an audit trail, a detailed and explicit description of steps taken in order to analyze and interpret data. This audit trail is presented both in this chapter, as the steps for data analysis are described, and in chapter four as findings are presented.
I have also worked to ensure that my coding processes were accurate and repeatable, through both carefully built and refined definitions for codes as well as check-coding across the data analysis process. The process of check-coding, for example, caused me to abandon several subcategories for the coaching session transcript coding as they turned out to be substantially unreliable. Both the building up of the codes themselves and the actual coding of specific transcripts were accomplished over multiple, line-by-line readings and refinement processes. Through the new insights of each round of analysis, I added new codes and reorganized and redefined the existing set of codes. I then recoded all previously coded transcripts, in light of the new coding hierarchies. In support of this process, I kept a reflective journal containing speculative questions, possible relationships, or crucial factors emerging in the data throughout data collection and analysis.

I did not rely on either the codes nor the rubric scale, themselves, as the analysis. Rather, these processes helped me to engage in rigorous and systematic thinking around the emerging data. I found several important points in my data analysis when
it seemed essential to move outside of the coding process. The most salient example was my examination of the specific characteristics of the interactions which occurred between each coach and classroom teacher during coaching sessions. My analysis of any changes occurring between each pair of guided reading lessons within each cycle and coach/classroom teacher dyad was an important part of the analysis for this study. Although individual bias is impossible to avoid altogether, I did make efforts to do so. I was careful, for example, to code and analyze in random order rather than working within one specific case and/or cycle at a time.

I also conducted explicit searches for alternative explanations for the relationship between coaching sessions and teachers' instructional behaviors. These alternative explanations, in fact, became an important component of the findings for this study and are discussed in chapter four. Although the presence of alternative explanations could be viewed as a negative finding, it is consistent with the interpretive theory upon which this study
is built. These alternative explanations represent the complex reality of lived experience for these coaches and teachers, and contribute to the study's face validity.

The credibility of this study is also enhanced by the three cycles of observations and interviews I conducted with each coach/classroom teacher dyad. The fact that I returned to each site multiple times, and based the findings of the study on both interviews and observations of teaching and coaching, allowed for data source triangulation. Indeed, there were multiple occasions on which the emerging themes or relationships were significantly altered or extended in light of subsequent visits, or by including both observation and interviewing. Further, the time period of the study's data collection allowed me to continue observing until salient themes had emerged and were repeating rather than extending into new areas.

**Researcher Credibility**

I have had 29 years of primary grade teaching experience, and 20 years of teacher education experience. I have taught a wide variety of approaches to small group reading instruction, to
both primary grade children and teachers. I have taught the
techniques and theory of guided reading instruction to primary
grade teachers for more than a decade, within workshop sessions,
demonstrations and coaching contexts. My extensive primary
grade classroom teaching experience, combined with staff
development and teacher education experience, has made me well
qualified to conduct this study.

Time Lines

The observation and interview cycles for each of the four
coach/classroom teacher dyads are listed in figure 3.8. Figure 3.9
shows the time line for this study, including design, data
collection, data analysis and report of findings.

<table>
<thead>
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<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
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<td>Cycle 3</td>
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<td>Cycle 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
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<td>Cycle 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
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<td>Cycle 3</td>
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Figure 3.8: Data Collection Time Line.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct-01</th>
<th>Nov-01</th>
<th>Dec-01</th>
<th>Jan-02</th>
<th>Feb-02</th>
<th>Mar-02</th>
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<td>Report writing</td>
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Figure 3.9: Study Time Line.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this study, my purpose was to examine and report on the relationship between coaching sessions and teachers' beliefs and instructional behaviors during guided reading lessons as well as to document and describe the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of four literacy coaches. In this chapter, I report on these findings in four sections:

1. A set of four case studies, describing the expressed beliefs, concerns and goals of teachers and coaches within each case.

2. A description of the changes in instructional behaviors occurring between the first and second guided reading
lessons across individual cycles for each case as well as across the four cases.

3. A description of the characteristics and interaction patterns within those coaching sessions that were associated with changes in instructional behaviors.

4. A description of the theory of practice of these four literacy coaches.

Case Studies

My purpose in presenting the following case studies is to provide the context in which the subsequent discussion of findings can be set. The cases, then, are presented in a somewhat abbreviated manner. Further details from each case will be presented within the following sections. In order to make it less likely that any individuals can be readily identified from this data, I have used pseudonyms and made other changes in identifying information. I have, however, attempted to ensure that no such changes were made where they would substantially
alter the weight or interpretation of findings. The coach and teacher interviews are the primary data sources for the case studies, as presented below.

**Carol and Daniel**

Daniel has been teaching kindergarten for over 25 years, and stated that he learned how to teach “in the trenches.” This school year was Daniel’s first experience teaching small group reading lessons on a regular basis. A number of themes permeated Daniel’s talk about reading instruction, including (a) a concern that students may not be ready for particular aspects of reading instruction, and (b) empowering students to be able to carry out reading work independently. Daniel stated that he has become much more comfortable with guided reading lessons this year, and emphasized the importance of a trial and error and collegial approach to his progress: “But I feel more comfortable doing it and I think there’s no prescribed right or wrong that you have to do. Some things work better than others. And that, unfortunately, sometimes you find that out the hard way.” For guided reading lessons, Daniel stated that he needed to improve
his ability to choose books appropriately for each group and to identify those concepts or vocabulary that would be likely to present a particular challenge to his students.

Carol, Daniel’s literacy coach, identified her overall coaching goal with Daniel as helping him to become more focused on his learners and what he wants to accomplish with each lesson. Carol also identified a need for Daniel’s book introductions to be more supportive, with more attention to difficult language and concepts. She sometimes found the choice between her own concerns and Daniel’s areas of focus to be a challenging tension and stated that it is also very important to listen carefully to Daniel and focus on his agenda as well. Carol expressed a concern that Daniel appeared to expect her to have all the answers. Instead, she wanted Daniel to become more self-reflective and empowered through his own thinking.

When asked what support would be helpful to her in her coaching role, Carol stated that she would like more opportunities to observe coaching and zero in on what the teacher says and how the coach responds. Carol saw herself as having become more specific in her coaching with a stronger focus on the lesson and
what needed to be changed or shifted. She set a goal for herself of finding that “ah-ha” in a lesson; “the pearl, the focus for me to help that teacher move forward.” Carol also stated that she would like to be able to pull away from routines during coaching sessions, and “feel more comfortable with just conversing.” Carol’s espoused (Argyris & Schön, 1985) theory of coaching, then, might be characterized by such terms as: empowerment, listening, and conversational.

Daniel was confident about his own teaching, in general, but also felt that the isolated position and lack of time to collaborate with peers is “a sad thing about teaching.” When asked about his experiences with coaching, Daniel expressed appreciation for Carol’s ability to help teachers “reflect over what you’ve done, and in a non-threatening way.” Daniel also valued the more informal nature of much of their interactions around teaching and being able to observe Carol herself teach. Overall, Daniel felt that it was very helpful to have a second pair of eyes and to collaborate with a coach.
Kristie and Melinda

Melinda has had eight years of teaching experience, and this study was her second year of kindergarten teaching. Melinda had not had experience teaching guided reading lessons until the year of this study. She stated “I can’t believe I get paid for this” and felt that she had learned a lot about teaching through on the job training. Melinda listed “understanding kids and working with kids” as her overall strength as a teacher. For Melinda, talking about teaching decisions was still a difficult task. Melinda felt that she is doing a good job in her teaching but doesn’t have the knowledge yet to answer questions or present rationales about instructional decisions.

For Melinda, learning how to pick out and introduce books for each guided reading lesson have been important areas of learning. Overall, Melinda has been surprised at how much preparation it takes to teach the very easy appearing little books of guided reading. She stated that she struggles with knowing how much information to give to students during each book introduction and how much to leave for them to figure out:
“...because I’m thinking, okay, they should be able to read it. If not, then they’re just mimicking me.” Melinda was frequently puzzled by either how hard or how easy a particular text was for her students to read. She has found the difficulties her students have, such as learning how to point with your finger and match one to one while reading, surprising at times. Melinda emphasized the lack of preschool and/or general life experiences for the children in her school as a factor in their learning.

Kristie, Melinda’s literacy coach, viewed Melinda’s progress as a huge success and commented on how far she has come over the past year or so. Kristie stated that Melinda “wants me to tell her everything she’s doing wrong. Because she wants to fix it.” Kristie also stated that Melinda has been an easy teacher to coach, since she was starting at the very beginning. Kristie’s stated concerns over Melinda’s teaching of guided reading lessons during this study centered around a lack of preplanning, particularly for book introductions.

Kristie saw herself as having a good relationship with most teachers at her school and stated that a big area of learning for her as a coach has been how different personalities need to be
approached during coaching. She has found, for example, that some teachers need her to provide only a couple of tentative suggestions: "Make sure that I say, you know I don’t know if this will work, but why don’t you try it?" She expressed a concern that even though the teachers she coaches know what to do, that it is not always happening: "That's my whole thing. They know it all, do it." She described modeling of effective teaching as of paramount importance for many teachers. Kristie described coaching as learning how to manipulate people and make them think that her suggestions are their own ideas. Kristie described informal conversations (stopping by and asking "How did this go?") as more effective than formal coaching sessions. Kristie’s espoused theory (Argyris & Schön, 1985) of coaching, then, might be characterized by such terms as: telling, modeling, or manipulation.

Melinda stated that Kristie has a great way of getting the best out of her. Melinda expressed gratitude that Kristie asked probing questions that required her to think. Melinda also valued
opportunities to observe Kristie's instructional behaviors and language, as well as the times that Kristie has just walked by and provided one word reminders or quick ideas about teaching.

Rose and Charles

Charles was in his second year of first grade teaching during this study, but had not taught guided reading lessons during the previous school year. One of the surprises Charles faced this year was learning how much harder it is to teach guided reading lessons than basal reading lessons. Charles stated that his guided reading instruction has improved a lot this year, and that one of his best strengths in teaching is his willingness to push students. Another teaching strength mentioned by Charles is his ability to create links across such components of the framework as writer's workshop and guided reading. Charles stated that he has made conscious efforts to comply in areas specifically mentioned by his literacy coach, including emphasizing the meaning of stories as well as memorizing and using the set of teaching prompts. A
particular difficulty that Charles has experienced is getting to know the books well enough so that he can consistently and quickly choose the right text for each group of students.

Charles has expressed concerns about the level of text difficulty that is appropriate for each group of students, and of when specific phonetic elements should be taught. Charles has held to his own beliefs about reading instruction in many areas, and stated: “Because some words you just can’t figure out by looking at the picture. And if they also knew those other strategies I think that they would have a better shot at figuring them out without my help.” Charles stated that he needs to prepare better for guided reading lessons, without changing his teaching plans at the last minute.

Rose, Charles’ literacy coach, stated that the use of the meaning prompts and provision of strong book introductions had consistently been a needed area of improvement for Charles. She stated that she had frequently talked about the importance of a sense of story for guided reading lessons, but that Charles appeared to be strongly focused on phonics instruction instead.
Rose stated that she often did not feel able to find the words or the focus that she felt she needed in order to be clear and of help to teachers.

Rose stated that a goal of her coaching is to help teachers understand that it is "a team effort and an opportunity for us to improve teaching and learning." Rose recalled that her training program had emphasized that coaching needs to focus on the teacher's perceived needs, but has found that teachers seem to want to be told what's wrong. Rose stated that she is trying to learn more about how to decide on a focus area: "What, from everything you saw, is the most effective thing for that teacher to learn or talk about in the coaching?" Rose felt that she consistently struggles with how to articulate the changes in instruction or understandings needed by a teacher. With a change to a three-day coaching cycle, Rose felt that she would be able to be much more explicit about what teaching behavior(s) she wanted the teacher to exhibit: "So I'm thinking that if I knew I was coming back the next day and I wanted to see if a certain behavior, for him to think about exhibiting, I would narrow it to
that behavior.” Rose’s espoused theory (Argyris & Schön, 1985) of coaching, then, might be characterized by such terms as: articulation, telling, evaluating.

