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# A Qualitative Study of Instructional Coaching Based on an Analysis of Interviews from Teachers, Coaches, and Administrators

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING BASED ON  
AN ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS FROM TEACHERS, COACHES, AND  
ADMINISTRATORS

by

Samuel R Purdy

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
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Doctor of Philosophy  
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at

The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

May 2017

## ABSTRACT

### A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS FROM TEACHERS, COACHES, AND ADMINISTRATORS

by

Samuel R Purdy

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2017  
Under the Supervision of Professor Karen Stoiber

The “transfer of training problem” refers to the difficulty professionals have in adopting evidence-based practices after they receive training on those practices. This “transfer of training” problem is especially important to consider for educational professionals in urban settings where students are more likely to not meet grade level academic expectations and where teachers often report feeling underprepared to teach in diverse, dynamic classrooms. Instructional coaching is a type of ongoing, job-embedded professional development that may help teachers overcome the “transfer of training” problem. This study examines exit interview data from teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators who participated in pilot programs of instructional coaching to improve student literacy in four urban schools. Data analysis was completed using a constant comparison approach; 39 salient themes were identified which were then compared to a model of instructional coaching which has been developed based on the existing coaching literature. Considerable support for previous findings concerning instructional coaching was found, based on the qualitative analysis of the interviews, and new factors that contribute to effective coaching were identified. Overall, participants reported positive perceptions of their involvement with instructional coaching, and reported positive outcomes for both students and teachers as a result of the instructional coaching pilot programs. The need for increased teacher

decision-making and collaboration in instructional coaching, the application of instructional coaching in urban settings, and the relationship of instructional coaching to school psychologists are discussed.

## **Dedication**

I am immensely blessed to have received the support of many caring people over the course of my doctoral education. They have guided me professionally, and personally. I hope I can become even a portion of how caring and competent they are. While I have really been supported by a community, there are individuals who deserve my explicit thanks:

The professors who have acted as my doctoral advisers, Dr. Markeda Newell and Dr. Karen Stoiber; the professors with whom I have worked alongside conducting research, Dr. Cindy Walker, Dr. Nancy Rice, and Dr. Ruth Short; and the professors who served on my dissertation committee, Dr. David Klingbeil, Dr. Rajeswari Swaminathan, and Dr. Cheryl Baldwin.

The school psychologists who have acted as formal mentors as part of my training; John Berger, Mark Vincent, Denise Sather, Dr. Patriq DuSaint, Jeri Talbot, Michelle Jetzer, and Mandy Haley.

The teachers, administrators, and coaches who participated in my study; and the graduate students who provided assistance with transcription and data analysis, Amy Kaminski and Isabelle Mousseau.

Above all, this dissertation, and all the work that I have done and will do, is dedicated to my beautiful family; my wife Cherie, my daughter Persephone, and my son Enoch. Their spirits are inspiring, their support unfailing, and their love unconditional.

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## A Qualitative Study of Instructional Coaching Based On an Analysis of Interviews from Teachers, Coaches, and Administrators

Many public school students struggle academically (Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2013), and teachers may be unprepared to meet the unique needs of struggling students especially as the United States student population becomes increasingly more diverse (Teemant, 2014). Ongoing professional development has frequently been identified as a fundamental component for increasing teacher competence, which is then expected to increase student academic outcomes (Teemant, Wink, & Tyra, 2011). Instructional coaching is one model for ongoing professional development (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009) which researchers have indicated produces greater gains in teacher instructional skills than more traditional models of professional development (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011). While instructional coaching has been widely adopted across the nation (see Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Matsumura, Garnier, & Spybrook, 2013), there is still substantial need for further research on coaching in describing how coaching is being implemented and in identifying essential components of effective coaching.

### **The Need for Improvement in an Urban Context**

Researchers have shown that urban schools struggle to attract and retain the necessary number of effective teachers needed (Jacob, 2007). Many teachers experience a “reality shock” as they transition from their academic training to their places of employment. These teachers may discover that training experiences and an idealized image of teaching failed to prepare them to teach in as complex and dynamic of an environment as the classroom (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner, 2015). As a result, many teachers quickly realize they need ongoing professional development to meet these demands. The quality of professional development,

however, varies widely among schools; a prevalence of low-quality professional development may prevent teachers from acquiring the additional skills necessary to be a successful teacher (Matsumura, Garnier, & Resnick, 2010).

A lack of practical experience, knowledge of foundational reading skills and literacy instruction best practices, and the ability or motivation to implement those practices with fidelity may all contribute to the high number of students who are not proficient in reading. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 63% of fourth graders are reading at a “minimal level of proficiency” (i.e., able to read at grade level) (2009), while only 28% of students in poverty are reading at grade level (Vernon-Feagans, et al., 2013).

The amount of students who struggle to comprehend text further suggests the need for improved instruction and intervention targeting literacy skills (Matsumura et al., 2013). This concern is especially relevant for an urban district in which a significant number of students live in poverty and read at a non-proficient level.

### **Instructional Coaching as Professional Development**

Teacher professional development is already common and school districts are spending a large amount of money on professional development (Teemant et al., 2011). Shulman, who many have viewed as a leader in educational policy, noted in 1986 that professional development is largely designed to improve teachers’ understanding the subject matter of what they teach, and methods for educating students on that subject matter (Shulman, 1986, Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011). According to Teemant, there is an international need to identify effective professional development models for improving teacher effectiveness when working with diverse students (Teemant et al., 2011), which suggests there needs to be a change in the type of professional development that school districts have engaged in for decades as described by Shulman (1986).

Until recently one-time workshops, offered to teachers on professional development days, were the traditional type of professional learning in the school setting (Knight, 2009b). However, independent workshops that lack planned follow-up lead to, at best, successful implementation for only 10% of participating educators (Bush, 1984 as cited in Knight, 2009b). Alternative modes of professional learning, such as coaching, are needed to make meaningful change in teacher practice.

Coaching, specifically where experienced educators support classroom teachers in providing quality instruction to students, is an increasingly popular option in educational settings (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Instructional coaching is widely recognized as an effective professional development strategy (Teemant, Leland, & Berghoff, 2014). Instructional coaching is also a non-direct intervention for addressing student outcomes.

The theoretical link between coaching and student outcomes is that coaching would increase the use by teachers of evidence-based practices, and the high quality instruction as a result of adopting those practices would increase student achievement (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011). This link is supported by the finding that students who attend schools or classrooms receiving ongoing instructional coaching in literacy see an improvement in literacy skills as compared to non-coaching schools (see Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011 for one such study as well as a discussion of research that failed to find these effects). However, there exists substantial limitations in the current research on instructional coaching, despite positive findings for the use of extended instructional coaching (see Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Teemant, 2014). As part of an introduction to special issue of *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice* the associate editors framed this need for research in the following way:

Over the past five years we have been starting to gradually increase the quality of research studies and the number of randomised control trials. All of this is starting to provide us with a better understanding of coaching and related interventions, and hence evidence that it has specific benefits for individuals. However, we are still at the start of a long journey, we need to work over the coming decade to start to better understand what coaches do that creates positive effect and secondly where coaching is a more effective intervention than other organisational or personal development methods. (McDowall, 2012, p. 70).

In particular, there is a lack of qualitative studies that can serve as the research base for identifying the critical components of instructional coaching. Rodgers (2014) summarized this problem by writing “a rapid proliferation of literacy coaching has occurred before adequate research could be undertaken to understand the interaction between coach and teacher” (p. 262).

Current research designs concerning instructional coaching as a means for changing student outcomes often fail to examine the specific factors that make the process more or less successful. Additionally, researchers may conflate the impact of specific interventions with the added benefits from implementing that intervention through a consultation process; for example, a reading intervention that is supported by instructional coaching may improve reading scores either from the reading intervention, the coaching support, or the interaction between the two. As such, there is need for a qualitative study of instructional coaching services to specifically identify components of successful coaching.

### **Current Study**

The current qualitative study aims to identify the structures and strategies that make instructional coaching effective. This research examined instructional coaching that has occurred

in two *in vivo* pilot studies of instructional coaching at three public elementary schools. These studies are called the Focus on Reading and Social-Behavioral Foundations (FRF) project (Lander et al., 2015) and the *Book Reading to Improve Growth and High-quality Teaching* program (BRIGHT; Stoiber, Johnson, Copek, & Pierron, 2016; Stoiber, Lopez, Carse, & Koppel, 2017). Whereas the FRF project was linked to a long-term goal to “improve third grade reading outcomes. The BRIGHT project aimed to improve teacher capacity to implement evidence-based literacy instruction during shared book reading. Collection and analysis of interview data has been used to evaluate these programs and also to identify specific factors that support and constrain the coaching process which can be used to inform future consultation or coaching.

The current study drew upon a data set in which interviews were conducted with teachers, coaches, and administrators who were associated with the FRF and BRIGHT projects. The sample of participants in the current study is in contrast to the majority of studies that limit their data collection to only one of these three groups of educational professionals. The current qualitative study has the following research questions:

1. What changes in teachers have teachers, coaches, and administrators observed as a result of coaching?
2. What changes in students have teachers, coaches, and administrators observed as a result of coaching?
3. What factors contributed to successful coaching from the teachers’ and the coaches’ perspectives?
4. What factors were barriers to successful coaching from the teachers’ and the coaches’ perspectives?

5. What changes to the coaching program do participants think should be made in order to make the process of instructional coaching more effective?

After interview data was collected following instructional coaching in three elementary schools a sixth research question was developed: 6) How do the themes concerning instructional coaching found in these interviews support, refute, and inform a model of instructional coaching developed based on the existing coaching literature?

## **Literature Review**

### **School Reform**

Much has been written about the weaknesses of the U.S. public school system (for example, see Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). Urban school districts face especially difficult circumstances that may limit the success of urban schools. These schools are historically underperforming and inadequately funded to meet their overwhelming service need (see Teemant, 2014; Shernoff, Lakind, Frazier, & Jakobsons, 2015); as such, urban schools frequently struggle in adopting and implementing evidence-based practices (Shernoff et al., 2015). Urban districts frequently provide services to large number of students who are low-income, multilingual, and multicultural, are situated in cities with high economic disparity, with high mobility rates and teachers who commute to the schools in which they teach instead of living in those neighborhoods (Teemant, 2014). The need for innovation is compounded by the ever increasing amount of diversity among public school students in the U.S., especially when considering the lack of preparedness among many teachers to meet these diverse needs (Teemant et al., 2011; Teemant, 2014).

Reform in the school setting may be difficult for numerous reasons. Numerous high-profile charity organizations have focused their efforts on improving student performance and

“fixing” public education, though these efforts have been controversial and have not always accomplished their reform goals (see VanSlyke-Briggs, Bloom, & Boudet, 2015; Lipman & Jenkins, 2011). Policy reform initiatives often fail to make a difference in classroom practice, and research examining educational policy reform has “been skeptical about the degree to which policy can reach the classroom” (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012, p. 5).

Schools are frequently subjected to reform efforts; such initiatives may therefore be seen by educators as education fads that will quickly be abandoned for a new and different plan in the future. This attitude may lead to poor staff buy-in, which is the staff’s willingness to support reform efforts in their school (Knotek, 2005). Some best practices have been identified to help overcome these barriers to systemic change: having strong leadership, including teachers in decision making, and providing opportunities for collaborative problem solving (Pyle, Wade-Wooley, & Hutchinson, 2011).

Many school district reform efforts are focused on systematically providing high-quality instruction to students (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010). However, changes to instruction may be especially challenging to enact as student instruction is complex (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015), particularly on a wide scale (Gallucci et al., 2010), and mandates for teachers to change their practice has proved ineffective at making meaningful change across a school setting (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). For example, Gallucci et al. (2010) reported that extended professional learning opportunities were needed to substantially change teaching practices across a school. Coaching is often framed as a method for systemic reform as it “builds collective capacity” for staff to adopt and support new initiatives and practices through extended professional learning (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Coaches, in this context, act as mediators between district reform efforts and classroom practices (Gallucci et al., 2010). Although



systematic change, and not only individual change, is important for improving educational outcomes for students (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015) systems are made of individuals; coaches therefore facilitate systemic reform by focusing on the teacher level.

These extended learning opportunities can be justified as a response to what is known as the “transfer of training” problem. Transfer of training is “when trainees successfully generalize knowledge and skills acquired in one setting (e.g., workshop) to a new context (e.g., classroom)” (Shernoff et al., 2015, p. 7). The concern of poor transfer of training was encapsulated in this summary of the research by Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, and Smith-Jentsch (2012):

Transfer of training has long been a fundamental concern for researchers and practitioners alike... [D]espite the fact that billions of dollars are invested in training every year, even recent reports suggest that trained competencies often do not transfer to the workplace, indicating an enduring “transfer problem.” Transfer of training is the “endgame,” the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired during training are applied to the job (p. 88).

In educational settings, this transfer of training problem is due, in part, to an underestimation of how much intensive, sustained support is required for teachers to develop new instructional skills. (Shernoff et al., 2015).

The transfer to training problem directly impacts teacher, school, and student outcomes. As highlighted by Shernoff et al. (2015), the demands of adopting new innovative and new instructional practices may be especially overwhelming to beginning educators, who often report feeling lost and unsupported. The overwhelming nature of changing instructional practices is compounded for teachers in urban settings where there may be “tremendous stressors associated with teaching in high-poverty communities” (p. 7). Such feelings may contribute to high teacher

turnover, which negatively impacts student achievement. This link between teacher turnover and student outcomes is pronounced among underperforming schools which disproportionately educate minority students. “Nationally, approximately 30 % of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years of entry; in schools serving economically disadvantaged students, turnover rates are closer to 50 %” (Shernoff et al., 2015, p. 6; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For these teachers, as well as other more seasoned educators, more support is needed to overcome systemic and individual barriers associated with reform than merely informing or instructing them of the new practice and policies of the district.

Although many schools and districts have mandatory induction and mentoring programs, early career teachers often report being disappointed by the lack of intensive and sustained support that they need to effectively improve their classroom practice (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Coaching, and specifically instructional coaching, has been conceptualized as a critical component of addressing transfer of training (Salas et al., 2012), as it provides ongoing training that is directly tied to the classroom environment.

Another barrier to the successful transfer of training is the inherent expert-novice relationship found in traditional professional development (Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). “When leaders are positioned as experts and teachers are positioned as novices to be trained by those experts, the inherent inequality of the training relationship interferes with the likelihood that the practices will be implemented” (p. 103). In this dynamic, change is seen as moving something from “bad” to something “good,” and therefore training may be seen as punitive and judgmental. Coaching has been suggested as a mechanism by which these barriers to the transfer of training may be addressed as coaching is not done by administrators, but peers, and a collaborative partnership is encouraged (Knight, 2009a).

## Coaching

### Definition of Coaching

As one researcher described it, “‘coaching’ is, in essence, different things to different people... simply knowing... coaches are in a school does not imply anything about how those individuals spend their time” (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009, p. 155). Another wrote “the term coaching is used in a variety of ways, but in education, most authors describe the role as inherently multifaceted and ambiguous” (Gallucci et al., 2010, p. 920). However, there are some general commonalities among definitions, such as coaching being a job-embedded form of extended professional development (Teemant, 2014).

Coaching differs from the type of training typical in much of the professional development delivered to educators; a workshop model is much more common in which participants receive some sort of one-time training outside of the classroom environment in which teachers work. Educators are then expected to apply and implement the content of this training, traditionally with no ongoing support. Some have called this a “train and hope” approach to professional development (Shernoff et al., 2015).

Coaching in education has been defined as:

a one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate. (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012, p. 17 as cited in Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012)

The above definitions reflect only one aspect of coaching taxonomy: specialist coaching. It is necessary when evaluating and applying research on coaching in education to be able to

distinguish what type of coaching program is being used as any of the following types may be referred to as “coaching.” Three types of coaching are (a) mentoring, where experienced colleagues support others in their field through career transitions; (b) specialist coaching (e.g., instructional coaching, literacy coaching, etc.), where designated coaches focused on interventions to develop educational practices; and (c) collaborative coaching or co-coaching, which is a reciprocal process between peer educators (Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012; Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, 2005). The current review will focus only on specialist, or instructional, coaching in the schools.

**Instructional coaching.** Instructional coaching, as its name implies, is a form of specialist coaching that focuses on improving classroom instruction (Teemant et al., 2014).

“Instructional coaching... provides intensive, differentiated support to teachers so that they are able to implement proven practices” (Knight, 2009a, p. 30). Another author further defined instructional coaching in these terms: “Regardless of the particular model or categorization, instructional coaching is generally understood as a means to build capacity for change and instructional improvement, typically by providing the kinds of learning opportunities necessary to facilitate change” (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2014, p. 183). In other words, “instructional coaches partner with teachers to help them incorporate research-based instructional practices into their teaching” (Knight, 2009a, p. 30).

Knight (2009a) proposed that the theoretical framework underpinning instructional coaching as professional development is the *partnership approach*. Seven partnership principles guide productive instructional coaching practice. These principles are:

- 1) Equality: instructional coaches and teachers are equal partners.
- 2) Choice: teachers should have choice regarding what and how they learn.

- 3) Voice: professional learning should empower and respect the voices of teachers.
- 4) Dialogue: professional learning should enable authentic dialogue.
- 5) Reflection: reflection is an integral part of professional learning.
- 6) Praxis: teachers should apply their learning to their real-life practice as they are learning.
- 7) Reciprocity: instructional coaches should expect to get as much as they give (Knight, 2009a, p. 31-33)

While these principles guide *how* coaches go about their work, they do not explain *what* it is that coaches do as a part of their positions. Killion (2009) identified ten roles that coaches often have to fulfill. It is important to recognize that this list of roles is not a proposal of what activities a coach *should* be engaged, but a reporting of the types of activities coaches *may* be asked to perform. In fact, Killion argues that “by narrowing the range of roles, coaches focus their work more intensely on those roles that have the greatest potential for impact on teaching and student learning” (p. 9). The purpose of identifying these ten roles is to empower coaches in purposefully selecting those responsibilities that will be most impactful in their school environment. After all, “when coaches’ work is so expansive, the potential exists that coaches will take on too many roles and... dilute the impact of their work” (Killion, 2009, p. 9),

These ten roles are:

- 1) Data Coach. A data coach works with individual teachers or teams to analyze data concerning student outcomes and make plans for improvement.
- 2) Resource Provider. Coaches may be a source of resources that teachers need, including supplies, lesson plans, or references.

- 3) Mentor. Coaches may be a mentor to teachers who are new to the field or simply new to their school building. This requires the coach to have knowledge of the stages of teacher development and involves acclimatizing the new teacher to professional norms and practices.
- 4) Curriculum Specialist. Coaches may assist teachers in understanding the adopted curriculum, including appropriate pacing and aligning assessments to the learning outcomes expected with the curriculum.
- 5) Instructional Specialist. Coaches may focus more on the *how* of teaching rather than the *what* (as opposed to when a coach acts as a curriculum specialist). Coaches may aid teachers in adopting evidence-based instructional approaches and matching those approaches to the differentiated needs of her or his students.
- 6) Classroom Supporter. A coach is acting as a classroom supporter when she or he is working alongside a teacher or teachers inside the actual classroom. This requires the coach to have skills in co-planning, co-teaching, observing, and engaging in ongoing feedback and evaluation,
- 7) Learning Facilitator. Coaches may be required to organize, coordinate, or facilitate professional learning for the staff at a school.
- 8) School Leader. As a school leader coaches may advocate for school and district reforms, work to create a productive school climate, and participate in school-based teams and committees.
- 9) Catalyst for Change. Beyond serving as school leaders, coaches act as catalysts for change by making observations about stagnant practices, stating their point of

view, and expressing dissatisfaction with the status quo. These change efforts are towards clearly articulated goals and not simply change for change's sake.

10) Learner. Coaches may attend conferences and workshops in order to continue in their own development, strengthen coaches' skills, and gather new ideas and resources.