Charles stated a preference for informal types of coaching sessions, where he has been able to pick up a variety of useful ideas for teaching. Charles did, however, acknowledge that the formal coaching sessions had convinced him that he needs to pay more attention to the list of prompts and descriptions of supportive book introductions in the readings. A strong concern of Charles’ was that the formal coaching sessions tended to raise his level of anxiety, causing him to feel overwhelmed and to forget the points made during the coaching session. Charles also stated that he and Rose have, at times, agreed to disagree. Charles emphasized, however, that “the more coaching sessions you can get like this, or anything, anything to make you a better teacher, the better off you’ll be.”
Kate and Sherrie

The year of this study was Sherrie’s second year of teaching experience, and her first year teaching first grade. She described one of her strengths as being positive with each child and not making them feel badly about any of their mistakes. Sherrie commented that her overall knowledge of the schematics of the instructional framework improved a great deal in her first year of teaching. Sherrie stated that she had a good feel for doing running records and has been able to change students’ placement in reading groups appropriately. Sherrie has worked on improving her book introductions for guided reading, and has seen payoffs in terms of students’ fluency and ease of reading. She has tried various ways of introducing students to unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts during book introductions, and has worked on developing procedures that feel more comfortable to her. Sherrie expressed concerns that students needed to take an active part while encountering the vocabulary in a new text “rather than being told what it was.” Sherrie also expressed
concerns over being able to identify and make use of good opportunities within each lesson for powerful teaching points.

Kate, Sherrie’s literacy coach, stated that she has seen strong improvements in Sherrie’s book introductions for guided reading lessons which she attributed to Sherrie’s stronger degree of familiarity with the books. Kate has also worked to help Sherrie be able to find useful teaching points for her guided reading lessons, and to use prompts to help students use phonetic cues beyond just a first letter.

Kate commented that she has felt able in her coaching to push the first grade teachers hard because they are so eager to learn:

It’s so complex. We want them to look at so many things all at once. If they get the prompts together then something else falls apart. And if they get something else together, then the prompts slip again. And it’s just that balance. When asked what her coaching goals were, Kate stated that she wanted teachers to understand that she is not evaluating them but is there to support them. She described her own tendency to
want to just tell teachers how it should be done. She struggled to find the right questions to ask to get teachers to become more reflective:

It has to be their idea. And they have to come up with it on their own. I mean I can tell them and tell them, but until they actually have it happen to them and have that ah hah moment it’s not going to work.

Kate also expressed a perceived need to step back, think carefully about where the teachers she worked with “really are,” and to provide more modeling for them. She viewed some teachers as not yet ready for coaching. As she reflected back on her first year of coaching, Kate commented that she is now a better listener and is working to incorporate teachers’ agendas into her coaching.

Kate’s espoused theory (Argyris & Schön, 1985) of coaching, then, might be characterized by such terms as: support, reflectiveness, and ownership.

Sherrie emphasized that coaches should realize that their role is to guide teachers, rather than to think that they are in charge. She stated that having opportunities to observe teaching was the most help to her. She felt that observation provided her
with the opportunity to see where instruction was working or not working, and then to reflect on what the teacher was doing. She valued the coaching sessions for providing approval of what she had come to understand about effective teaching. Sherrie felt that formal coaching sessions were valuable, in part because they required a time commitment: “Because sometimes you get into a rut or a routine and don’t realize that you’re not using all of your resources.” Sherrie also valued informal conversations about teaching, or roundtable discussions, for the reassurance in finding out that others are having the same problems: “release, reflect and reassure.”

Summary of Case Studies

These teachers and coaches are thoughtful and dedicated educators and colleagues, who are working together on the implicit goal of improved student achievement. Each of the teachers who participated in this study were very insightful regarding effective instruction and their own progress. The coaches were dedicated to supporting teachers and improving instruction for all students and articulated a number of self-
reflective comments about their own strengths and weaknesses as coaches. As evidenced both by comments during interviews and actual teaching or coaching, each participant in this study appeared to be relentlessly moving towards improved instruction, step by step. Figure 4.1 summarizes the findings for the four case studies, as presented in this section.

In the next section of this chapter, I move to an analysis of the changes which occurred in the instructional behaviors and beliefs of these kindergarten and first grade teachers, as well as the characteristics of the associated coaching sessions.

**Changes in Beliefs and Instructional Behaviors**

*Identification of Changes in Teaching Behaviors*

In order to establish where changes in instructional behaviors occurred across the guided reading lessons observed for this study, each lesson was viewed through multiple, line-by-line readings and the teacher’s instructional behaviors were summarized across three dimensions. These three dimensions included the degree of student engagement, the establishment of the meaning of the story, and the issues identified within the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Viewpoints of Participants Concerning:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Teacher: Daniel</td>
<td>Felt that students may not be ready to learn. Taught to empower students to become independent.</td>
<td>Valued informal, non-threatening coaching, observation and collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach: Carol</td>
<td>Became more focused on the learners and lesson goals.</td>
<td>Becoming self-reflective. Empowerment, listening, conversational.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Teacher: Melinda</td>
<td>Surprised by the challenges faced by beginning readers. Felt that students were not well prepared for school by life experiences.</td>
<td>Valued probing questions and observation, as well as quick reminders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach: Kristie</td>
<td>Learned to teach from the ground up. Needed to engage in more preplanning for lessons.</td>
<td>Informal conversations are very important. Telling, modeling, or manipulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade Teacher: Charles</td>
<td>Surprised by challenges of reading instruction. Complied with coach's requests.</td>
<td>Preferred informal coaching. Valued all assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach: Rose</td>
<td>Needed to focus on developing a sense of story and using meaning cues.</td>
<td>Emphasized finding a focus area and being explicit about needed changes. Articulation, telling, evaluating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade Teacher: Sherrie</td>
<td>Emphasized teaching to develop active students. Learning the overall instructional framework.</td>
<td>Valued observation, informal conversations and formal coaching sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach: Kate</td>
<td>Assisted with teaching points and strong book introductions.</td>
<td>Struggled to find the right questions for coaching. Support, reflectivity and ownership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Case Study Summary Chart.
associated coaching session. (Appendix D includes a sample lesson analysis for constructing and extending meaning within a book introduction.) Figure 4.2 shows a summary for one cycle where I did not identify changes in instructional behaviors, and figure 4.3 for one in which I did identify changes. Although all teachers in this study attempted to implement changes in their instructional behaviors, they were not always able to do so effectively. Figure 4.4 lists where I did or did not identify differences in instructional behaviors within each cycle, as determined by the summaries and line-by-line analyses. From this summary, case three appears to have resulted in relatively fewer changes in instructional behavior and case four in relatively more changes. There were also five other cycles where changes were identified.

In the second guided reading lesson for case three, cycle three, for example, the students were considerably more engaged and enthusiastic, without explicit statements of frustration during the reading. The teacher accomplished this improvement both through the selection of an appropriate text and her active and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Measured</th>
<th>First Guided Reading Lesson</th>
<th>Second Guided Reading Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher work to engage the children in the designated guided reading task, holding their interest and attention throughout the lesson?</td>
<td>The text was at an appropriate level of difficulty, with no obvious down time for students throughout the lesson. The instruction and activities were well tuned to the cutting edge of learning for these students. Students showed signs of high levels of attention throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>The selected text was too hard for students to read. Beyond prompting during reading, the teacher did not adjust for this difficulty level. The students started reading enthusiastically, but quickly showed signs of frustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher work to help readers construct and extend the meaning of the text?</td>
<td>The teacher presented a good overall statement of the story’s meaning and plot, and provided opportunities for students to apply their own experiences. There were no concepts for which all students needed further explanation or support as they read. The teacher prompted for the use of meaning at difficult words. No extension of meaning occurred after reading.</td>
<td>The teacher did not provide an overall main idea statement, but did attempt to connect concepts in the story to students’ experiences. The teacher prompted to the use of meaning at difficult words, but presented only a perfunctory and very brief after-reading statement about the story. No extension of the meaning of the story occurred after reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher include teaching points in each guided reading lesson?</td>
<td>The teacher made no overall teaching points to the group as a whole, although the teacher did include a word study section.</td>
<td>No teaching points were made to the group as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Sample Narrative Description Showing Lack of Changes in Instructional Behavior.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Measured</th>
<th>First Guided Reading Lesson</th>
<th>Second Guided Reading Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher work to engage the children in the designated guided reading task, holding their interest and attention throughout the lesson?</td>
<td>There was significant down time for students, as they waited for their turn to read. The teacher actively included all students and had all materials at hand. The lesson was preplanned, and the text was readable for all students.</td>
<td>There was significant down time for students, as they waited for their turn to read and as students got ready to begin. The teacher actively included all but one student, and had materials at hand. The text was readable for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher work to help readers construct and extend the meaning of the text?</td>
<td>The book introduction was planned, but did not establish the story’s plot well. The instructional focus was on individual words and vowels, rather than on meaning. The teacher occasionally prompted students to use meaning at difficult words, but only with a reminder to look at the pictures. The teacher did not engage students in summarizing or revisiting of the meaning or plot of the story after reading.</td>
<td>The teacher introduced students to the main points of the story and presented a strong main idea statement of the text as students started reading. The teacher prompted students to use meaning at difficulty with a wider variety of prompting language. The teacher did include an after reading extension and review of the story’s plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the teacher help students develop a sense of story, and prompt to use meaning to figure out difficult words.</td>
<td>The teacher’s instruction on vowel sounds was prominent throughout the lesson. (See above for further details.)</td>
<td>The teacher utilized a greater variety of prompting during reading, including to meaning. (See above for further details.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3: Sample Narrative Description Showing Changes in Instructional Behavior.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Cycle 1 Shifts?</th>
<th>Cycle 2 Shifts?</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Case 1</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructing and Extending Meaning</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Issues</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2</td>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructing and Extending Meaning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Issues</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 3</td>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructing and Extending Meaning</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Issues</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4</td>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructing and Extending Meaning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Issues</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4: Changes in Instructional Behaviors, Determined by Summary Analyses
humorous introduction to the text. The lesson was conducted with a quick pace and active teaching. In another example, the teacher for case one, cycle three was able to improve the construction and extension of meaning by including a brief, summarizing discussion after reading where students were able to extend the story to their own experiences. Contrary to the first lesson in the cycle, the teacher introduced the language and plot of the story specifically and clearly. As they read, the students experienced no common difficulties with concepts or vocabulary within the text.

I extended the summary and narrative analysis of each guided reading lesson by scoring each lesson on a six-point rubric scale across each of the same three dimensions of student engagement, constructing meaning, and coaching issues. The degree to which each of the three dimensions was taught for in each guided reading lesson was judged against (a) whether present in none, some or all of the lesson components; (b) the degree to which specific, local challenges interfered; and (c) the degree to which the teacher was able to smoothly integrate the teaching behaviors. Figures 4.5 to 4.8 graph these rubric scores.
Figure 4.5: Rubric Scores, Case 1.

Figure 4.6: Rubric Scores, Case 2.
Figure 4.7: Rubric Scores, Case 3.

Figure 4.8: Rubric Scores, Case 4.
for each of the four cases. Looking across these 4 graphs, I judged 9 out of the 12 individual cycles as having demonstrated at least one improved area of teaching behavior as defined by the rubric scores. Additionally, three individual cycles were judged to have shown improvement in those instructional behaviors targeted by the associated coaching session, as did case four in all three cycles.

The decision as to whether or not changes had occurred from the first to the second guided reading lesson within each cycle was a clearer one to make than was the assignment of a rating score between 0 and 6. The dimensions utilized for the rubric scoring were complex, situated constructs which varied from one cycle to the next. It did not appear to be appropriate to identify changes across entire cases. The teaching behaviors which were overtly discussed as goals for improvement within the various coaching sessions included the following:


2. Using a wider variety of prompts to assist students’ reading.
3. Introducing students to the language of the new book, in addition to the plot or story line.


5. Getting students to stop pointing with their fingers.

6. Identifying appropriate topics for, and implementing teaching points in each lesson.

7. Less prompting to the use of visual cues in isolation from the meaning of the story.

8. Teaching for students' improved fluency.

9. Prompting students to use initial letter cues at difficulty.

Further, the dimensions of student engagement and constructing meaning placed varying requirements on the teacher's instructional behaviors, depending upon the particular text being read and students' on-the-spot responses to the text.

Looking at both the summary analyses and rubric scoring, it is perhaps tempting to assume that this analysis has now shown where changes in the teacher's instructional behaviors occurred across the three cycles and four cases of this study. At the very least any clear and informative identification of changes in
teaching behaviors is decidedly more complex, however. Each reading lesson observed for this study occurred within a highly variable local context. This context was always defined by much more than the coach’s feedback. Each set of guided reading teaching behaviors occurred within a specific context, including the choice of text, the characteristics of that text, the characteristics of students within that group on that particular occasion, and so forth.

I have termed the result of this complex, sociocultural mix “shift with glitches.” This area of findings is consistent with an interpretive approach and builds an understanding of the practice of coaching through the documentation of concrete details within distinctive local meanings. Each guided reading lesson was a “moment-to-moment enactment of social action in real time” (Erickson, 1986, p. 129). In the next section, I identify examples of shifts with glitches before moving on to a presentation of the characteristics of those coaching sessions associated with changes or lack of changes in instructional behaviors.
Shifts with Glitches

Case One, Cycle Two.

A comparison of the rubric scores for student engagement, support of meaning and the coaching session issues between the first and second guided reading lessons for case one, cycle two could support an overall conclusion that the coaching session resulted in substantially less positive teaching behaviors. Indeed, the same group of students showed a marked difference in their level of engagement between the two lessons. The goal for improved instruction raised by the teacher in the coaching session was to be able to identify opportunities for and include teaching points within lessons. The teacher, however, did not present any teaching points at all to the group as a whole during the second guided reading lesson in this cycle.

In this example, however, some shift does appear to have actually occurred. The teacher had received feedback from the coach that the books selected for this group were too easy. The teacher had reviewed the types of errors these students were making and felt that the next level up would be too difficult at the
current time. With further input from the coach, however, the teacher agreed to select a harder text for the second lesson in this cycle. This book was demonstrably difficult for the students. After the book introduction, they started reading enthusiastically but soon bogged down and began to show overt signs of frustration. The independent reading section of this lesson took approximately 16 minutes, more than twice that of the previous lesson for the same group of students. The teacher was not able to include a teaching point after the reading of the text, as the lesson had taken so much time that their “special” was about to begin.

The teacher, after viewing a portion of this lesson on the video tape for the stimulated-recall interview, commented that she may have confused the students by trying to pull in their own experiences about being sick and taking medicine at the same time as they were looking through the story for the first time. She had found it difficult to create bridges in this discussion between the students’ experiences and the story line. The teacher did talk about a number of important vocabulary terms and concepts within this book introduction, but did not show or refer to any of
these terms in print. Even as it became clear that the reading was
difficult the teacher made no changes in the format of the lesson
as a result of the difficulty level. The teacher, then, attempted to
respond to the coach's suggestion for improvement but on this
occasion, at least, did not do so effectively.

*Case Two, Cycle One.*

In this next example, it appeared that positive shifts in
teaching behaviors had occurred for the dimensions of
establishing meaning and the goals from the coaching session.
There were also, however, interesting complications that occurred
as the teacher worked to take on new understandings into his
教学 practice.

The teacher presented the overall meaning of the story to
the students during the book introduction, but was not able to
clear up their confusions prior to the reading of the text. The
teacher called students' attention to the meaning of the story as
they encountered difficulties in their reading, with prompts to use
a meaning cue 13 out of 23 times. He did so, however, primarily
by pantomiming the feelings that are referred to in the text rather
than through the teaching of independent problem-solving strategies. Each prompting interaction with a student during the independent reading section of the second guided reading lesson ended in a told being given to the student:

T: Now it rhymes with awake. What could you do if you were awakened by a noise and you thought it was a monster? It made me....

OC: The teacher shakes his body, acting out shaking in fear. No response from the student.

T: /Sh!/ . It has to start with an SH. Shake.

S: Shake with fear.

The text was difficult for all students in the group to read, and several students consistently waited for the teacher's assistance rather than attempting to read further.

Each of these two teachers, then, did appear to be attempting to take on shifts in his or her understanding of and ability to carry out effective guided reading instruction but were not always able to do so without substantial new difficulties arising. This shift with glitches was true of every teacher within this study, and underscores the understanding that teaching is a
complex endeavor. Effective teachers must be able to coordinate a complex set of analyses and actions and engage in decision-making processes on a moment by moment basis (Lyons & Pinnell, 1999). Each coach's job, then, is enormously complex as she assists individual teachers who are learning how to focus on student responses, analyze their own teaching behaviors and effectiveness, and develop competence in a variety of components within guided reading lessons. The learning engaged in by coaches and teachers in this study was not a simple matter of transferring new knowledge into teaching routines.

    My examination of both the summary analysis and rubric scores did, however, identify two cases which appear to represent, respectively, the accomplishment and non-accomplishment of shifts in teaching behaviors. In the next section of this chapter, I will now describe each of these.

    Case Three, All Cycles.

    The goals arising out of the case three coaching sessions included (a) preplanning and delivering an accurate book introduction that states the main idea of the text and supports
students’ knowledge of the concepts and language in the text, and (b) providing praise points to readers. For the second guided reading lesson in cycle two, the teacher did provide an overview statement and an opportunity for students to talk about the concepts and language of the new text. Unfortunately, the students’ language did not match that of the text and the teacher did not ensure that students had at least heard the unfamiliar vocabulary used in the text (e.g., “builder” rather than “workerman”) before asking them to read. After having read the last page of the text with the students during the introduction, the teacher stated that she was hoping that would carry over into their reading. The students, however, were not able to utilize this link well. Due to the difficulties the students had while reading the text, the teacher then found it difficult to provide teaching points to students’ successful problem-solving. The teacher, then, was not able to put the coach’s suggestions into practice.

Although the teacher in case three of this study appeared to be learning many useful things about effective teaching, her actual teaching behaviors during guided reading lessons did not shift in substantial ways as described either by the coaching
session goals or along the dimensions of student engagement or constructing meaning. This teacher had, however, begun to recognize important signs of growth in reading skills from individual students. Throughout the study, she appeared to be both confident and accurate when talking about each individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

*Case Four, All Cycles.*

The case four teacher did demonstrate substantial and positive shifts in teaching behaviors across the three cycles of this study, particularly for the establishment of a strong understanding of the story's meaning and the goals identified within the coaching sessions. These goals included: (a) that the teacher would hold the book during the book introduction and introduce important concepts and language to the students, (b) structuring the lesson so that students read independently rather than chorally, (c) prompting students to look at and use an initial letter for word solving, and (d) teaching and prompting so that students would become more independent in their use of problem-solving strategies.
As the teacher taught the second guided reading lesson for cycle one, he was able to smoothly integrate a refined format for the lesson. The teacher was also able to identify a useful opportunity for a teaching point at the end of the lesson, providing quick and effective practice with word making as well as a useful wrap-up of the meaning of the story they had just read. This set of teaching behaviors contrasted positively with the first guided reading lesson in this cycle, where the teacher had moved to choral (rather than independent reading) in an attempt to get in a teaching point:

I still don’t for the life know why yesterday I had them trying to read [together] other than I thought maybe I could get to the teaching point, you know if we were all at the same place. But it worked so much better just to let them go. And you know maybe you missed something here, but you’re going to get it in the long run. And I felt a lot better about that, that aspect of it. And I think the kids were really engaged.
For the second guided reading lesson in cycle two, the teacher carefully introduced the students to most of the important and possibly unfamiliar terms and concepts of the text. He did, however, apparently neglect to recognize that the term television for TV in the text would possibly cause difficulties for at least some students in the group. It appeared as though the teacher was now able to talk articulately about looking through a book and analyzing where any challenging concepts or vocabulary might be. He was still encountering challenges in his efforts to put these understandings into practice on a consistent basis.

The case four teacher was able to prompt explicitly for students' independent problem-solving of difficult words in this lesson as had been discussed and modeled by the coach:

T: [S], when you got stuck today, I like the way you went back and started again to make sure that it made sense and sounded right. Good job. I heard you do this, [S] and you too, [S]. Good job.
This prompting behavior constituted a change from the first lesson in this cycle, where the teacher had prompted to useful sources of information but had not yet been specific about independence:

T: [S], what's he doing here? Think so? What's he doing? What would make sense? What did you guys do at Halloween when we had our party?

S: Dressing up.

T: Could that word say dressing? Check it. Yeah? That's right, good job.

Identification of Changes in Teachers' Beliefs

In my examination of the beliefs and assumptions expressed by the teachers in this study I identified (a) one common theme, (b) individual concerns, and (c) tensions between teachers and coaches. In this section, I will briefly describe these findings as well as the various ways in which conflicts or tensions in teachers' beliefs or assumptions were resolved or where changes in beliefs occurred.
Although in differing forms, all four teachers expressed concern for the degree to which students were learning how to read independently. Several teachers expressed a concern that students needed to be “weaned” from strong book introductions. One teacher connected this concern to the development of comprehension skills and independence in reading and stated that students need to be “a part of it rather than being told what it was.” Another teacher expressed her belief that strong book introductions prevented students from being able to actually read the text rather than just repeating the teacher’s words. In a discussion about prompting during text reading, a third teacher commented that it is important to let students make their own mistakes:

T: It doesn’t do any good for me to tell them. Doing too much for them. I need to have them learn to be independent in their problem-solving. I find myself, I’m sounding the words out. But I’m going through, mouthing through, and then I’ll say, oh good, he got it. And no, he didn’t. I did. And I realize how much you have to step
back and let them solve the problems. But still teach along the way. That's difficult, to know how much support to give.

An area of tension talked about by coaches and teachers was the need to preplan and write down their guided reading lesson plans. Although all four coaches expressed some degree of certainty that book introductions, at least, should be preplanned and written down, three of the teachers in this study made statements arguing against any strict application of this principle. One teacher, for example, stated that the difficulty she had in providing book introductions at appropriate levels of support was due to her lack of familiarity with the books and characteristics of beginning readers rather than the lack of a written plan. Another commented that there is value in doing “whatever’s in the moment” and that on-the-spot changes are inevitable anyway. Other individual beliefs and assumptions expressed by the teachers in this study varied from (a) a concern over the teaching of comprehension or phonics skills in guided reading lessons, to
(b) concerns over readiness levels of students, or (c) to the perceived need to “push” students in order to achieve strong progress.

For the most part, the teachers’ beliefs did not appear to change in substantial ways across the time span of this study, even where their instructional behaviors were changing. I found subtle and tentative evidence, only, of the beginnings of change in teachers’ beliefs. The case one teacher noticed a substantial and positive improvement in one group’s reading performance as the result of a stronger book introduction than she had provided for the first half of the same text on the previous day. She continued to express concerns over supportive book introductions, however, throughout the study. During the cycle one and two interviews, the case two teacher expressed strong concerns over the coach’s recommended emphasis on the meaning of stories. He did, however, attempt to teach as suggested by the coach and by the cycle three interview had noticed that students were beginning to internalize the language of the prompts:
T: I was really worried about getting my kids to [level] I. But ever since I’ve started doing this, I’m pushing, pushing, pushing, and it’s getting better. The more that they work with those questions and they think about what I’ve told them, the better it’s getting...Because I wasn’t giving them enough to think about, enough in their head to come back and say, ‘Okay, I need to look at the picture.’...For them to start thinking it, internalizing it.

As a result of their coaches’ recommendations, then, the teachers were moving to new instructional behaviors and beginning to observe positive results in student responses. The stated beliefs of the teachers in this study, however, did not substantially alter by the end of cycle three. Instead, the teachers appeared to find ways to support themselves in these beliefs and to operate effectively with the coach at the same time. One teacher appealed to other teachers for confirmation of his beliefs about the importance of teaching vowels, and stated that he would try to negotiate a “happy medium” on this issue with his coach. Another teacher continued to include comprehension...
skills in guided reading lessons (i.e., traditional retelling of the events, in order, of the story in response to teacher-posed questions), but did so only when the coach was not observing. The case four teacher continued to express concerns over the degree to which his students appeared to be “ready” for guided reading instruction throughout the study. He continued to work on improving his guided reading instruction, however, by adopting a “just try it and see” approach. The case four teacher also emphasized the ways in which guided reading instruction provided valuable and accurate information on individual students’ strengths and weaknesses.

Although all four teachers expressed a great deal of gratitude to their own coach for her able and expert assistance, they also emphasized their own autonomy and expertise. One teacher stated explicitly that the coach is “not the one in charge.” The same teacher stated: “We’ve come to the conclusion that sometimes we just don’t agree. So...whatever’s best for me I do.” All four teachers expressed satisfaction with their own learning in
the area of guided reading instruction, and amazement at the
degree to which teachers have traditionally been expected to
learn how to teach without in-school assistance.

The next section of this chapter examines the differences in
coaching sessions that were associated with changes or a lack of
changes in teaching behaviors.