With the range of roles that coaches have typically been required to fulfill, coaching activities can vary widely between coaches, between program, and within an individual coach's own practice (Piper & Zuikowski, 2015; Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson, 2008). The role or roles that a coach fills as part of their work may not be fixed over the course of a year. Instead, she or he may have to adapt to the developmental needs of the teachers with whom they work.

Toll (2009; see also Toll, 2007), argues that many of these roles are already being filled by others in the school environment and that a "fresh alternative" approach to instructional coaching is needed. That alternative approach is to have coaches focus on partnering with teachers as co-equals, "who first listen and learn from teachers, then assist them in goal setting and planning for action" (p. 59). Instead of acting more as supervisors or technicians, this partnership mind-set allows coaches to "truly [provide] job-embedded professional development, because [the coach] begin[s] with teachers' needs, interests, and questions, and [then supports] teachers in reflecting, gathering information (i.e., data), and making informed instructional decisions" (Toll, 2009, p. 59).

### **Suggested Components of Effective Coaching**

The following conditions have been proposed as being necessary components of instructional coaching if that coaching is to be co-equal, partnership driven job-embedded

professional development and, ultimately to effectively influence teacher and student outcomes. It should be noted, however, that many of the following suggestions are considered essential based on clinical experiences and not on empirically-derived research.

**Adequate time.** Providing adequate time and ensuring consistency in implementation is important to the integrity of any intervention, coaching included. The amount of time coaches spend with teachers is a critical factor in changing teacher behavior (Piper & Zuikowski, 2015). However, the time barriers that exist in public schools may stand in the way of effective coaching. Teachers and coaches report that

teacher schedules [are] unpredictable, with last minute scheduling conflicts and impromptu staff meetings making it difficult to plan reliably for pre- and post-conferences. Teacher absences, workload, and stress also reduced ECT availability for coaching, which was difficult for coaches to regularly accommodate. (Shernoff et al., 2015, p. 13)

Similarly, a trainer and researcher of school-based coaches wrote

This seems obvious, but the most frequent concern raised by the more than 2,000 instructional coaches we have worked with in the past four years was that they are asked to complete so many noninstructional tasks that they have little time left to work with teachers. (Knight, 2009a, p. 50).

When not provided adequate time for meetings coaching may occur “coaching on the fly” where coaches attempt to conduct their important work during those liminal moments between instruction where classroom teachers may be engaged in discussion, and not during more formal conferences where more in depth conversation on teacher practice may be had (Shernoff et al., 2015). A high coach-to-teacher ratio also results in a time barrier to effective coaching. Perhaps



unsurprisingly, when coaches are required to work with an increasing number of teachers, coaches are able to see each teacher less often (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015). Fewer coach-client visits are correlated with lower ratings of working alliance between coach and teacher (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015) and decreased gains in student performance (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015).

More time does not necessarily mean better outcomes; there may be limited gains after a certain amount of coaching. Findings from some studies suggest that less intensive coaching may be just as effective as high levels of coaching once a certain threshold of support is reached (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015; Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005). Still, many teachers experience coaching may be underexposed to coaching activities, such as goal setting, modeling, and providing formative feedback. Rodgers (2014) present four factors for assessing the quantity of coaching that occurs: 1) “repetition,” or the number of coaching cycles in which the teacher and coach work together; 2) “intensity,” or the amount of energy or focus a coach puts into coaching; 3) “duration,” the amount of time and effort spent on any one coaching event; and 4) “engagement,” or the amount of energy a teacher is willing to put into being coached.

**Evidence-based practices.** “If [instructional coaches] are going to make a difference in the way teachers teach, they need to have scientifically proven practices to share. Hiring coaches but not ensuring that they are using proven practices is a bit like trying to paint a beautiful painting without any art supplies. [Coaches] need to have a repertoire of tools to help them assist teachers in addressing their most pressing concerns” (Knight, 2009a, p. 51). As such, evidence-based practices, which can be defined as research-based or empirically-supported programs, practices, or strategies intended to impact specific outcomes in target areas (Shlonsky & Gibbs, 2004), are necessarily the focused content of effective instructional coaching.

Cook and Odom (2013) further described evidence-based practices as “practices and programs shown by high-quality research to have meaningful effects” (p. 136). This description distinguishes “best practices” from evidence-based practices, as evidence-based practices must meet rigorous empirical standards (Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2002.) The relationship between coaching and evidence-based practices is bi-directional: Coaching can serve as a means for promoting the adoption of high-impact evidence-based practices that might otherwise fail to bridge research-to-practice divide (Cook, Cook, & Landrum, 2013; Forman, Olin, Hoagwood, Crowe, & Saka, 2009); while using evidence-based coaching practices increases the impact of coaching (Knight, 2009a).

A focus on evidence-based practices provides the additional benefit of providing structure and common language. Coaches with a range of evidence-based practices that they can share with the teachers with whom they work are able to more quickly aid teachers in classroom management and adoptive effective strategies for addressing student misbehavior (Shernoff et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, coaching practices have rarely been looked at critically by research (Rodgers, 2014); coaching practices are typically compared to a "no-coaching" control rather than to an experimental condition utilizing alternative coaching procedures (Killion, 2009; McDowall, 2012). However, Knight and Cornett (2008; see also Cornett & Knight, 2008) identified the following seven practices as most approaching the standard of being evidence-based from a review of 250 published instructional coaching articles: teacher enrollment, collaborative planning, modeling the lessons, teacher-directed post-conference, observing the lesson, collaborative data exploration, and providing continued support (Figure 1).

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Teacher Enrollment</b>	The coach initiates a one-on-one interview prior to engaging in professional learning activities. The interview helps build common ground, develop interests and concerns, and establish a rapport between teacher and coach.
<b>Collaborative Planning</b>	Teacher and coach collaboratively develop a practical plan for the implementation of a new teaching practice, and build a rubric to help guide observation of the lesson's delivery.
<b>Modeling the Lessons</b>	The coach delivers the planned lesson in the teacher's classroom, while the teacher observes and records notes on the observation guide
<b>Teacher-Directed Post-Conference</b>	Immediately following the coach's model lesson, the teacher facilitates a collaborative and constructive conversation.
<b>Observing the Lesson</b>	The pair then reverses roles, with the teacher delivering the planned lesson and incorporating elements learned during the previous three steps. During the lesson, the coach records observations on the rubric.
<b>Collaborative Data Exploration</b>	Immediately following the teacher's lesson, teacher and coach discuss the lesson, incorporating data from the coach's observation rubric.
<b>Continued Support</b>	The coach provides continuous support in the development of lessons and pedagogical techniques, until both parties feel recognize mastery of the practice.

*Figure 1.* Effective instructional coaching practices. Figure adapted from Hanover Research (2008, p. 9) based on the work of Knight and Cornett (2008).

**Professional development for the instructional coaches.** Although there is an assumption that instructional coaches are established experts, during the adoption of new curriculum or programming and during other reform efforts school-based coaches are also learning about those new initiatives, structures, frameworks, and practices (Gallucci et al., 2010). “Coaches need to understand the interventions they are sharing, and they need to understand how to productively employ the coaching process. Without their own professional development,

[coaches] run the risk of being ineffective, wasting time and money, or even misinforming teachers...” (Knight, 2009a, p. 50-51).

Coaches therefore need professional development in two areas. Not just the best-practices which they will support teachers in implementing, but also the technical skills of coaching (Mraz et al., 2008). These technical skills related to coaching may include the specific activities of a coaching program, procedure, or plan, but also skills in communication, listening, questioning for understanding, relationship building, establishing rapport and trust, developing confidence in others, celebrating successes, change management, and leading teacher professional development (Gallucci et al., 2010; Creasy & Paterson, 2005; Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

Shernoff et al.’s (2015) investigation of instructional coaching identified an effect of inadequate coach professional development: high coach turnover. They concluded that this finding suggested “the need for a flexible... model in which some coaches received more extensive, field-based support and active learning opportunities to maximize their effectiveness” (p. 17). These researchers pointed out again, however, that such recommendations were in “direct contrast to how coaches are typically conceptualized in the literature—as established experts who by virtue of their experience are equipped to support other educators” (p. 17). These coaches needed assistance with developing their technical skills as well as social support among peers who were also engaging in the work of coaching.

**A range of styles of support.** Teachers perceive coaches who provide technical support as high quality (Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2012). This factor is a reflection of coaching as a mechanism to support the implementation of evidence-based practices. However, teachers reported the benefits of other styles of support as well. When coaches provide instrumental and emotional support it normalized the struggles teachers faced in changing their instructional

practices and improved teacher confidence. As such “technical support was deemed as necessary but insufficient given the school context and classroom challenges” (Shernoff et al., 2015, p. 17).

**Positive Relationship.** The quality of the relationship between the instructional coach and the classroom teacher is another factor that may support instructional coaching. Positive relationships built on mutual respect, shared goals, and positive communication styles are often seen as a critical component to coaching. “[T]eachers see their profession as an integral part of their self-identity... If coaches... are careless with their comments or suggestions about teachers’ practices in the classroom, they run the risk of offending teachers, damaging relationships, or... not be heard” (Knight, 2009a, p. 52).

Relatedly, effective coaches are expected to be collegial and not authoritative with their teachers. “Coaches will find it easier to have open conversations about teaching practices if their collaborating teachers do not view them as bosses and, therefore, do not have to worry about how their comments might affect the way they will be evaluated” (Knight, 2009a, p. 52).

Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015), building off of research from clinical psychology examining the “working alliance” between therapist and client, theorized that the behaviors of bonding (i.e., activities that create a social bond between the coach and client) and goal agreement (i.e., activities that led to the mutual agreement on goals and the tasks to achieve these goals) were the fundamental components that contributes to a successful coaching relationship. After they analyzed the video recordings of 31 coaching partnerships (i.e., coach and client) and questionnaires completed by the participants several important conclusions were reached.