The Differing Interaction and Content Patterns

Between Coaching Sessions

The qualitative differences in those coaching sessions which
were associated with cycles or cases showing changes in
instructional behaviors are of interest, both as coaches strive to
fine tune their practice and as teacher educators come to
understand the support and training needed by literacy coaches.
Through marginal notes and line-by-line readings, I examined the
interaction during coaching sessions around (a) coaching for
shifts in behavior, (b) coaching for analysis and reflection, (c) the
coach’s theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1985), and (d) the degree
of co-construction. Early on in my observations and analyses, I
identified substantial differences in the ways coaching sessions
were carried out from one session to another. In order to clarify those differences I identified, coded and quantified the differing interaction types and patterns.

I analyzed and coded each coaching session transcript using a set of interaction nodes (see figure 3.2). I then produced a matrix, through NU*DIST, showing the points of intersection between the four cases and six interaction codes for the 12 coaching session transcripts (see figure 4.9). I computed an average percentage within each category for each case (see figure 4.10). Case three showed the highest average percentages for coach replaying, teacher replaying, and coach questioning, and the lowest average percentage for teacher questioning. Case four had the highest average percentages for teacher telling and total teacher talk, and the lowest for coach replaying (see figure 4.11).

I then, tentatively, hypothesized that high amounts of teacher and coach replaying or coach questioning during a coaching session may not be associated with the occurrence of shifts in teaching behaviors for guided reading lessons. Conversely, a higher ratio of teacher talk to coach talk in general, and the amount of teacher questioning in particular may be
| Case, Cycle | Total Teacher Talk | Replaying | | | Telling | | | Questioning | | |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|             |                   | Coach     | Teacher       | Coach          | Teacher        | Coach          | Teacher        |
| 1, 1        | 37.0              | 21.0      | 22.0          | 16.0           | 13.0           | 7.9            | 3.0            |
| 1, 2        | 41.0              | 9.3       | 9.3           | 36.0           | 16.0           | 5.0            | 8.6            |
| 1, 3        | 35.0              | 8.4       | 17.0          | 27.0           | 18.0           | 1.9            | 0              |
| 2, 1        | 3.4               | 7.1       | 2.8           | 59.0           | 0.6            | 5.2            | 0              |
| 2, 2        | 30.0              | 16.9      | 24.0          | 32.0           | 1.7            | 3.8            | 4.2            |
| 2, 3        | 24.0              | 13.0      | 17.0          | 36.0           | 4.9            | 6.3            | 2.5            |
| 3, 1        | 35.0              | 15.0      | 31.0          | 13.0           | 6.5            | 11.0           | 1.9            |
| 3, 2        | 21.0              | 19.0      | 17.0          | 23.0           | 3.3            | 13.0           | 0              |
| 3, 3        | 42.0              | 15.0      | 39.0          | 24.0           | 5.4            | 6.0            | 0              |
| 4, 1        | 42.0              | 8.1       | 18.0          | 18.0           | 22.0           | 10.0           | 2.9            |
| 4, 2        | 44.0              | 7.1       | 26.0          | 23.0           | 14.0           | 6.5            | 5.9            |
| 4, 3        | 59.0              | 7.4       | 21.0          | 22.0           | 33.0           | 5.2            | 6.1            |

Figure 4.9: NU*DIST Matrix – Percentages of Interaction Codes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Case 1</th>
<th>Case 2</th>
<th>Case 3</th>
<th>Case 4</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Replaying&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>12.03</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Replaying</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>20.34</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Telling</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>42.33</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>27.83</td>
<td>9.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Telling</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>7.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Questioning</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Questioning</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total T Talk</td>
<td>37.67</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>32.67</td>
<td>48.30</td>
<td>32.61</td>
<td>15.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>T = Teacher, C = Coach

Figure 4.10: Average Percentages of Coaching Session Interaction Codes.
Figure 4.11: Average Percentages of Interaction Categories.
associated with shifts in teaching behaviors. The additional questions of interest, then, concerned (a) the quality of teacher or coach replaying occurring in coaching sessions, (b) the relationship between coach questioning and teacher response, and (c) the types of questions asked by teachers and their function within the interaction. In the next two sections, I present my findings for these questions based on analyses through NU*DIST codes, narrative summaries and marginal notes.

Teacher and Coach Replaying During Coaching Sessions

The category of replaying refers to instances in the coaching session transcripts when either the coach or teacher described sections of the observed lesson, either from the viewpoint of the teacher's reasoning or actions, or students' responses. This category might be referred to as evidence; playing back the evidence on which analysis and evaluation of teaching moves can then be made. In general, teachers replayed evidence more often than did their coaches. Teachers' replaying was primarily concerned with either student behavior or teaching moves:
T: But then [S] automatically said, “Oh, it’s a cheetah!” And then [S] said “Oh, it’s a baby cheetah.” And, so I said okay now, how does this cheetah go? Or how does it move? And they said, fast. So I was, I was happy that they came up with that.

Teachers also occasionally restated the text for the purposes of the coaching conversation. Coaches’ replaying included all of the above, plus characterizations or praise for the teacher actions or student responses:

T: You did a really nice job, because our kids aren’t ever, have never been to a go cart race and they didn’t know about the checker flag and all that. But you were able to start about recess and who’s the fastest runner, and who’s the winner. So you set that up by talking about what they know.

Coaches also replayed previous coaching conversations or teaching goals.
There appeared to be important differences, however, in the function that replaying held between case three and case four. Within case four, the replaying typically occurred within an analytic frame:

C: And you said that they were self-monitoring and they were pointing one to one, and you were concerned about [S]. What did you see him doing today?

T: He was really on task and he was self-monitoring with known words and his one to one on, I felt was very good from what I observed. I don’t know if you saw anything different, you know, as you were sitting there. But, but I felt they were all... I feel good about where they were level wise.

Even where she apparently saw a need for further accuracy or depth of evidence in order to appropriately address a teaching challenge, the case four coach would typically support a more extended replaying of relevant evidence before moving to any conclusion:
T: I’m happy with what they’re doing when they’re stuck. They’re really, aside from telling each other sometimes. But

C: And they’re using meaning and structure too.

T: Right.

C: Now, what do you see them doing at difficulty or even after error?

Within case three, the teacher’s replaying typically occurred in response to a question posed by the coach. The coach’s questions served the purpose of requesting the teacher’s agreement with the coach that a particular aspect of her teaching needed improvement. The teacher’s replaying, then, did not appear to serve an analytic or reflective purpose.

*Teacher Questions During Coaching Sessions*

The percentage of interactions coded as teacher-posed questions ranged from 0% to 8.6%. Almost all of the questions asked by teachers during coaching sessions were “how to”
questions, primarily concerned with book introductions, teaching points, word work or running records. Some of these questions were on a very concrete level:

T: How does that work with compound words and explaining that to them? To start the second, can you say that? Just find that main chunk and then start the next sound. Is that how you...? 

Other questions asked by teachers were opportunities for them to check understanding:

T: So it sounds like the teaching point thing is something like, find something positive and then something that they could all benefit from or work on?

Teacher questions were not a regular occurrence within the case three coaching sessions. When a teacher question did occur, it was typically responded to by telling from the coach:

T: So where do you draw your line from the introduction to the, and giving them enough support so they, they can do a nice job.... Where does that line up?
C: Well, that’s, that’s part, because you know your kids. You’ve done a nice job selecting the book, so that’s where you’re going to look at your running records and you’re going to look at the text. And you’re going to try to set up an introduction that’s going to give enough support to this level that they’re going to able to read it with problem-solving work to do.

When a question was posed by the teacher of case four, it was followed by either (a) coach questioning, (b) teacher telling or (c) teacher and coach replaying:

T: I think they were kind of going at the same pace. And maybe it was coincidental or maybe it was that they were almost hearing each other?

C: Do you think that’s what caused them to sound just a little bit choppy?

T: Maybe a little bit.... But I think that they’re, I suppose young enough in their reading expertise that they still are real careful about reading each word. And so I thought maybe if they took their finger away that that would help.
Using the NU*DIST print outs with interaction coding stripes, I prepared a set of diagrams depicting the occurrence of teacher or coach replaying, telling and questioning across the time frame of each of the individual coaching sessions (see Figures 4.12 and 4.13). These diagrams are intended to visually demonstrate the differences in the interaction patterns between the two cases, as described above. The case four diagrams, for example, show more frequent, varied and complex interaction by the teacher across the top line of the diagram; the teacher was not only replaying evidence and participating more often, but telling and asking questions as well. The case three diagram, on the other hand, shows mostly teacher replaying across the top line, with telling and questioning by the coach on the bottom line. The coaching sessions associated more clearly with shifts in instructional behaviors, then, appeared to be characterized by active teacher engagement and complex interaction.
Figure 4.12: Coach and Teacher Interaction Patterns during Case Three Coaching Sessions.
Figure 4.13: Coach and Teacher Interaction Patterns during Case Four Coaching Sessions.
Searching for Negative Examples

In order to test my emerging hypotheses, I conducted an explicit search for disconfirming evidence, or instances where (a) the coaching sessions matched the characteristics of case four but were not associated with shifts in teacher behaviors or (b) the teaching behaviors showed shifts where the coaching sessions did not match the characteristics of case four.

Case One.

The coaching session interactions of case one do match those of case four, particularly for a higher percentage of teacher questioning and teacher telling, plus coach telling. In the coaching session for cycle two, for example, the coach and teacher are both engaged in examining evidence and asking questions about effective instruction.

C: So that they could hear that fluent reading. But you already picked up on the, pulling their finger out. Because, and I think that will help them when they are at difficulty, to get that fluency going.
T: So it sounds like the teaching point thing is something like, find something positive and then something that they could all benefit from or work on?
C: Um hum. And it can be individual as you are listening. You know, those little things that you’re
saying to those kids, those are individual teaching points.

T: But repeating them for the whole group is going to benefit the child, that individual child again, but it’s going to also be

C: Yeah. Um hum.

T: Getting them to think.

The question as to whether changes in instructional behaviors have occurred within case one is more complex than for case four. I have already described the “shifts with glitches” that occurred in cycle two. By cycle three, a strong shift had occurred in the provision of teaching points during the after reading section of the lesson. This point had been raised by both the coach and teacher at each coaching session throughout this cycle. Further, the teaching for both of the guided reading lessons in cycle three was very strong both for student engagement and the establishment of the meaning of a story, at a top rubric score of six. For example, in both lessons the teacher presented a strong overall main idea statement and gave students opportunities to utilize their background knowledge to read and understand the current text. The teacher also introduced all of the concepts and vocabulary which might have proven to be difficult for students, and engaged the students in a summarizing and extending
discourse of the story after reading. Case one, then, does appear to support the study’s characterization of coaching sessions that are associated with shifts in teaching behaviors.

**Case Two**

The coaching session interaction patterns of case two, on the other hand, do not appear to be a good match to those of case four. Case two consisted of a substantially lower average percentage of total teacher talk and teacher questioning, as well as a larger average percentage of coach telling (see figure 4.10).

Yet, shifts in teaching behaviors did occur within this case, particularly for those goals established by the coach in the three coaching sessions. As the teacher discussed his teaching and learning during the three interviews, he articulated both strongly held beliefs about teaching and learning as well as changes he had made in his teaching as a direct result of the coaching sessions:

If we weren’t doing the coaching session I probably would have pushed them a little bit more than what I’m doing.
Personally. But I’m trying to go back to meaning. I’ve been, we’ve been taught that you need to go by meaning first. So that’s what I’m really concentrating on.

The case two teacher, then, may have changed his teaching behaviors based on compliance rather than on change in his beliefs.

He also stated that he had noticed changes in the ways that his students read, in response to his own changing instructional behaviors. Whereas some portion of his shifts in teaching behaviors may have occurred in compliance with the coach’s requests, he may also be in the process of analyzing his way into stronger teaching for guided reading lessons over the next months and years. Case two may, then, serve to disconfirm my hypotheses regarding the characteristics of coaching sessions associated with shifts in instructional behavior. It is also, however, an example of the complexities and challenges associated with any attempt to make an absolute prescription for specific coaching behaviors.
Day (1999) cautions against any prescriptive description of effective teaching that is based purely on behavioral competencies or technical skills: "Can we really understand teachers' work without understanding their understandings of it?" (p. 55). It is important, then, to extend this study's set of findings to the larger landscape of coaching. In the next section I describe the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of the literacy coaches who participated in this study.

Describing the Theory of Practice of Literacy Coaches

In this section, I will first discuss the problem (discrepancy between the actual and desired state of affairs) of the coaches' theory of practice (Robinson, 1999), and then describe the constraints that appear to have ruled out or made problematic possible solutions. These findings are based on my analyses of the coaches' actual coaching practices and their statements concerning their coaching practices, made during interviews.
Defining the Problem

Explaining a practice requires researchers to analyze the problem for which it acts as the solution. Defining the problem that underlies the work of the coaches in this study was a complex task. An implicit goal of the work of these coaches was the improvement of guided reading instruction and thus student achievement. Within this foundation, the Literacy Collaborative instructional framework appeared to act as proxy for improved instruction. One coach stated “if teachers don’t teach the framework then I haven’t done my job.”

When asked what their goals were, however, the coaches responded that they wanted teachers to be more comfortable with the process of coaching and to know that their purpose was not to evaluate them. The coaches in this study appeared to place the maintenance of a positive collegial relationship with teachers as an overall goal of their work. Several coaches also stated that their goal was to help teachers to be more self-reflective. When discussing the rewards they had felt from their coaching roles,
several coaches mentioned the magic moment when a teacher appeared to begin to understand important aspects of teaching and learning:

And she asked me a question I thought was so significant. Do you get the same rewards from coaching that you did in teaching? Is there a reward there?...There is beginning to be now...when you see that they are shifting or coming to you and asking questions because they want to understand something better...Oh, I got their antennas out. They know what questions to ask now.

When asked why they had applied for the job of literacy coordinator, none of the coaches in this study stated that they wanted to learn how to coach adults. The most common response was that the coach wanted to participate in the training program because it offered a strong, cutting edge and in-depth level of knowledge regarding literacy instruction:

The knowledge base that I would gain. From the training.

Ultimately, that was the bottom line. It wasn’t working with
the teachers as much as building my own knowledge and working with children.

The coaches also commonly stated that they had felt ready for a further challenge in their professional lives.

*Describing the Constraints*

An overriding goal of the coaching work in this study (as described by coaches) was to establish a reflective, team building context and to maintain collegial relationships with teachers. Constraints are those factors that serve to rule out or to make problematic (Nickles, 1988) possible solutions to either the coaches' implicit goal of improved instruction or their explicit goal for maintenance of collegiality and building of reflective teams. The constraints identified within this study, in fact, all appeared to relate strongly to this second, explicit goal. The coaches made numerous comments about the growth in understanding they had developed in many areas since becoming a literacy coach. One of the most common was that they needed to vary their approach for individual teachers. The coaches
talked about needing to watch the language they used with teachers, to be sure to include praise, and to offer suggestions with a degree of tentativeness.

The coaches consistently described teachers’ varying levels of expertise as a limiting factor. Teacher expertise was viewed by the coaches as a constraint within which they needed to work. The three most common themes in coaches’ references to teacher expertise were (a) the teacher’s degree of familiarity with the texts used for guided reading lessons, (b) the challenges associated with the achievement of deep levels of understanding, and (c) the type of support that various teachers appeared to be in need of. Coaches commented, for example, that developing a deep level of understanding for book introductions or word work was hard for teachers. Each coach referenced a degree of “resistance” from teachers at their school site. Several coaches made an explicit connection between the need for modeling in reference to teachers’ stress level or degree of resistance to coaching:

There are quite a few that are still at modeling, that’s what they need. And just to talk about, okay what have I done?

What did you see me do? And that has really made a
difference. In the last three weeks I went into two rooms.
One in the morning for an hour and one in the afternoon
for an hour. Just to do modeling and talk with them. And it
made such a difference. They aren’t near as resistant as
they were.

The coaches recognized that the learning they were asking
teachers to take on is complex and demanding, and requires time
and energy:

I think for a young teacher, he’s right about where they are.
You know, they’re trying to sort that out. And trying things.
You know, he had his blends and digraph chart. Let’s take it
just a little bit further. Have them go back to their seat and
find those words like chip and chimney. And generate some
of their own. Or in a group together. So we’re getting there.

It’s just, it’s one step at a time.

Each of the coaches also expressed some surprise at the
similarities they perceived between teaching children and
teaching adults.

Here’s another ah hah. How much what I do with adults is
what I did as a teacher with students. Assessing who they
are, where they are, what their strengths, what their needs are. Figuring them out as individuals so that I know better how to come at them. How the communication will work the best. And getting excited, just like I did with my own students when I was a teacher. Getting excited when they achieve something.

Although this study concerned itself directly with the formal coaching sessions occurring after the coach observed a guided reading lesson, the teaching, coaching and interview comments were also clearly influenced by a wide variety of informal coaching contexts as well. The coaches worked hard to establish the frameworks and understandings for formal coaching sessions; preconference, lesson observation, coaching session, a written record of established goals, and follow up. They worked to establish this formal coaching, however, in opposition to constraints pushing in the direction of less threatening, informal coaching opportunities:

Still, on some people’s part, is the feeling of evaluation. I don’t think there’s anything real direct that I can do about
that other than just being, keeping it on as conversational and friendly a level and supportive and finding the good things.

When asked about their perceptions of the most helpful or preferred types of coaching, the teachers in this study listed observations, round table discussions, sounding boards, lunchtime conversations or conversations while completing routine teaching tasks. The teachers were explicit about why they valued these opportunities: to keep them from getting in a rut, as a second pair of eyes, getting ideas, being confirmed, hearing effective instructional language or observing different possibilities for instructional behaviors. When specifically asked about the value of formal coaching sessions, however, teachers also listed positive outcomes. One teacher, for example, stated that the scheduled, formal coaching sessions ensured that the conversation would be more intensive and result in higher levels of reflection and goal setting. Another commented that the formal sessions enabled them to carefully refer back to the notes and texts from a particular lesson.
Time was also an all important constraint on the work of these coaches. The coaches felt that the amount of available time affected their efforts to get teachers to write down book introductions ahead of time, for example. Time constraints also directly affected their coaching work, as they attempted to find ways to schedule formal coaching sessions without having teachers feel that their planning time was being sacrificed. Several coaches also expressed concern over their own time frames for coaching. As they identified a need to provide extended coaching over longer periods with individual teachers, in order to help them put together a complete instructional framework, the coaches then had to make difficult choices. Similarly, each of the coaches agreed in principle that it was important for them to continue teaching children for at least 90 minutes each day but were finding it difficult to do so.

The problem underlying their theory of practice, as articulated by the coaches, was establishing a reflective, collegial context in which feedback and suggestions could be offered to teachers in support of the improvement of instructional practices. In working to do so, these coaches worked within constraints
centered around tensions between teacher expertise and resistance, and formal and informal contexts for coaching. The reasoning processes that the coaches engaged in were evident, as they found ways to approach their coaching work within these constraints.

*Describing Coaches' Reasoning and Decision-Making*

*Theories-in-Use.*

Where practice is defined as those actions informed by their beliefs (Robinson & Walker, 1999) about how to go about improving literacy instruction or maintaining reflective and collegial relationships with teachers, the coaches in this study appeared to be functioning within a complex and challenging period of growth. One coach cautioned that coaches have to “be really ready to be flexible, to be challenged, and to problem solve.” The coaches' conversational moves within coaching sessions provided insights into what each coach's current individual theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1985) might have been.
One coach, for example, made such statements as “that was probably a good decision” across each coaching session. These statements could indicate that the coach believed that her job was to evaluate and tell teachers where they are going right or wrong in their teaching decisions. Another coach explicitly modeled the analytic thinking that would support improved teaching: “Well, I’m trying to think how to make an activity like that mirror what the process is when you’re actually reading.” This kind of coaching behavior may imply that coaching is about changing a teacher’s ways of thinking about instruction, as well as a degree of faith that the teacher is capable of doing so himself.

In some cases, the primary emphasis during a coaching session was on coach telling. This preponderance of coach telling, however, appeared to be an indicator for a variety of theories-in-use. A preplanned agenda appeared to be evident in the moves made by one coach: I’ll tell you about the sequence for early literacy behaviors, so that I can then logically explain why teaching vowels is not appropriate for this group of students. In another case, the coach provided “how-to” suggestions and specific examples throughout coaching sessions. The coach, then,
may have based her coaching on a belief that teachers need to be able to hear more than broad statements like “provide a more supportive book introduction.”

Espoused Theories and Assumptions.

The coaches in this study appeared to be operating from a stage theory of teacher development. Each coach commented that some teachers did not appear to be “ready for coaching” and that the coach would need to step back to modeling or even provide materials:

But those that I do coach, I’m finding that I need to maybe step back. I think they have more knowledge base than they do. So I have to take a step back and maybe go back to making sure all the materials are right there for them and available quickly.

Coaches stated that they felt a need to evaluate “where teachers are at” and several coaches characterized teacher development as “coming and going” rather than steady upward progress. Although the coaches each stated that it was important to work from the “teacher’s agenda” rather than their own, they also
articulated a tension between this belief and their own assessment of teachers’ instructional needs. Strategies described by the coaches included (a) asking the right questions, (b) clear articulation of teaching moves, (c) choosing a powerful focus for the coaching session, and (d) providing teachers with the specific language of effective instruction.

Each of the coaches perceived a need to “soften” their messages to teachers and described a variety of ways to do so. These strategies appeared to be used by the coaches to resolve the tensions between needing to improve instruction but working from the teacher’s areas of focus, while maintaining collegial relationships. Coaches described a variety of these “softening” strategies:

1. Take one step at a time, and at the teacher’s cue.
2. Talk about the teacher’s goals first.
3. Provide frequent, short coaching interactions over time, combined with modeling.
4. Keep coaching interactions conversational, friendly, positive and supportive.
5. Use language carefully during coaching interactions. Include statements of the coach’s own challenges and failures.

6. Discuss instructional issues in the class sessions, where the feedback will not be one-on-one.

7. Start with praise, and then ease into the points for improvement.

8. Focus on the responses and strengths or weaknesses of individual children.

9. Avoid giving the impression that the teacher was “wrong.”

Many of the coaches expressed amazement over how much they had learned about coaching since the previous school year:

As I look back at the sessions that I coached last year, I had no clue what I was doing. I mean the points that I would pick would just be so stupid. But I think I’m getting better. I’m a better listener to what they’re telling me.

Every coach also talked explicitly about her present goals for improvement. All of the coaches described challenges in identifying pivotal areas of focus, to balance the teacher’s agenda
against their own, and to decide when to bring in additional areas to focus on. The coaches worried that they didn’t have the right language to describe particular teaching moves for teachers, or to raise issues without offending. The coaches also expressed concerns over the forthcoming years in their coaching work: “You know, I think as they grow in their teaching, I’m going to have to grow in my knowledge of this too.”

The problem that these coaches set out to address in their coaching work, then, is a more complex matter than the broad goal of improved literacy instruction. The theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of these literacy coaches is delineated through both explicit and implicit goals, and a large set of constraints that served to restrict their options. When asked what she would tell someone else about the job of coaching, one coach said:

It’s a very complex job. It’s really like three jobs. Because you’re working with children part of the day. And you’re preparing for either a 40-hour class or a 20-hour class. And sometimes you have to be able to shift gears very quickly.
Summary

In this chapter, I have reported the findings of this inquiry into the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of four literacy coaches. I provided a description of the problem definition and constraint set that constituted the theory of practice for these literacy coaches, including the identification of important tensions that appear to affect their work. Detailed descriptions were also provided of (a) teachers’ instructional behaviors and beliefs, and (b) the characteristics of those coaching session interactions that I identified as having been associated with changes in teachers’ instructional behaviors during kindergarten and first grade guided reading lessons. In the next chapter, I summarize these findings and discuss (a) the implications of the findings, (b) areas for further research, and (c) the limitations of this study.
Teacher education and professional development are no longer situated solely within colleges and universities. Rather, the call is for the development of teachers to be a jointly held responsibility:

We have witnessed dramatic transformations in how teachers are prepared, how they are encouraged and supported in their ongoing professional development, the ways in which they are expected to shape their professional practice, and the manner in which they play out their professional roles in schools and other educational settings. (Griffin, 1999, p. 2)
Many of the current reform efforts, for example, coaching, within the field of teacher education appear to hold promise. Precise and reliable data are needed, however, to evaluate their effectiveness. Teacher educators, policy makers and practitioners need useful information about the effects of new practices in teacher education.