First, coaches and clients rarely agreed in their ratings of the coaching relationship; additionally, participants’ ratings of the coaching relationship did not correspond with the amount of observable working alliance related behavior. This finding implies that participants

are themselves poor judges of the quality of the coaching relationship. Second, goal agreement had a positive relationship to coaching success, but bonding behaviors (i.e., activities designed to create a bond between the coach and teacher) did not. This finding suggests that while the coaching relationship is important, activities specifically designed to improve the social relationship are non-effective when compared to coaching relationships founded on a shared purpose and vision. Third, these agreements about goal attainment was only effective at improving coaching outcomes when initiated by the client. When goals and tasks agreement was initiated by the coach the opposite effect was observed; coach-led goal identification had a significant negative impact on goal attainment during coaching.

Matching coaches and teachers on similar demographic and personality factors (e.g., gender, experience, demeanor, and ethnicity) is a practice that may be assumed to improve the coaching relationship, but it does not seem necessary or helpful. Bozer, Joo, and Santora (2015) found that coach-coachee match based on either gender or perceived similarity between the participants had no significant effect on most measures of successful coaching outcomes, leading the researchers to conclude “it appears to be unnecessary... to be concerned about coach-coachee matching based on similarity” (p. 218).

The discussion of the role relationship quality has on the coaching experience is important as it highlights a fundamental problem with instructional coaching research: the components of effective coaching is more often based on case-study, assumption, and “common sense reasoning” which may overestimate the role of factors that are more likely to be discussed by participants, which may be the case with personal feelings of friendship or matching between coach and client; other components of effective coaching may be completely neglected.

## Coaching Heavy and Coaching Light

These somewhat contradictory findings on relationships are reflected in the “coaching heavy versus coaching light” dyad proposed by Killion (2009). These two types of coaching are the result of coaches’ beliefs and goals concerning coaching and represent categorically different approaches. When coaching light, coaches want “to build and maintain relationships *more* than they want to improve teaching and learning” (p. 22). These coaches may find that they are appreciated, valued, and liked by their colleagues, but little meaningful change occurs. When coaching heavy, coaches engage in high stakes activities that critically look at curriculum, teaching practices, and assessment data. Relationships between coach and coachee are supported through professional respect and credibility earned through by tackling the “undiscussable... relationship between teaching and student learning” (p. 23). While coaches who coach light are seen as supportive by teachers, coaches who coach heavy “say ‘no’ to trivial requests for support” (p. 23) and focus their activities on areas with the greatest potential for increasing student outcomes. Instructional coaching therefore is not merely a support for teachers; a coach's primary responsibility is to improve student learning. This has to be balanced, however, with the importance of shared decision making and collaboration in coaching.

The International Literacy Association (formerly the International Reading Association) mirrors this concept of light and heavy coaching in their foundational document *The Role and Qualifications of the reading coach in the United States* (2004). In that publication a three level descriptive model for typical coaching activities. Level 1 represents informal coaching that heavily emphasizes relationship building, providing materials and resources to colleagues, and assisting with student assessment. Level 2 represents more formal coaching activities that begin to look at areas of need and focus. These activities include co-planning lessons, analyzing

student work, and providing professional development presentations for teachers. Level 3 represents formal and intense coaching activities such as modeling instructional practices, co-teaching lessons, and providing feedback to teachers on their classroom instruction.

The International Literacy Association did not, however, draw the same conclusions as Killion and did not say that Level 2 and Level 3 coaching behaviors (i.e., coaching heavy) are more effective than Level 1 coaching behaviors (i.e., coaching light). Instead, the organization presents all three levels as a simply a description of what coaches typically do in their positions. All three levels are presented as effective for improving school outcomes.

### **Using Coaching to Create Student Change**

Piper and Zuilkowski (2015) justified coaching as a means for changes in student outcomes by theorizing that “high quality teacher professional development leads to changes in pedagogy, which result in improvements in student outcomes” (p. 174). However, they hypothesize that teacher beliefs and attitudes would not change until after teachers were able to see these changes to student outcomes. The instructional coach, therefore, provides the necessary support these teachers would need to adopt new teaching practices prior to teacher buy-in for the instructional change; that buy-in would develop after their efforts were rewarded with success among the students (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015).

This expected relationship between instructional coaching and student outcomes has been described as a “causal cascade.” This cascade describes process through which coaching 1) first builds a relationship between the coach and teacher, 2) second, instructs the teacher on evidence-based best practices and motivates the teacher to implement these, and 3) third, the teacher implements such practices in a manner that improves student outcomes (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011;



see also Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011; see also Shernoff et al., 2015 for a discussion of why this model is especially relevant in urban schools).<sup>1</sup>

### **A Model of Coaching to Create Student Change**

Each of the above conceptualizations of coaching and research findings presents a component, or set of components, that describes the process of coaching and how that facilitates change. Figure 2 presents a model combining these findings and suggestions to describe 1) the goal and barriers that instructional coaching addresses, and 2) the components of instructional coaching.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a discussion on the match between the traditional roles of school psychologists and instructional coaching.

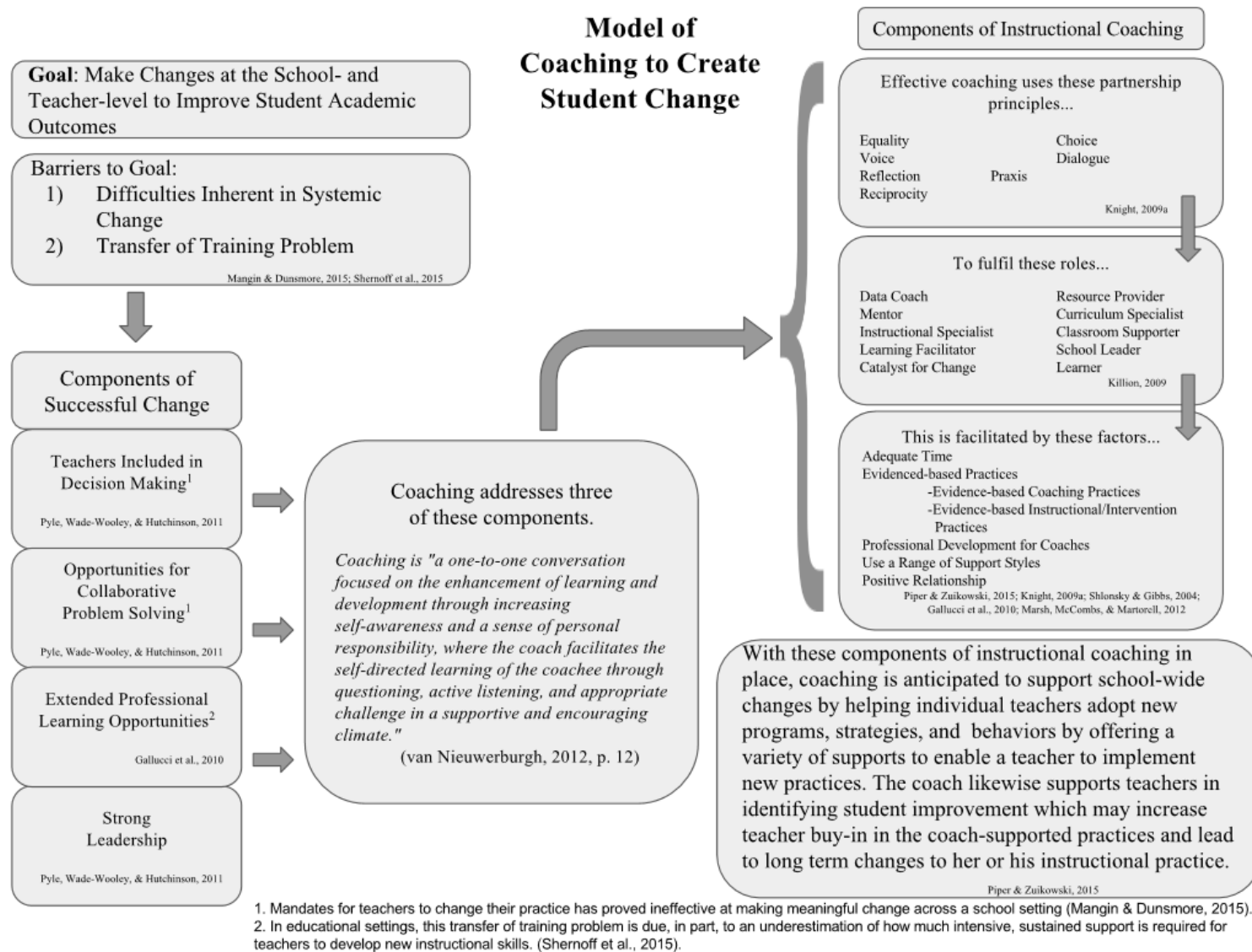


Figure 2. Proposed model of how instructional coaching creates student change, based on a review of the literature.

## **Foundations of the Current Study**

The current study is a qualitative analysis of instructional coaching that occurred during two particular intervention programs called *Focus on Reading Foundations* (FRF) and *Book Reading to Improve Growth and High-quality Teaching* (BRIGHT). The FRF program was developed through a collaboration between a set of urban schools, philanthropic organizations, and the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (UWM); BRIGHT was an extension of a prior project developed by Stoiber & Gettinger (see 2016; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2016) and involved a partnership between UWM and an urban school district. One of the primary goals of these partnerships is to improve urban students' reading achievement and increase the number of students reaching proficiency by 3rd grade. A foundational component of the FRF and BRIGHT programs is instructional coaching; particularly in addressing literacy instruction.

### **Need for Literacy Instruction**

As stated earlier in this paper, an estimated 63% of fourth graders are reading at grade level (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), while only 28% of students in poverty are reading at grade level (Vernon-Feagans, et al., 2013). As of 2014 only 15.4% of the partnering urban schools' third grade students were reading at grade level.