Within this study, I examined the practice and statements of four primary grade, school-based literacy coaches working with both new and experienced kindergarten and first grade teachers. I focused on several important aspects of the work of these coaches: (a) the constraints and contexts within which the coaches worked; (b) the goals they worked towards, and the decision-making processes they engaged in to meet those goals; and (c) the relationship between coaching and the instructional practices and beliefs of teachers during guided reading lessons. In this final chapter, I first review the findings of the study and then discuss the implications of these findings as well as areas where further research is needed.
Summary of Findings

I observed and analyzed three cycles of guided reading lessons and coaching sessions with four coach/classroom teacher dyads for this study. Each cycle of data collection included (a) video taping an initial guided reading lesson, (b) audio taping a coaching session, (c) video taping a second guided reading lesson, and (d) audio taping a stimulated-recall interview with each participant.

The instructional behaviors of each guided reading lesson were analyzed, including the degree to which teachers (a) engaged students in the reading lesson, (b) helped the students to construct and extend the meaning of stories, and (c) implemented those teaching behaviors that were overtly discussed as goals for improvement in the associated coaching sessions. I used computer-assisted coding as well as marginal notes to analyze each coaching session transcript for the percentage, types and functions of interaction categories. These interaction categories included replaying, telling or questioning by either the coach or
teacher. Each interview transcript was analyzed and coded for content, constraints and coaches’ or teachers’ statements about their reasoning or decision-making.

My analysis of the data revealed information in four areas: (a) complex shifts in instructional behaviors during guided reading lessons; (b) the relationships between coaching sessions and teaching behaviors; (c) the types of, and changes in, teachers’ instructional beliefs; and (d) documentation and description of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of four primary grade literacy coaches. In this section of the discussion, I briefly review each of these categories of information in order to set the stage for a discussion of their implications.

*Shifts with Glitches*

Each of the four coaches and teachers who participated in this study were dedicated to improved instruction and student achievement. The beliefs or assumptions articulated by teachers included: (a) that learning to teach required both in-the-trenches experience as well as intensive, collegial support; (b) concerns over how to include such early literacy components as
comprehension or phonics skills within guided reading lessons; (c) the importance of modeling and observation in addition to formal coaching sessions; and (d) the overall importance of teaching for students' independent use of literacy skills. The teachers also emphasized their belief that written preplanning is not always essential to effective teaching.

For the most part, the teachers' beliefs did not appear to change in substantial ways across the time span of this study. On the one hand, the teachers' instructional behaviors were changing as a result of their coaching sessions and they had observed positive results in student responses as a result. Teachers' stated beliefs, however, did not change in overt or substantial ways over the course of the study.

The four teachers in this study were working on a complex and important set of improvements in instructional behaviors and decision-making throughout the three cycles of observations: (a) selecting and introducing texts, (b) prompting students to engage in powerful word-solving strategies during the reading of continuous texts, and (c) delivering powerful teaching points during guided reading lessons. These areas of focus, discussed in 175
coaching sessions, resulted in the complex set of instructional improvements that I termed "shifts with glitches." Each of the observed guided reading lessons was situated within a highly local context and defined by much more than the coach's feedback alone. Each time the teacher implemented a new guided reading lesson, he or she did so in response not only to the coach's feedback but also to his or her own concerns and beliefs. Each new lesson also contained specific characteristics of its own: a new text, interacting with varying student responses or different students (see figure 5.1). The teacher was attempting to apply new behaviors within a situation that, inherently, presented different demands. Although the teachers in this study did strive to implement shifts in teaching behaviors, they were often not able to put these shifts into practice without encountering substantial, new difficulties.

In spite of these challenges, shifts in teaching behaviors did occur across the 24 lessons I observed for this study. For the second guided reading lesson in the third cycle of observations, for example, Charles was able to improve his prompting for
Figure 5.1: The Contexts of Guided Reading Lessons.
students’ use of generative word problem-solving strategies and presented an appropriately supportive book introduction. Out of 12 individual cycles in the study, I identified 10 as showing at least one improved area of teaching behavior. Additionally, I identified three individual cycles that appeared to show improvement in those instructional behaviors targeted by the associated coaching sessions, as did case four in all three cycles. In the next section, I will discuss the characteristics of coaching sessions that were associated with these shifts in instructional behavior.

Characteristics of Coaching Sessions Associated with Changes in Teaching Behaviors

Based upon an analysis of the interaction patterns and content of coaching sessions associated with changes in teaching behaviors, I characterized effective coaching sessions as those in which the teacher was actively engaged, contributed significantly to the talk of the coaching session and asked questions. In these sessions, replaying of the teacher’s actions or student responses occurred within an analytic frame. Effective coaching sessions,
for example, included specific statements from both the coach and the teacher that replayed both the teacher’s actions and student responses and resulted in a co-produced analysis and evaluation of teaching moves.

Teacher questioning was more evident in coaching sessions associated with changes in instructional behavior than in those sessions not associated with changes in instructional behavior. Teacher questioning was followed by a wide variety of teacher and coach talk, including replaying by either coach or teacher, coach questioning, or teacher telling. I hypothesized that the interaction patterns of effective coaching sessions were complex in nature and did not rely heavily on coach telling or coach questioning. Although several of the coaches did describe their work as such, the coaching sessions I identified as more effective did not appear to be manipulative in nature nor focused solely on the teacher’s requested areas of need. Effective coaching sessions appeared to be well grounded in replaying of the teacher’s actions and student responses for the purpose of analyzing teaching
effectiveness. I suspect that these coaching sessions supported the teachers’ tentative theory building that, in turn, led to shifts in teaching behaviors.

The coaches’ conversational moves during coaching sessions provided insights into each individual’s current theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1985). These theories-in-use ranged from evaluation, to telling, to the modeling of analytic ways of thinking about instruction. Based upon their statements during interviews, the coaches’ espoused theories of coaching varied from (a) telling, articulation or manipulation to (b) reflectiveness or ownership.

The four literacy coaches who participated in this study perceived a need to improve their coaching expertise, including the ability to identify and choose appropriate areas of focus for individual teachers and to utilize powerful language in their coaching conversations. The coaches valued the formal coaching sessions observed within this study for the opportunities they provided to engage in explicit conversations with individual teachers regarding teaching behavior and students’ responses. The
coaches also, however, emphasized the value of modeling and more informal coaching conversations. As stated by one coach, “I think coaching goes on all day long.”

*The Theory of Practice of Literacy Coaches*

An implicit goal for the work of these coaches was the improvement of guided reading instruction and thus student achievement. The coaches’ explicit goal was maintaining a positive collegial relationship with teachers. The coaches consistently attempted to find ways to enable teachers to be comfortable with the process of coaching and to realize that their purpose was not evaluation. The coaches appeared to be operating from a stage theory of teacher development, and stated that some teachers were not “ready” for coaching. The constraints that bounded the work of these coaches included (a) their own level of knowledge and experience with coaching, (b) teacher resistance and instructional expertise, (c) the complex and challenging nature of guided reading instruction, and (d) time availability and other contextually-based factors. I also identified two important tensions affecting the work of these
coaches, between (a) formal and informal coaching contexts and (b) working from the teacher's or the coach's areas of focus. These tensions were directly related to issues of collegiality and teacher expertise and in the direction of informal rather than formal coaching contexts.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the findings that emerged from data analysis were as follows:

• The four teachers in this study were working on a complex and important set of improvements in instructional behaviors and decision-making, and changes in teaching behaviors did occur across the three sets of guided reading lessons.

• Although teachers expressed satisfaction with the results their changes in instructional behaviors had on student responses during guided reading lessons, they also did not alter their explicit statements regarding their beliefs about teaching.
• Each teacher’s efforts to put his or her new understandings into practice were complicated by the highly local context of a new, subsequent guided reading lesson. Consequently, teachers were often not able to put new instructional behaviors into practice without encountering substantial, new difficulties.

• Teacher talk and teacher questioning were more evident in those coaching sessions associated with changes in instructional behaviors, and occurred within an analytic frame where evidence of teaching effectiveness was replayed and evaluated.

• The implicit goal for the work of these coaches was the improvement of guided reading instruction and student achievement. The coaches’ explicit goal was the maintenance of a positive collegial relationship with teachers.

• The practice of these literacy coaches was bounded by such constraints as (a) coach or teacher expertise, (b) the complex nature of guided reading instruction, and (c) time availability or other contextually-based factors.
Implications

In the long run, educational research should result in improved instructional practice and stronger student achievement. The results of this study hold a number of important implications for coaches and for the teacher educators and policy makers who support them. In this section, I discuss the implications of this study in three areas: (a) the effectiveness of coaching, (b) the training and support needed by coaches, and (c) an evaluation of the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of literacy coaching.

Effective Coaching

In spite of their overall success, the coaches and classroom teachers in this study were not always able to improve guided reading instruction behaviors. The coaches in this study were experienced coaches who had completed an intensive training program. They also had dedicated time available for regular, formal observations and individual coaching sessions with teachers. Yet, three of the individual cycles in this study did not show improvement in instructional behaviors between the first
and second guided reading lessons. This lack of improvement appeared to be due at least in part to the highly local, complex and contextualized nature of guided reading instruction. It also indicated, however, that the teacher had perhaps not yet internalized the coach’s suggestions so that he or she could use them in flexible ways and new circumstances.

The findings of this study, then, imply that the provision of literacy coaches within a school or school system should not be viewed as a guarantee of instructional improvement. I would also speculate, however, that deep and lasting improvements in guided reading instruction for diverse groups of students are not likely to occur on a widespread basis without in-class coaching. It is crucial, though, that the supporters and practitioners of coaching programs clearly conceptualize not only the potential benefits, but the training and support required for effective coaching.

Any effects of coaching must be realized within the complex worlds of teaching expertise, teacher-made decisions and diverse contexts. I believe that the effectiveness of coaching should be measured in both the short and long term. In the short term, coaches should expect the challenges of “shifts with glitches.”
Each coach should possess the experience and expertise needed in order to provide more than broad descriptions of effective teaching for teachers. Learning to teach effectively within a wide variety of circumstances requires teachers to begin improving their instruction where they do not yet control a flexible and complex set of instructional behaviors. Coaches should be able to build conversational interactions with teachers that support (a) each teacher’s current and long term construction of goals; (b) replaying, questioning, and analysis of the evidence of teacher’s actions and student responses; and (c) refinement in teaching behaviors. It appears that this type of coaching session will be most likely to lead to teachers’ abilities to use theory and instructional skills to present effective lessons across a variety of contexts.

The goals of coaching sessions must be to help teachers improve their competence, performance and effectiveness. Competence is defined as the repertoire of knowledge, skills and values held by teachers; performance is their on-the-job behavior; and effectiveness is defined as the teachers’ impact on student achievement (Andrews & Barnes, 1990). These broad goals are
consistent with a view of teachers as professionals who are
developing the expertise to apply new combinations of skills and
knowledge towards probable success. Although it will be difficult
to disaggregate the results of coaching from the many other
factors affecting student achievement, it should also be
understood that improved student achievement is a long term
goal of coaching.

Based upon these findings and implications, then,
mentoring and coaching constitute differing roles and purposes.
Mentoring appropriately serves a broad and important role for
new teacher retention and induction, so that achieving a good
match and strong personal relationship between mentors and
protégés is crucial. Effective coaching requires particular
expertise in (a) curricula, instructional rationales and delivery;
(b) observational and evaluative skills; and (c) coaching expertise
and behaviors. Each coach must be able to work effectively with a
wide variety of both new and experienced teachers. This
definition of coaching highlights the importance of training and
support for coaches.
Coaching's Theory of Practice

Robinson (Robinson, 1998; Robinson & Walker, 1999) argued that neither researchers' nor practitioners' theories should be privileged. Explaining a practice requires researchers to analyze the problem for which the practice acts as solution. In the context of this study, I could not have accurately understood the practice of these literacy coaches without recognizing the importance of their expressed goal for maintaining collegial relationships and their perceived need not to be seen as evaluators. Yet, in order to maintain the coherence of issues of instructional reform and improved student achievement coaches must also provide direct and explicit feedback to teachers. Coaches, then, must evaluate the work of teachers in order to coach effectively. This dilemma constitutes a troubling tension, one which the coaches in this study were diligently, teacher by teacher, attempting to solve. I believe that addressing this set of issues will require a critical and on-going dialogue between teacher educators, trainers of coaches, coaches and classroom teachers.
Training and Support

Establishing and maintaining an effective coaching program will be likely to require more than simply assigning experienced teachers to coaching roles. The four literacy coaches who participated in this study had completed an intensive, university-level, seven-week course across one school year in the implementation of an instructional framework for literacy instruction as well as in-class coaching for K-2 teachers. Each of these coaches had also completed a year of field experience in literacy coaching beyond their training year. The choice of participants for this study, then, provided information regarding literacy coaching under very strong conditions of training and support.