Teacher beliefs and practices may help contribute to these low reading proficiency levels. There is evidence that suggests that early childhood teachers may emphasize other skills (i.e., social skills and play) more so than early literacy skills and expect reading to be an emergent skill from other activities in which the child engaged (Giles & Tunks, 2014; Friesen & Butera, 2012). Teachers may also make instructional decisions based on their own experiences in school over evidence-based practice (Friesen & Butera, 2012). In response to both these sorts of instructional beliefs, the low reading proficiency among many school populations, and the

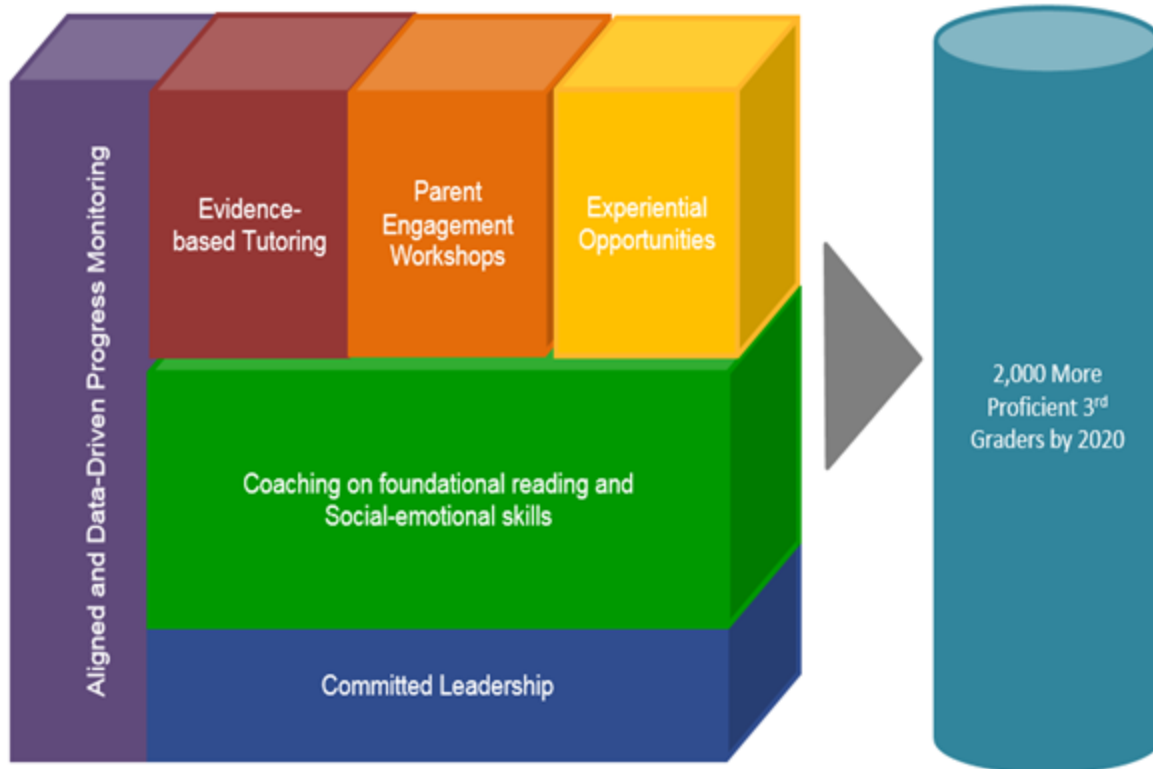
general difficulty in applying evidence-based practices in urban settings literacy instruction was made the primary focus of the instructional coaching occurring in both FRF and BRIGHT.

### **Focus on Reading Foundations Program**

Focus on Reading Foundations (Lander et al., 2015) is a comprehensive literacy intervention. (This program has since been renamed to Transformative Reading Instruction (TRI)). FRF was initially piloted in one urban school from January 2014 to June 2014; it was then implemented in that school plus an additional school during the 2014 - 2015 academic year.

Focus on Reading Foundations is designed to coordinate activities between numerous stakeholders at a school, increase the use of evidence-based practices, and ultimately increase the number of students reading proficiently by the 3rd grade.

There are several key components to the FRF model (Figure 3). First, FRF is aligned with data-driven progress monitoring, which includes regular progress monitoring the reading growth of participating students. Second, FRF requires committed leadership willing to allocate resources and adapt practices based on data, feedback, and changing needs. Third, participating teachers are provided coaching on teaching foundational reading skills. Fourth, FRF classrooms received evidenced-based tutoring provided by volunteers one-to-one to students performing below grade-level expectations in reading. Fifth, FRF schools held parent engagement workshops. Sixth, teachers were provided support in incorporating experiential opportunities for students to reinforce vocabulary and content in the classroom. All of these components are considered necessary to the potential success of FRF, but this paper focuses primarily on the third component: coaching.



*Figure 3.* Focus on Reading Foundations (FRF) Program Model. This model identifies the key components of FRF which are anticipated to increase the number of students reading proficiently by 3rd grade.

Participating teachers were assigned a coach with background as a reading specialist. These coaches followed the FRF coaching framework (Appendix B), which includes two categories and seven domains related to effective coaching. Those categories are Quality Instructional Coaching Practices (coaching practices; data handling, analysis and decision making; knowledge base; soft skills; and continuous improvement), and Management of Instructional Coaching Practices (recruiting, hiring and retention; and deployment). Each domain includes practices and indicators. The coaching framework guides the program and is used to provide expectations and feedback to coaches. In FRF schools, teachers participate in weekly

professional development on reading instruction and monthly professional development on classroom and behavior management in addition to weekly in-classroom coaching sessions.

**Literacy coaching and intervention format.** Coaching sessions involved FRF coaches and teachers working together and took place in teachers' classrooms. The primary goal was the adoption of evidence-based foundation reading instructional practices by these teachers. Coaches used a gradual release design when supporting teachers in the use of these practices. In this design, coaches first model the selected practice for the teacher in the classroom with the teacher's own students. Next, the coach led the teacher through guided practice, providing ongoing direction and assistance as the teacher used the instruction practice. As teachers master the targeted skill, coaches provide less direct advice, but continue to observe, provide feedback, consult, and review data collaboratively with the teacher through the school year. Coaching sessions occurred at a rate of one session per week at the beginning of the school year, with additional coaching sessions scheduled as needed as the academic year progressed.

The specific skills targeted within FRF are foundational code-focused skills related to the alphabetic and phonemic elements of words on which comprehension skills may be built (Goldstein, 2011; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2016). Students received evidence-based instruction targeting these code-focused skills during FRF sessions. These occurred daily, regardless of whether the coach was present. The evaluators of the FRF program described these student sessions as thus:

In [FRF], teachers provide non-proficient students small group instruction focused on foundational reading skills. [FRF] sessions are defined as students working in small groups with teachers getting explicit, targeted instruction on foundational reading skills based on their needs as determined by data. Sessions occur 3-5 times per week, last

approximately 25 minutes, and cover the content listed in the modules above. Instruction is tailored to directly match students' needs. Students work to reach set fluency levels for each foundational skill. Often fluency is understood only in the context of reading passages. In [FRF] however fluency relates to every foundational reading skill [covered in the included content modules: rapid letter naming, rhyming, blending (sound awareness), segmenting (sound awareness), sounds and decoding, multi-syllable decoding, passage fluency, retelling, vocabulary, and word fluency]. Students work to show their mastery of skills by reaching pre-determined levels of fluency in all skill areas such as blending, segmenting, and letter naming. Sessions are structured to maximize time for students' active engagement and repeated practice. [FRF] follows the philosophy that foundational reading skills are best developed by repeated and engaged practice and [FRF] is designed to maximize students' active engagement in repeated practice at their exact skill level. (Lander et al., 2015, p. 6)

## **BRIGHT**

*Book Reading to Improve Growth and High-quality Teaching* is an instructional intervention which uses shared book reading to promote emergent literacy skills in kindergarten students. Shared book reading is already a standard practice in many kindergarten classrooms (Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006); BRIGHT provided ongoing instructional coaching alongside developed book reading guides to improve the efficacy of shared book reading.

BRIGHT is an instructional intervention that has three main program components. First the intervention includes explicit literacy instruction using an array of high-quality children's books and repeated book readings. The instructional intervention occurred over 13 weeks--a different book is read aloud in small groups and repeated each week (that is, 13 different books

are read aloud two times per week). Second, the book reading incorporates a balance of meaning-focused and code-focused interactions. Teacher guides provide prompts through which students are provided with opportunities to engage in meaning-related learning (e.g., vocabulary, narrative understanding, etc.) and also with specific code-focused aspects of the text (e.g., alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge.). Third, staff engage in professional development. Each teacher in the BRIGHT program received four 1-hour instructional workshops as well as explicit book reading demonstrations modeled by coaches. Performance feedback was also provided by these instructional coaches bi-weekly, a coach explicitly demonstrates, guides, and provides feedback to teachers in their use of “shared book reading.” (See Gettinger & Stoiber, 2016 for a comprehensive literature review and results from a comparable shared book reading and coaching study conducted by one principal investigator of the BRIGHT program.)

### **Study Coaches**

Seven instructional coaches participated in the literacy aspect of the FRF and BRIGHT programs. The three literacy instructional coaches that participated in FRF were experienced educators with a background in literacy instruction and intervention. The four instructional coaches that participated in BRIGHT were graduate students in a school psychology program at a participating university.

### **Research Methods**

The following research was conducted at the conclusion of two pilot studies implemented during the 2014-2015 academic school year. These pilot studies were the result of a partnership between the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and an urban school district. Over the course of the 2014-2015 academic school year a select group of teachers (n=16) received the ongoing



support from instructional coaches (n=7) concerning literacy instruction in the manner that was previously described. These teachers were expected to implement specific reading techniques and interventions in their elementary classrooms. The following analysis focuses solely on data collected from exit interviews with coaches, teachers, and administrators.

This study exhibits many of the qualities identified in Nastasi and Schensul's (2005) description of qualitative research in school psychology: capturing an emic perspective within a "real-life" context, using inductive and iterative data analysis techniques, and embracing a prolonged relationship between the participants and the researcher. Such research techniques may help address the "schism between research and practice" by "[documenting] the challenges encountered in implementing interventions designed to change or reform existing practice" and by paying "attention to cultural and contextual factors which not only facilitate or inhibit the effectiveness of intervention, but also influence the social or ecological validity of the interventions" (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005, p. 186).

### **Sample and Setting**

Two schools were selected for the pilot study of FRF and two schools were selected for the pilot study of BRIGHT based on administration buy-in and research relationships that had been previously developed in the buildings. All kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers at the two participating FRF schools were given the opportunity to participate. There were no additional inclusion or exclusion criteria. Twelve teachers participated in the FRF coaching process, 6 at each site. The principals at the two schools in which BRIGHT was implemented were each asked to select two teachers to participate. Four classroom teachers participated across the two school sites in the BRIGHT study (two teachers at each site).

Participants were given the opportunity to consent to be interviewed at the end of their participation. The final sample includes 12 teachers (n=10 FRF, 83.3%; n=2 BRIGHT, 50%), 7 coaches (n=3 FRF, 100%; n=4 BRIGHT, 100%) and 4 administrators (n=4 FRF, 100%; n=0 BRIGHT, 0%). This sample includes individuals in three major roles involved in these instructional coaching programs: teachers, coaches, and administrators. Each of these roles includes important stakeholders in the coaching process, and including each of them will allow for a more complete picture of the coaching process.

Four of the responding teachers participated in a pilot behavioral coaching program in addition to the standard FRF treatment. The behavioral coaches in that program are also the graduate students who completed all of the exit interviews. These four teachers were not asked about their behavior coaches or the behavioral coaching process as the focus of this study is on literacy instructional coaching. Table 1 provides which program each respondent participated in, which graduate student interviewed them, and what their role in the school is.

Table 1.

*Respondent information, including their role, the coaching program they participated in, and the graduate student with whom they interviewed*

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Coaching Program and Site</b>	<b>Interviewer</b>
Respondent 1	Administrator	FRF School 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 2	Administrator	FRF School 1	Interviewer 1
Respondent 3	Administrator	FRF School 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 4	Administrator	FRF School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 5	Teacher	FRF School 2 plus Behavior Coaching provided by Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 6	Teacher	FRF School 2 plus Behavior Coaching provided by Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 7	Teacher	FRF School 2 plus Behavior Coaching provided by Interviewer 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 8	Teacher	FRF School 2 plus Behavior Coaching provided by Interviewer 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 9	Teacher	FRF School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 10	Teacher	FRF School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 11	Teacher	FRF School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 12	Teacher	FRF School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 13	Teacher	FRF School 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 14	Teacher	FRF School 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 15	Coach	FRF School 1 & 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 16	Coach	FRF School 1 & 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 17	Coach	FRF School 1 & 2	Interviewer 1
Respondent 18	Coach	BRIGHT School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 19	Coach	BRIGHT School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 20	Coach	BRIGHT School 2	Interviewer 2
Respondent 21	Coach	BRIGHT School 2	Interviewer 2
Respondent 22	Teacher	BRIGHT School 1	Interviewer 2
Respondent 23	Teacher	BRIGHT School 1	Interviewer 2

## **Consent**

Participants in the pilot studies had previously provided consent to their participation in that portion of the research, including previously planned interviews. As the length, content, and procedures of these exit interviews changed since the initial conceptualization of the pilot studies, interviewees were asked to provide additional signed consent for this proposed study (Appendix C). Consent was obtained immediately prior to conducting the interviews, and included consent to have the interviews audio recorded.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

One of the co-principal investigators of the FRF and BRIGHT pilot studies contacted the principal at each of the participating schools to inform her or him of the proposed extension of the research work that was currently being completed at their school and to get verbal permission for the direct scheduling of the interviews with the teachers. Email correspondence was then used to schedule the interviews with the teachers, coaches, and administrators during the provided professional development and planning time that occurs directly following each school day, or during another time more convenient.

The interviews were conducted by one of two educational psychology graduate students. Interviews were recorded on a password protected digital device (i.e., smartphone). After each day of interviews, those audio files were uploaded to a password protected computer. The audio files were then immediately removed from the digital recording device. The interview recordings were transcribed at the research office provided at UWM. Transcription pseudonyms were used to replace any names or other identifiable information in the audio file. Once transcribed all audio files were deleted.

## **Instrumentation**

A semi-structured interview format was used. Each interviewee was asked the prescribed questions from the appropriate interview protocol, and the interviewer was then allowed to ask follow-up questions for clarity and depth based on the responses. Separate interview protocols were developed for teachers, coaches, and school administration. This protocol was developed based on the original research objective of the pilot study (i.e., “to understand the implementation and impact of professional development (PD) and coaching efforts on teachers’ instruction and students’ reading and social-emotional learning and competencies”) as well as the additional research questions of the dissertation proposal. These interview protocols are attached as Appendices D, E, and F.

## **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the interview data was completed using a constant comparison approach, which is rooted in grounded theory (see Charmaz, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; see also Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2011) and Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2007) for descriptions of alternative qualitative analysis techniques which helped inform the choice of a constant comparison approach). This approach is particularly appropriate for addressing process-oriented questions, such as those concerning the process of instructional coaching, and to answer general questions about the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The constant comparison method is used to create theory by coding the content of included artifacts (e.g., interviews) numerous times; previous coding in the sample then informs later coding. Each round of coding combines information into increasing more meaningful units which allow themes from across the sample to be detected.

Coding of transcripts occurred through an iterative process that had three phases. First, line-by-line coding was completed. In this phase transcriptions were read and each sentence is described in a few key words for its main idea or thought. Second, axial coding was completed. Axial coding involves comparing the line-by-line coding of each interview to the coding of the other interviews; similar descriptions and ideas were combined into themes. Third, themes were evaluated to determine whether they would be included in the final analysis. Themes were automatically selected for the final analysis if they were endorsed by at least 20% of the sample. Themes that were endorsed by fewer than 20% of the respondents were included if they represented a point of view that added further clarity to the themes already present. Themes have not been distinguished based on program (i.e., pertaining to BRIGHT or FRF) for efficiency. However, it is possible given the small number of participants that results may not necessarily apply to both programs.

After coding was completed, themes were compared to the existing conceptualization of instructional coaching, which for the purpose of this study is the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* (Figure 2). As such, this study used an approach that is “primarily constructivist, [but] incorporates elements of post-positivism” (Moy et al., 2014, p. 127) by including comparison to an *a priori* model (Ramalho, Adams, Huggard & Hoare, 2015) and also by the use of a second coder to assess reliability (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). (See Moy et al., 2014 for an example of Educational Psychology research that utilizes similar data analysis; see Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011 for a discussion as to why more qualitative research has not been conducted in school psychology.)

## **Reliability**

To assess the reliability of coding, a second graduate student completed coding on a subset of interviews (n=14, 60.1%); this coding was similar to axial coding in that the researcher combined line-by-line coding into more salient ideas from the interview, but no requirement for the number of interviews in which that idea was present. This coding was then compared to the axial coding completed by the principal investigator. 98% of the ideas from the secondary coder were present in the principal coding, and 91% of the codes identified by the principal investigator were present in the secondary reliability coding. This should be taken to mean that there was a high level of inter-rater reliability in terms of the coding procedures and that a similar analysis of the interview data would result in a comparable analysis.

## **Results**

Thirty-nine themes were identified from the 23 respondent's interview. These themes have been organized in order from the most frequently endorsed themes to the least frequently endorsed themes and labeled correspondingly. The name of each theme along with the number and percentage of total respondents, teachers, administrators, and coaches who endorse each theme has been included in Table 2. A richer description of each theme, including text from respondents who endorsed the theme has been included in Appendix G.

Table 2.

*Endorsement rates of identified themes, by respondent role*

	Total		Teacher		Coach		Administration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Theme 1: Coaches Followed a Model, Observe, Provide Feedback Process</b>	18	78.26%	10	83.33%	6	85.71%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 2: Participants Reported Positive Perceptions about the Coaches</b>	15	65.22%	11	91.67%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 3: Some Respondents Initially had Negative Attitudes and Concerns about Participating</b>	14	60.87%	7	58.33%	5	71.43%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 4: Scheduling and Finding Adequate Time were Significant Logistical Barriers</b>	14	60.87%	8	66.67%	5	71.43%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 5: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Participating Teachers</b>	14	60.87%	8	66.67%	4	57.14%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 6: Participating Students Improved in Foundational Reading Skills</b>	14	60.87%	10	83.33%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 7: Participating Teachers Adopted New Teacher Practices and Developed New Teaching Skills</b>	12	52.17%	7	58.33%	2	28.57%	3	75.00%
<b>Theme 8: Coaches Addressed Classroom and Behavior Management</b>	11	47.83%	4	33.33%	4	57.14%	3	75.00%
<b>Theme 9: Respondents Recognized a Need to Improve Reading Proficiency Among Their Students</b>	9	39.13%	6	50.00%	0	0.00%	3	75.00%
<b>Theme 10: Participating Teachers Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence</b>	9	39.13%	1	8.33%	6	85.71%	2	50.00%



	Total		Teacher		Coach		Administration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Theme 11: Students were Excited to Participate in Reading Interventions</b>	9	39.13%	2	16.67%	4	57.14%	3	75.00%
<b>Theme 12: Coaches Provided Physical Materials to Teachers, which was Very Beneficial</b>	9	39.13%	8	66.67%	1	14.29%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 13: Coaches Aided with Progress Monitoring, Which was Seen as Both a Positive and Negative</b>	8	34.78%	4	33.33%	1	14.29%	3	75.00%
<b>Theme 14: Teachers Expressed Excitement for the Coaching Program, Even if Initially Resistant</b>	8	34.78%	4	33.33%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 15: Implementation Checklists were Very Helpful to Teachers</b>	8	34.78%	4	33.33%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 16: Participating Students Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence</b>	8	34.78%	6	50.00%	1	14.29%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 17: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Students</b>	7	30.43%	1	8.33%	6	85.71%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 18: Participation in the Coaching Programs Made Teachers More Aware of their Students' and Their Own Current Level of Performance</b>	7	30.43%	5	41.67%	1	14.29%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 19: Teachers Described Coaches as Supportive</b>	7	30.43%	4	33.33%	1	14.29%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 20: Teachers Used Skills Developed With Coaches during Other Instructional Times</b>	7	30.43%	4	33.33%	3	42.86%	0	0.00%