The coaches in this study faced complex and persistent challenges in their coaching work as well as differential success. The coaches expressed concerns over their own current levels of coaching expertise and identified a strong need for further training and support. They consistently articulated a need to see expert coaches in action and to be able to question them
concerning their decision-making over time. The coaches stated that seeing and talking with more expert coaches was an especially crucial need after having had opportunities to try out coaching themselves: “There’s something to be said about getting some experience, doing it yourself, going back and revisiting coaching. Because now you’ve got some prior knowledge.”

Without on-going training and support, I believe that the assignment of experienced teachers to the role of literacy coach will not in and of itself ensure the achievement of instructional reform. Successful, current and extensive classroom teaching experience will certainly provide a strong foundation for the demands of coaching. The findings of this study indicate, however, that coaches need additional knowledge and expertise beyond classroom experience. The coaches in this study did not feel that their classroom teaching expertise was either irrelevant, or sufficient, for their role as literacy coaches. When discussing their current coaching expertise, the coaches articulated the need to describe effective teaching more clearly and to find useful ways to interact with teachers about effective teaching.
The training for literacy coaches should focus on three areas of expertise: (a) a strong level of knowledge about and experience implementing effective literacy instruction, (b) the ability to observe and analyze teaching, and (c) expertise in coaching theory and techniques. Coaches need to have expert models and advice, for example, for identifying appropriate areas of focus as well as learning the language that can best support their coaching conversations with teachers. Coaches also need to have expertise in the characteristics of adult learning, and of effective staff development programs.

Further, this study's findings imply a need for coaches to have opportunities to reflect on and perhaps revise their theories-in-use for coaching. The varying statements made by coaches during the coaching sessions in this study implied theories-in-use that ranged from (a) evaluation and telling, to (b) explicit modeling of the analytic thinking that would support improved teaching. I suspect that the latter type of theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1985) is more likely to be consistent with this study's finding that coaching sessions are more effective when they include greater percentages of teacher talk and questioning.
Where improved instruction and on-going collegial relationships are the goals of coaching, the specific ways that each coach’s theory-in-use plays out in coaching sessions becomes critical to success.

Training and support for coaches should serve the purpose of keeping their theories of practice open to the possibility of error and revision. Argyris (1982) emphasized the need for double-loop, rather than just single-loop learning, through “changes to the values, goals and key assumptions that make up that constraint structure” (Robinson, 1973, p. 42). Single-loop learning is important, but is characterized as relatively straightforward learning based upon the identification of a defective strategy. Double-loop learning, on the other hand, occurs as a result of recognition of the incongruities between espoused theories and theories-in-use (Argyris, 1982).

In the next sections, I evaluate the theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of literacy coaches through problem-based methodology’s three evaluative criteria: accuracy, effectiveness, and coherence (Robinson, 1993).
Evaluating the Theory of Practice

Explanatory accuracy.

A theory is considered to be more adequate than others if it provides a more accurate causal account (Robinson, 1993). The coaches' insistence that it was necessary for them to find ways to coach teachers yet still maintain collegial, team-building relationships was an important factor affecting their work in this study. I would certainly speculate that the sensitivity and tact demonstrated by these coaches was important to their success with individual teachers. There were, however, both intended and unintended consequences of the coaches' overriding concern for the maintenance of collegial relationships that caused me to question its overall accuracy as a causal account.

All of the teachers in this study expressed, at one time or another and to varying degrees, disagreement with their respective coach concerning either (a) student responses or instructional needs, (b) appropriate instructional changes, or (c) the best contexts for coaching. These areas of disagreement included concerns over text difficulty level, where and how to
teach for comprehension or phonics skills, and how hard to “push” students. It appeared as though each of the four teachers in this study was able to define workable solutions to the disagreements, while continuing to improve their instruction. Charles, for example, complied with the coach’s requests for stronger attention to the meaning of stories and put his concern over the teaching of vowels on hold for the time being. Melinda attempted to provide book introductions that were appropriately supportive, as advised by her coach, in spite of her belief that students should be able to read new texts without support. Daniel suspended his concern that some kindergarten students may not be ready to begin monitoring their reading through the use of initial consonants by emphasizing a “try it and see” approach in his current teaching. Sherrie structured her guided reading lessons within the framework taught to her by her coach, but added components for comprehension skills as well.

The shifts in teaching behaviors which occurred in spite of the disagreement between coaches and teachers appear to have resulted initially in single-loop learning. Each teacher also made statements, however, which indicated that they were beginning to
alter their values or assumptions about teaching. Charles, for example, noted that his newly implemented and stronger focus on the meaning of stories resulted in more successful reading for some students. And Melinda commented that when she provided an introduction to the language structures of new texts for her students, they still had significant amounts of problem-solving work to do as they read the new text. With input from their respective coaches, each teacher in the study appeared to be educating himself or herself about effective teaching:

The paradox of learning a really new competence is this: that a student cannot at first understand what he needs to learn, can learn it only by educating himself, and can educate himself only by beginning to do what he does not yet understand. (Schön, 1987, p. 93)

Argyris and Schön (1985) define internal inconsistency as the “special case in which one variable will fall out of its acceptable range if the other is brought into the acceptable range” (p. 109). It is probable that the coaches’ perceived need to demonstrate that they were not evaluating the teachers they worked with interfered at times with the goal of improved
instruction. This difficult and troubling tension is examined in the following sections, as I evaluate the effectiveness and coherence of the coaches' theory of practice (Robinson, 1999).

Effectiveness.

A theory of action is considered to be effective when it produces the intended consequences without violating important constraints (Robinson, 1993). The work of coaches, then, would be effective if it produced shifts in instructional behavior for guided reading lessons without damaging collegial relationships.

The coaches in this study were generally able to accomplish these twin goals in coaching session interactions where the teacher took an active role: making suggestions, analyzing evidence and asking questions. This finding is consistent with understandings regarding the complex nature of teaching itself, and the demands placed on teachers as professionals (rather than simply as technicians). The finding is also consistent with my recommendation that training and support programs for coaches be intensive and on-going, with emphases on (a) conversational interactions that include high amounts of teacher engagement,
(b) observations of and interactions with expert coaches, and (c) explicit discussions of the effectiveness and accuracy of theories-in-use.

Coherence.

The criteria of coherence requires that researchers and practitioners ask whether solutions to the problems of coaching are compatible with best theories (Robinson, 1993): In this case, does the practice constitute a solution that is compatible with theories of instructional reform and improved student achievement?

Although acknowledging that different teachers will respond differently to any particular approach, Richardson and Placier (2001) summarize research on staff development as follows: “The long-term, collaborative, and inquiry-oriented programs with inservice teachers appear to be quite successful in changing beliefs, conceptions, and practices” (p. 921). They note that this inquiry-oriented staff development process requires a long-term conceptual approach to the change process. The practice of coaches, then, could develop and maintain coherence through
training programs emphasizing inquiry and co-construction of understandings, in addition to the mastery of a specific set of understandings regarding effective instruction and coaching behaviors.

Additionally, those teachers who are the receivers of coaching could themselves be included in various important sections of this same training (as teachers are for school-based Literacy Collaborative courses). Where the content of staff development sessions for teachers includes opportunities to both hear about and contribute to discussions of the goals and processes of in-class coaching, coherence will be more likely to occur and teachers more likely to be seen as co-participants rather than as the objects of coaching.

The work of literacy coaches, then, should be grounded in high levels of coaching expertise and implemented through coaching conversations where teachers are encouraged to take an active and analytic role. Simultaneously, on-going, collaborative and inquiry-oriented staff development could both support the work of coaches and improve the contexts in which effective coaching occurs.
Summary of Implications

In summary, the implications of this study are as follows:

1. The assigning of experienced teachers as literacy coaches cannot, in and of itself, be viewed as a guarantee for improvement in guided reading instruction.

2. In order to be effective, coaches need expertise in:
   - How to implement coaching sessions with high amounts of active teacher engagement.
   - How to help teachers improve in competence, performance and effectiveness, within the complex reality of “shifts with glitches.”
   - The language and behaviors of expert coaching, including observational and evaluative skills.
   - Curricula, instructional rationales and delivery, the characteristics of adult learning, and effective staff development programs.
Limitations of the Study

For this study, I observed and analyzed the work of four literacy coaches and four kindergarten and first grade teachers at four school sites. This small sample size allowed for a more in-depth study, but also placed limitations on the generalizability of my findings. Further, the study included no direct measure of effects on student achievement. Other limitations of this study concern: (a) the nature of the tentative and untested analytic tools used to analyze for shifts in instructional behaviors; (b) the degree to which changes made for this report in participants' identifying information affects any interpretation of results; (c) the degree to which the statements of participants during interviews and their teaching or coaching during observations were accurate, complete, and representative; and (d) the description of a theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) of literacy coaching based upon four coach/classroom teacher dyads as the unit of analysis.
One of the important functions of qualitative research is to examine subjects of interest in broad and replicable ways that can identify needs and directions for subsequent quantitative research. The summary and rubric analyses I used for the identification of shifts in instructional behaviors in this study were chosen in exploration of creating ways of examining teaching. Their function within this study was as a set of tools which served to broaden and deepen my thinking and analyses. These tools, then, are not presented as tested instrumentation, nor the findings as evidence of cause and effect relationships. Indeed, further research exploring the validity of these tools as well as the development of additional ways of examining teaching would certainly be appropriate and useful.

There were instances across my writing of this report where issues of the confidentiality and minimum risk to participants conflicted with the presentation and interpretation of the data and findings. I chose, at times, to either disguise or omit some identifying information (e.g., gender and/or age) in spite of possible implications regarding the nature of coaching sessions, shifts made in instructional behaviors, or the teachers' and
coach's beliefs and assumptions. I made these decisions with great care, and attempted to balance the need to both protect participants and to present accurate and trustworthy data and findings.

There are several reasons why the teaching and coaching work observed for this study, as well as statements made during interviews may be distorted. Certainly the very presence of a university researcher, not to mention a video camera or tape recorder, made some participants obviously nervous. It is also likely that the participants did not feel able to be completely open and frank concerning their beliefs, understandings and opinions regarding either the coaching or the specific instructional practices they were working to implement. Also, the four coaches who agreed to participate in this study were self-selected from the group of literacy coordinators in this district. It is likely that this group of literacy coaches were atypical in a variety of ways. The stimulated recall interview procedure may also have had an effect on the ways in which the participants were coaching or teaching.
Finally, a description of the full range of constraints that the work of these literacy coaches satisfied within their existing theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) would need to include data and analysis from the point of view of administrators, district policies or funding decisions. I have not attempted to broaden the reach of this study into those areas, however.

Directions for Further Research

In this study, I observed and analyzed the coaching provided to two kindergarten and two first grade teachers by four well-trained and strongly supported literacy coaches, for guided reading instruction. Each of these literacy coaches had experienced one previous year of coaching, in addition to her training year. It is likely that some or all of the specific goals and constraints identified for these coaches’ theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) were strongly related to these specific characteristics.

It would be useful to conduct studies across a wider variety and larger sample of participants in order to test the findings of this study. Further research could be conducted, for example, on
the work of (a) more or less experienced coaches than those of this study, (b) coaches who have not had extensive support and training, or (c) coaches working with teachers at second grade or higher. Where strong training and support is provided to coaches, as recommended in this report, it would be useful to examine the effects of the training on subsequent coaching and instructional behavior and student achievement. The findings of this study could also be tested through longitudinal studies that examine the nature of the relationship between teachers and coaches over a span of several years, and any resulting changes in instructional beliefs and behaviors.

I have characterized effective coaching session interactions as complex in nature, with strong levels of teacher participation. Further research could confirm, disconfirm or expand this hypothesis by varying the data collection methodology or the instrumentation used to measure teaching outcomes (e.g., through systematic observation or discourse analysis). Further research is needed on the stability and reliability of a variety of ways to measure complex instructional behaviors occurring in
authentic contexts. It would also be informative to collect and correlate data on student achievement within such studies.

This study's description of the goals and constraints that the work of these literacy coaches satisfied within their existing theory of practice (Robinson, 1999) should also be expanded to include data and analysis from the point of view of administrators, district policies or funding decisions. Many of the constraints and tensions in the work of coaches identified by this study intersect with the social and institutional contexts of teaching. Identification of the full set of constraints affecting the work of classroom-based literacy coaches would constitute a more complete explication of the practice of literacy coaches.