	Total		Teacher		Coach		Administration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Theme 21: Coaches were Viewed as Experts</b>	6	26.09%	3	25.00%	1	14.29%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 22: Coaches Helped Teachers Match the Content of Interventions to the Instructional Needs of Students</b>	6	26.09%	3	25.00%	2	28.57%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 23: Students Were More Engaged in their Reading Instruction as a Result of the Coaching Programs</b>	6	26.09%	2	16.67%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 24: Respondents Shared Positive Attitudes Towards Future Coaching</b>	5	21.74%	2	16.67%	1	14.29%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 25: Students Wanted to be Included in the Reading Intervention Groups</b>	5	21.74%	3	25.00%	2	28.57%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 26: Coaches Reported Feeling Overwhelmed at the Start of Coaching</b>	4	17.39%	0	0.00%	4	57.14%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 27: Administrators Saw Their Role as Setting Expectations and Ensuring Adequate Time was Provided for Coaching Activities</b>	4	17.39%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	100.00%
<b>Theme 28: Respondents Expressed a Need for Coaching Help in Supporting Students Who are at a Higher Academic Level</b>	4	17.39%	3	25.00%	0	0.00%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 29: Clear Expectations Made Coaching More Successful</b>	4	17.39%	0	0.00%	3	42.86%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 30: The Organization and Structure of the Coaching Programs was Helpful to Participants</b>	4	17.39%	2	16.67%	1	14.29%	1	25.00%

	Total		Teacher		Coach		Administration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Theme 31: Participating Students Demonstrated Growth in Other Academic Areas Besides Reading</b>	4	17.39%	3	25.00%	0	0.00%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 32: Logistical Barriers, Besides Time and Scheduling, Made Participation in the Coaching Programs More Difficult</b>	3	13.04%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 33: Some Teacher Characteristics Hindered Coaching</b>	3	13.04%	0	0.00%	1	14.29%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 34: Coaches Reported That Participating in the Coaching Programs Developed Their Own Professional Skills</b>	3	13.04%	0	0.00%	3	42.86%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 35: Administrators Reported that the Coaching Programs would have been More Effective if they had Been Mandatory</b>	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 36: Some Coaches Worked With Teachers That were Not Actively Participating in the Coaching Process</b>	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	2	28.57%	0	0.00%
<b>Theme 37: Administrators Felt That Teachers Need to Take Responsibility For Their Students' Learning</b>	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	50.00%
<b>Theme 38: Some Teachers Were Resistant to Coaching and Lacked Buy-in</b>	2	8.70%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	1	25.00%
<b>Theme 39: Teachers Became Learners in their Own Classrooms through Coaching</b>	2	8.70%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	1	25.00%

Identified themes from the analysis of interview data have been selected to address each of the five *a priori* research questions.

**Research Question 1: What changes in teachers have teachers, coaches, and administrators observed as a result of coaching?**

Respondents reported several teacher-level changes as a result of their participation in one of the instructional coaching programs. First, teachers adopted new practices and generalized them to other academic areas (Theme 7 and 20). These skills included more explicit instruction on foundational reading skills, differentiating instruction based on student need, and providing opportunities for students to practice foundational reading skills embedded into other academic instruction.

Second, teachers became more confident in teaching foundational reading skills (Theme 10). This increase in teacher confidence was reported about novice and experienced teachers alike. Coaches and administrators primarily reported this outcome; only one responding teacher commented on a change in confidence. Third, teachers became more aware of their own teaching abilities as well as the abilities and instructional level of their students (Theme 18). Fourth, teachers expressed excitement for the coaching programs and expressed interest in receiving future coaching support (Theme 14 and 24). In some cases this theme represents a breakdown of teacher resistance and an increase in teacher buy-in in the coaching process and in the instructional programs that the coaches supported.

Table 3.

*Description of themes related to research question 1: Evidence of teacher change: What change in teachers as a result of coaching were observed by teachers, coaches, and administrators?*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Theme 7: Participating Teachers Adopted New Teacher Practices and Developed New Teaching Skills	Respondents described how participating in the programs built teacher capacity to implement high quality reading instruction and supported teachers in implementing new practices. Some of these practices were techniques and strategies that teachers had been exposed to previously, but coaching provided the support necessary to put them into practice. Other practices were introduced to teachers by the coach they worked with.	12	52.17%
Theme 10: Participating Teachers Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence	Teachers' confidence in providing high-quality instruction increased. This was thought to be due to a combination of support from coaches and from seeing demonstrable gains among students.	9	39.13%
Theme 14: Teachers Expressed Excitement for the Coaching Program, Even if Initially Resistant	Although some teachers were resistant to implementing a new reading intervention program in their classroom, those same teachers and others expressed excitement the coaching support and resources for their students that they received.	8	34.78%
Theme 18: Participation in the Coaching Programs Made Teachers More Aware of their Students' and Their Own Current Level of Performance	The requirements of the intervention programs and the guidance of the coaches aided teachers in identifying the current academic levels of their students. Coaches also prompted reflection and self-assessment by participating teachers which increased their own awareness of their strengths and skills.	7	30.43%
Theme 20: Teachers Used Skills Developed With Coaches during Other Instructional Times	Teachers generalized instructional techniques they developed while working with coaches to other times of the day and during other academic areas besides reading (i.e., math and writing). These skills included methods for working with large and small groups of students and effective classroom management techniques.	7	30.43%
Theme 24: Respondents Shared Positive Attitudes Towards Future Coaching	Respondents reported that they wished coaching would continue in the next academic year. In particular, teachers developed positive relationships with their specific coach and desired to work with those same professionals.	5	21.74%

**Research Question 2: What changes in students have teachers, coaches, and administrators observed as a result of coaching?**

Respondents reported five student-level changes as a result of their participation in one of the instructional coaching programs. First, participating students improved in foundational reading skills (Theme 6). Second, students demonstrated improvements in other academic areas, particularly writing, as a result of their improvement in foundational reading skills (Theme 31). Third, students were more engaged in their reading instruction (Theme 23). Fourth, students were more confident in their ability to be successful at academic work, which was not limited to the academic area of literacy (Theme 16). Fifth, students were excited to participate in reading interventions and students who were not in an intervention group wanted to participate (Theme 11 and 25).

There were noticeable differences between how individuals with different roles (i.e., teacher, coach, administrator) responded for several of these changes. Teachers were more likely to focus on students' improvement in foundational reading skills and confidence, whereas coaches and administrators focused more on students' engagement and excitement about participating in the reading interventions.

Table 4.

*Description of themes related to research question 2: Evidence of student change: What changes in students as a result of coaching were observed by teachers, coaches, and administrators?*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Theme 6: Participating Students Improved in Foundational Reading Skills	Respondents shared specific examples of students making academic gains in the area of foundational reading skills. Some of these students were able to reach grade level academic benchmarks while others made significant gains but were still academically delayed.	14	60.87%
Theme 11: Students were Excited to Participate in Reading Interventions	Students were described as excited, happy, and loving participating in the reading interventions. It was suggested by respondents that this was due to the interventions being at their instructional level and due to the success students were able to experience in intervention groups. In addition, students were more excited for reading in general as their foundational reading skills improved.	9	39.13%
Theme 16: Participating Students Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence	Students became more confident in their reading ability. They were also more confident in approaching other academic content.	8	34.78%
Theme 23: Students Were More Engaged in their Reading Instruction as a Result of the Coaching Programs	Students were more engaged in reading instruction, which was due to an increase in teacher skill in eliciting responses from students and student interest in reading material that was presented at their instructional level.	6	26.09%
Theme 25: Students Wanted to be Included in the Reading Intervention Groups	Students that were a part of a reading intervention expressed the desire to participate in the group, asked adults when a reading intervention would happen, and were disappointed when it was not their time for the intervention. Student that were not a part of a reading intervention expressed the desire to join an intervention small group.	5	21.74%
Theme 31: Participating Students Demonstrated Growth in Other Academic Areas Besides Reading	Students showed growth in writing and math, particularly in their ability to complete work independently and generalizing reading skills into these academic areas.	4	17.39%

### **Research Question 3: What factors contributed to successful coaching from the teachers' and the coaches' perspectives?**

There are 8 factors that respondents identified as contributing to successful coaching. First, the coaches were described as being supportive, knowledgeable, flexible, having good communication, and being trustworthy (Theme 2, 19, and 21). These positive traits improved the effectiveness of their instructional coaching. Second, coaches developed positive relationships with teachers (Theme 5). Third, coaches provided implementation checklists to teachers which helped them to plan lessons and implement interventions with fidelity (Theme 15). Fourth, each coaching program was well organized and expectations were clear (Them 29 and 30).

Fifth, coaches addressed classroom and behavior management if needed (Theme 8). This behavior support may have been provided by giving advice or feedback to teachers on classroom and behavior management strategies, or by applying classroom or behavior management techniques themselves as the coaches were in classrooms with students. Sixth, administrators set expectations and provided time for coaching activities (Theme 27). Seventh, coaches provided physical materials to teachers, such as lesson plans, student workbooks, and supplemental materials (Theme 12). This factor reported on by only one coach and none of the administrators, but two thirds of the participating teachers discussed the helpfulness of this tangible support. Eighth, coaches aided in progress monitoring (Theme 13). Although coaches reported that this progress monitoring should have been done entirely by teachers, teachers reported this help was a significant benefit for them.



Table 5.