Conclusion

Teachers, and the teacher education and professional development programs that support them, matter a great deal. Providing in-class literacy coaching opportunities for teachers may achieve important and worthwhile goals, including instructional improvement, student achievement and strong and effective staff development. This vision requires an in-depth
understanding of those challenges and tensions inherent in the practice of coaching and the characteristics of the training programs that will support effective in-class coaching.

In view of these needs, this study has provided a description of the on-the-ground practice of a group of well trained and supported literacy coaches, as well as of the relationship between coaching and instructional behaviors and teachers’ beliefs for kindergarten and first grade guided reading lessons. This study’s findings can help to develop the deep and rich connections needed between mentoring, coaching, classroom teaching and teachers themselves.

R: In what ways has the coaching been of help to you, or not been of help to you?

T: Well, I can’t think of anything that hasn’t been a help. It always helps to see things through other people’s eyes and Carol is really good at saying, “Okay, what did you want this to accomplish?” Or, “How might you do this differently?” Because, hey, we’re in this together. The goal is to help the kids learn and we’re both on the same team.
Guided reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) is one component of an effective classroom literacy program in the primary grades. For guided reading lessons, the teacher typically works with two to eight students who are at similar levels of reading ability or reading strategy development. Guided reading lessons provide an instructional context within which children learn how to read increasingly more difficult texts. The overall purpose of these lessons is to enable children to learn how to utilize effective reading strategies while reading connected text. The teacher's role during these lessons is to select and introduce an appropriate text, observe children's attempts to read, and explicitly teach for processing strategies both one-on-one and with the entire group.
A typical guided reading lesson consists of the following components:

1. Introducing a new text, including attention to the story line, concepts, tricky language and unfamiliar words.

2. Independent reading of the new text with teacher support as necessary.

3. Revisiting the storyline after reading to discuss the meaning.

4. Teaching for processing strategies.

5. Extending the meaning of the text through writing or other activities (optional component).

6. Working with words using magnetic letters or a small white board (optional component).

During the independent reading section of guided reading lessons, each student reads quietly to himself (or silently, as students become more proficient) while the teacher observes and assists. Each student in the group may read the new text once or multiple times through during this time period.
For each guided reading lesson, the teacher has carefully chosen a new text that is appropriate for a group of students and has preplanned a book introduction. It is essential for teachers to have a large collection of appropriate texts available to them at the school, at appropriate gradients of difficulty for each group. For effective guided reading instruction, each teacher needs to be in close touch with what the students in that group are presently learning about the reading of connected text and how he or she can be of best help. Teachers typically maintain a set of records for each guided reading group, including notes and observations as well as running records. Students do not necessarily stay in the same guided reading group over time, but are moved from group to group as is appropriate for their current reading progress.
APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF THE LITERACY COLLABORATIVE®

The Literacy Collaborative® is a comprehensive school improvement effort, designed to provide “long-term professional development and systemic support for teachers as they take on new instructional approaches and expand their skills” (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 231). The Literacy Collaborative is a successful, multi-year staff development project (Williams, Scharer, & Pinnell, 2001) with the overall goal of improving student literacy achievement in the elementary grades.

All schools participating in Literacy Collaborative training are required to make a five-year commitment to Literacy Collaborative implementation. Literacy Collaborative

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6 The Literacy Collaborative is a service mark of The Ohio State University.
implementation includes a number of interrelated elements: (a) a comprehensive framework for literacy development, (b) school-based professional development through class sessions and individual assistance and coaching for teachers, (c) the development of a school leadership team, (d) Reading Recovery (Clay, 1995) as a safety net for literacy achievement, and (e) a full-time staff developer called a literacy coordinator. Schools can implement either the K-2 and/or the intermediate, 3rd-6th grade version of the Literacy Collaborative. This study, however, was concerned with coaching as it occurred in kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

The K-2 literacy coordinator provides staff development courses and on-site coaching for each school’s K-2 teachers. The literacy coordinator also continues to teach children in classrooms. Through the literacy coordinator, teachers at each school receive training in the use of a literacy framework (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), a conceptual tool to help teachers of young children create, organize, and use a curriculum that supports effective literacy development. The framework emphasizes a variety of research-based instructional approaches, including
shared and guided reading, reading and writing workshop, and independent reading and writing. Once the literacy coordinator has completed the year of training, all K-2 teachers at each school then complete a 40-hour course, presented by the literacy coordinator, with the goal of developing expertise in each of the instructional components of the framework. This framework is a conceptual tool to help teachers of young children create, organize, and use a curriculum that supports effective literacy development.

Each literacy coordinator receives seven weeks of university training over the course of a year. The training for literacy coordinators develops a strong knowledge of the instructional components of the framework that literacy coordinators are required to implement in their own classrooms. During this part of the training, the Literacy Collaborative trainers model coaching expertise for the literacy coordinators as they engage in local guided meetings, videotaping and peer feedback. As the literacy coordinators gain a strong expertise in the instructional components, their training program begins to overtly address the development of coaching expertise. The focus on coaching skills
includes guidelines for coaching sessions (i.e., preconference, lesson observation, coaching session and follow up meeting), how to operate during coaching sessions (e.g., focus the coaching on salient points that are within the teacher's reach), and discussions of important issues related to coaching (e.g., building trust, focusing on the teacher's goals, or not providing evaluative information to the building principal).
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Cycle One Teacher Interview Questions

1. As we talk today, remember that you are certainly free to decline to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. I’m going to show you a short video clip from your lesson. As you watch it, I want you to reflect on how your teaching for guided reading is going and what you have accomplished in this lesson. Then I’d like you to tell me about your thinking and the decisions you made as you taught this lesson.

2. Has your teaching during guided reading lessons changed? If so, in what ways?
3. As you think about teaching guided reading lessons, what do you know now that you didn’t know previously?

4. What else do you want to learn, about teaching guided reading lessons?

5. In what ways has the coaching that you have received from your literacy coordinator been helpful or not helpful to your teaching?

6. Tell me about your own training to be a teacher. How many years have you taught? Where did you receive your teacher training? Where and how do you think that you have learned the most about teaching?

_Cycle One Coach Interview Questions_

1. As we talk today, remember that you are certainly free to decline to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. I’m going to show you a short video clip from [the teacher’s] guided reading lesson. As you watch it, I want you to reflect on how your coaching work with [this teacher] is going and what you have accomplished. Then I’d like you to tell me about your thinking and the decisions you have made.
as you have interacted with [this teacher] about guided reading lessons.

2. Talk about your coaching work with [this teacher]. What changes in [his/her] teaching have you worked to support in your interactions with [him/her]? What has been easy or hard to accomplish, as you have worked with [this teacher]?

3. What are some of the kinds of decisions you have been making or thinking about in your coaching with other teachers this year?

4. Are there factors at your school or in your district that seem to either help or get in the way of your work as a literacy coach?

5. How has your work as a literacy coach changed, since you completed your own literacy coordinator training?

Cycle Two Teacher Interview Questions

1. What I would like to do now is to learn more about your current thinking processes related both to your teaching of guided reading lessons and of coaching. I'm going to show you a short video clip from your lesson. As you watch it, I want you to reflect on how your teaching for guided reading has
been going over the last month or so. Then I’d like you to tell me about your thinking and the decisions you made today as you taught this lesson.

2. From my previous visit, I believe that you have been talking about and reflecting on _______. What is your current thinking on that now and how are you doing with that in your teaching?

3. What do you do well, in your teaching of guided reading lessons?

4. What do you not do as well, when you’re teaching guided reading lessons?

5. What kind of assistance has been of the most help to you in developing your present expertise for guided reading instruction?

6. What would you say that you’ve learned by participating in the more formal coaching sessions, such as when the two of you sit face to face and decide upon a specific focus area together?

7. How about when the coaching is more informal, as in hallway conversations or being able to just observe? What have you learned from this type of assistance?
Cycle Two Coach Interview Questions

1. What I would like to do now is to learn more about your current thinking processes for your work as a coach. First, I'd like you to a portion of your coaching session from yesterday. As you listen, I want you to reflect on and talk about your thinking and the decisions you have made as you have interacted with [the teacher] about guided reading lessons.

2. In the past you and [the teacher] have talked about ______. How is that going for her?

3. What would you like [him/her] to come to understand now about guided reading instruction, and how do you feel that you can be of best help to [the teacher]?

4. In your coaching in general, for any or all of the K-2 teachers on your staff, what are the key goals that you are working towards during this year?

5. What success stories can you tell me? Where has your coaching with teachers felt very successful?

6. What have been your own greatest areas of learning, or ah ha’s as it were, as a literacy coach?
7. How and why did you decide to become a literacy coordinator?

Cycle Three Teacher Interview Questions

1. What I would like to do now is to learn more about your current thinking processes related both to your teaching of guided reading lessons and of coaching. I'm going to show you a short video clip from your lesson. As you watch it, I want you to reflect on how your teaching for guided reading has been going over the last month or so. Then I’d like you to tell me about your thinking and the decisions you made today as you taught this lesson.

2. From my previous visit, I believe that you have been talking about and reflecting on ______. What is your current thinking on that now and how are you doing with that in your teaching?

3. What do you do well, in your teaching of guided reading lessons?

4. What do you not do as well, when you’re teaching guided reading lessons?
5. What kind of assistance has been of the most help to you in developing your present expertise for guided reading instruction?

6. What would you say that you’ve learned by participating in the more formal coaching sessions, such as when the two of you sit face to face and decide upon a specific focus area together?

7. How about when the coaching is more informal, as in hallway conversations or being able to just observe? What have you learned from this type of assistance?

*Cycle Three Coach Interview Questions*

1. What I would like to do now is to learn more about your current thinking processes for your work as a coach. First, I’d like you to listen to a portion of your coaching session from yesterday. As you listen, I want you to reflect on and talk about your thinking and the decisions you have made as you have interacted with [the teacher] today about guided reading lessons.

2. In the past you and [the teacher] have talked about _____. How is that going for her?
3. What would you like [the teacher] to come to understand now about guided reading instruction, and how do you feel that you can be of best help to [the teacher]?

4. In your coaching in general, for any or all of the K-2 teachers on your staff, what are the key goals that you are working towards during this year?

5. As a coach, how do you feel that those goals may have changed since last year?

6. What success stories can you tell me? Where has your coaching with teachers felt very successful?

7. What have been your own greatest areas of learning, or ah ha’s as it were, as a literacy coach?

8. How and why did you decide to become a literacy coordinator?
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF GUIDED READING LESSON NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

MEANING
The teacher helps children construct and extend the meaning of the text. The teacher helps students construct meaning by making connections between the text and their personal, world, and literary knowledge. Teachers also help students develop a range of strategies to extend meaning beyond the text.

Book Introduction
The teacher helps students activate prior knowledge, explains unfamiliar ideas, concepts, and word meanings, shows students how to use illustrations as support, raises questions and engages students' interest.

4:29 duration. The book introduction began with the teacher and students choral reading a vowel chart: “short A apple, long A, eight” for just over one minute. Then, the teacher introduced the broad topic of today's book by asking them what they remember from when they studied gardens and living/nonliving things in science. The subsequent discussion was primarily about naming things that grow in the garden. The teacher did narrow the topic as the discussion went on from gardens, to vegetable gardens, to “things that grow in a garden that you have to pull out of the
ground.” Approximately half-way way through this book introduction, the teacher pulled out a copy of today’s new book and showed students a picture of spinach. The teacher covered up the first part of the sentence on the only page of the book the teacher had yet shown them, asking them to decode the word: “It’s this green leafy stuff and that’s the word... it’s a short I.” After a little less than a minute, the students were able to support each other and chorally identify the word.

After 3:29, the teacher presented a main idea for the story that she had previously prepared and read from a card: “about a boy who tells us that bugs like specific vegetables in the garden...” The teacher then went immediately on to word work: “And there’s one more word that I want to talk about before we read this book.” The teacher wrote the word everyone on a whiteboard, referred to it as a “long word,” and then talked about and underlined parts of the word. The teacher stated that it has "this vowel right in the middle."

The teacher had clearly given thought to this book introduction and preplanned it. Most of the book introduction, however, was focused directly on either vegetable vocabulary terms or the word everyone. Further, this book introduction as a whole had several consequential gaps in it. A number of vegetable names, which the children subsequently had difficulty reading, were not mentioned. And it was not clear, from the children’s reading, that they understood or remembered what was meant by the teacher’s brief comment about "a boy telling us that bugs like specific vegetables."
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