*Description of themes related to research question 3: What factors emerged as contributing to successful coaching based on teachers' and the coaches' perspectives?*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Theme 2: Participants Reported Positive Perceptions about the Coaches	Participants shared overall positive perceptions of coaches. The coaches were praised for being knowledgeable, flexible, having good communication, and being trustworthy.	15	65.22%
Theme 5: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Participating Teachers	Participants described the relationship between teachers and coaches as positive. Coaches helped teachers feel comfortable and supported. Coaches provided feedback that was helpful but sensitive and tailored their approach to the needs of the teacher.	14	60.87%
Theme 8: Coaches Addressed Classroom and Behavior Management	Coaches were involved with classroom and behavior management in two ways. First, coaches sometimes assisted with classroom management themselves, especially with those students who were not in a teacher-led group while the coach was in the classroom. Second, coaches provided guidance and suggestions to teachers regarding classroom and behavior management over the course of the instructional coaching they provided.	11	47.83%
Theme 12: Coaches Provided Physical Materials to Teachers, which was Very Beneficial	Teachers were very grateful for the physical materials provided by the coaches. These include workbooks, worksheets, storybooks, guides, and checklists.	9	39.13%
Theme 13: Coaches Aided with Progress Monitoring, Which was Seen as Both a Positive and Negative	Coaches aided teachers with progress monitoring during the reading interventions. This was not part of the initial program designs. Teachers saw this help as an example of the support coaches could provide to limit the burden of implementing a new reading intervention. Coaches saw this aide as a necessary compromise while building teacher capacity, but that it was unsustainable if the number of teachers a coach were expected to support was to increase.	8	34.78%
Theme 15: Implementation Checklists were Very Helpful to Teachers	Each coaching program had an implementation checklist that identified the crucial components of the literacy intervention that teachers were expected to complete. These checklists were a helpful, or even essential, component of the coaching program with which they participated. Teachers were able to use them to remember essential components of the intervention they were delivering while coaches used them to support teachers in becoming independent.	8	34.78%
Theme 19: Teachers Described Coaches as Supportive	Teachers described coaches as supportive. This support came in a variety of ways, including providing advice, helping deliver intervention components, and providing encouragement.	7	30.43%

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Theme 21: Coaches were Viewed as Experts	Coaches were seen by participants as experts not only in the specific reading intervention programs but also in instruction in reading instruction generally, other academic areas, and classroom management.	6	26.09%
Theme 27: Administrators Saw Their Role as Setting Expectations and Ensuring Adequate Time was Provided for Coaching Activities	Responding administrators agreed that their role was to set the expectation that teachers would fulfil their commitment to the coaching programs and ensure that time was provided for coaching meetings and activities.	4	17.39%
Theme 29: Clear Expectations Made Coaching More Successful	Coaches took efforts to make their expectations for participating teachers clear. This increased teacher buy-in. Coaches took opportunities during coaching to clarify roles in addition to planning training opportunities at the start of the academic year to orient teachers to the reading intervention programs.	4	17.39%
Theme 30: The Organization and Structure of the Coaching Programs was Helpful to Participants	The structure of the coaching programs provided predictability for the teachers and gave them the ability to jump in and begin implementing without worrying about many of the logistical concerns that may have otherwise been a problem.	4	17.39%

**Research Question 4: What factors were barriers to successful coaching from the teachers and the coaches’ perspectives?**

Two factors were identified by respondents as barriers to successful coaching. First, there was difficulty in scheduling coaching meetings and a lack of adequate time for coaching activities (Theme 4). Second, individual teacher beliefs, such as the likelihood that any initiative will only be implemented at a school for a short period of time, and teacher resistance hindered successful coaching (Theme 33 and 38).

Table 6.

*Description of themes related to research question 4: What factors emerged as barriers to successful coaching based on teachers and coaches’ perspectives?*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Theme 4: Scheduling and Finding Adequate Time were Significant Logistical Barriers	Respondents reported finding adequate time to be a significant barrier to coaching. This was due in part to the many demands on teachers' time, and to the nature of their schedules which are frequently decided and changed by other professionals. Coaches also were very busy and it was difficult to match their busy schedules with teachers' busy schedules. Participation in the programs took time that other teachers not participating could spend on other important activities, such as district designed professional development.	14	60.87%
Theme 33: Some Teacher Characteristics Hindered Coaching	Some teachers were resistant to change, rigid in their teaching process, resistant to feedback, or felt that any new initiative (e.g., the reading intervention programs) were short term changes that did not deserve the teacher's investment.	3	13.04%
Theme 38: Some Teachers Were Resistant to Coaching and Lacked Buy-in	Not all teachers bought into the coaching process. These teachers may have been minimally involved in coaching and showed poor follow through.	2	8.70%

**Research Question 5: What changes to the coaching program do participants think should be made in order to make the process of instructional coaching more effective?**

Three changes were suggested by respondents to improve the instructional coaching process that occurred as a part of FRF and BRIGHT. First, extra time should be provided to teachers during the school day for coaching activities (Theme 4). Some participating teachers were expected to complete some coaching activities during their after school preparation or professional development time but these teachers felt like that schedule arrangement caused them to fall behind on other important teacher related activities. Other teachers felt rushed having to find time for coaching feedback during their already full instructional days.

Second, some respondents (n=4, 17.39%) reported that they desired having coaching support on providing differentiated instruction for students who were advanced compared to grade-level academic expectations (Theme 28). These teachers felt like the programs as currently implemented neglected to provide a range of services that would meet the needs of all of their students.

Third, two administrators reported that the coaching programs would have been more effective if it had been mandatory for all staff to participate (Theme 35). However, other research has found that mandates for teachers to change their practice has not been effective at making meaningful change (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015).

Table 7.

*Description of themes related to research question 5: What changes to the coaching program do participants think should be made to make the process of instructional coaching more effective?*

Theme	Description	Frequency	Percent
Theme 4: Scheduling and Finding Adequate Time were Significant Logistical Barriers	Respondents reported finding adequate time to be a significant barrier to coaching. This was due in part to the many demands on teachers' time, and to the nature of their schedules which are frequently decided and changed by other professionals. Coaches also were very busy and it was difficult to match their busy schedules with teachers' busy schedules. Participation in the programs took time that other teachers not participating could spend on other important activities, such as district designed professional development.	14	60.87%
Theme 28: Respondents Expressed a Need for Coaching Help in Supporting Students Who are at a Higher Academic Level	Respondents reported finding adequate time to be a significant barrier to coaching. This was due in part to the many demands on teachers' time, and to the nature of their schedules which are frequently decided and changed by other professionals. Coaches also were very busy and it was difficult to match their busy schedules with teachers' busy schedules. Participation in the programs took time that other teachers not participating could spend on other important activities, such as district designed professional development.	4	17.39%
Theme 35: Administrators Reported that the Coaching Programs would have been More Effective if they had Been Mandatory	Administrators felt that participation in the coaching programs should be mandatory for their staff instead of voluntary. Although they recognized the importance of teacher autonomy, these administrators felt that the impact of the coaching was so beneficial for participating teachers mandated participation was justified.	2	8.70%

## Discussion

A benefit of this qualitative study is that it allows for components of instructional coaching to be examined within the *in vivo* context of urban schools and classrooms typical of the participating district. Overall, the results of this analysis demonstrate that these urban teachers and administrators found that these instructional coaching programs were beneficial for the adult participants as well as for their urban students. Additionally, respondents indicated that the instructional coaching components these programs were built upon held up not just in practice but did so in urban classrooms with their unique traits, influences, and struggles.

This study examined more components of coaching than is often examined in other analyses of coaching, which frequently focus on one dimension of the coaching process. The *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* incorporates findings and theories concerning (a) principles guiding the implementation of coaching, (b) the roles coaches undertake, (c) factors that facilitate coaching activities, as well as (d) the goal and (e) systems-level context of instructional coaching.

### **Comparison to the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change***

Before examining specific applications of these results for educational practitioners in urban contexts, the results from this analysis can be compared to the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* (Figure 2) that was developed based on a review of the instructional coaching literature<sup>2</sup>. This confirmatory comparison effectively answers the sixth research question proposed at the start of this analysis: how do the themes concerning instructional coaching found in these interviews support, refute, and inform a model of instructional coaching developed based on the existing coaching literature

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<sup>2</sup> Particularly the work of Killion (2009); Knight (2009a); Gallucci et al. (2010); Mangin and Dunsmore (2015); Marsh et al. (2012); Pyle et al. (2011); Shernoff et al. (2015); Shlonsky and Gibbs (2004); and van Nieuwerburgh (2012).

A majority of the identified themes (n=26, 66.7%) closely matched elements of the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* (see Figure 4). Following is a description of how these themes match the developed model and the previous discussed literature.

**Goal.** The identified goal of coaching, to "make changes at the school- and teacher-level to improve student academic outcomes," mirrors the identified purpose of district reform efforts identified by authors such as Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, and Boatright (2010). Six separate themes addressed parts of the stated goal of using coaching to create student change. (These themes were Theme 6, 7, 9, 20, 23, and 31). These themes represented respondents' acknowledgement of the need to improve student academic outcomes, specifically in reading. These themes also reflected that such positive outcomes occurred and came about, in part, by changing teacher-level factors (i.e., instructional practices).

In describing those teacher-level changes in instructional practices, responding teachers shared specific examples such as Respondent 12 (teacher) who reported that the coaches helped her to improve her ability for "...scaffolding during the small group instruction and that seems to work really well" and Respondent 14 (teacher) who identified one specific strategy given to her by her coach: Elkonin boxes. She shared: "the [Elkonin boxes] with... the empty squares. When I started doing that is when I think it all kind of came full circle."

Another Respondent 11 (teacher) also described specific areas of her reading instruction influenced by coaching:

My small groups have completely changed. I mean how I teach my small groups have completely changed. Like the routine. As far as doing rapid letter naming, then doing letter sounds, then doing beginning-middle-and end. Just all my reading stations have changed now that I have learned how all the skills work together... Infusing those sight

words. And then really looking at the data and assessments to see what letters the kids need to work on.

Respondents did not endorse the need to make school- or systems-level changes as a part of the effort to improve student academic outcomes. This absence may be due to some of the difficulty in identifying and addressing systemic changes, as well as the tendency to focus on individual changes (i.e., teacher changes) instead of acknowledging, assessing, and addressing concerns with school climate, culture, or processes. However, no salient theme from the analysis of the interviews suggested that this component is not a valid component of using coaching to address student change.



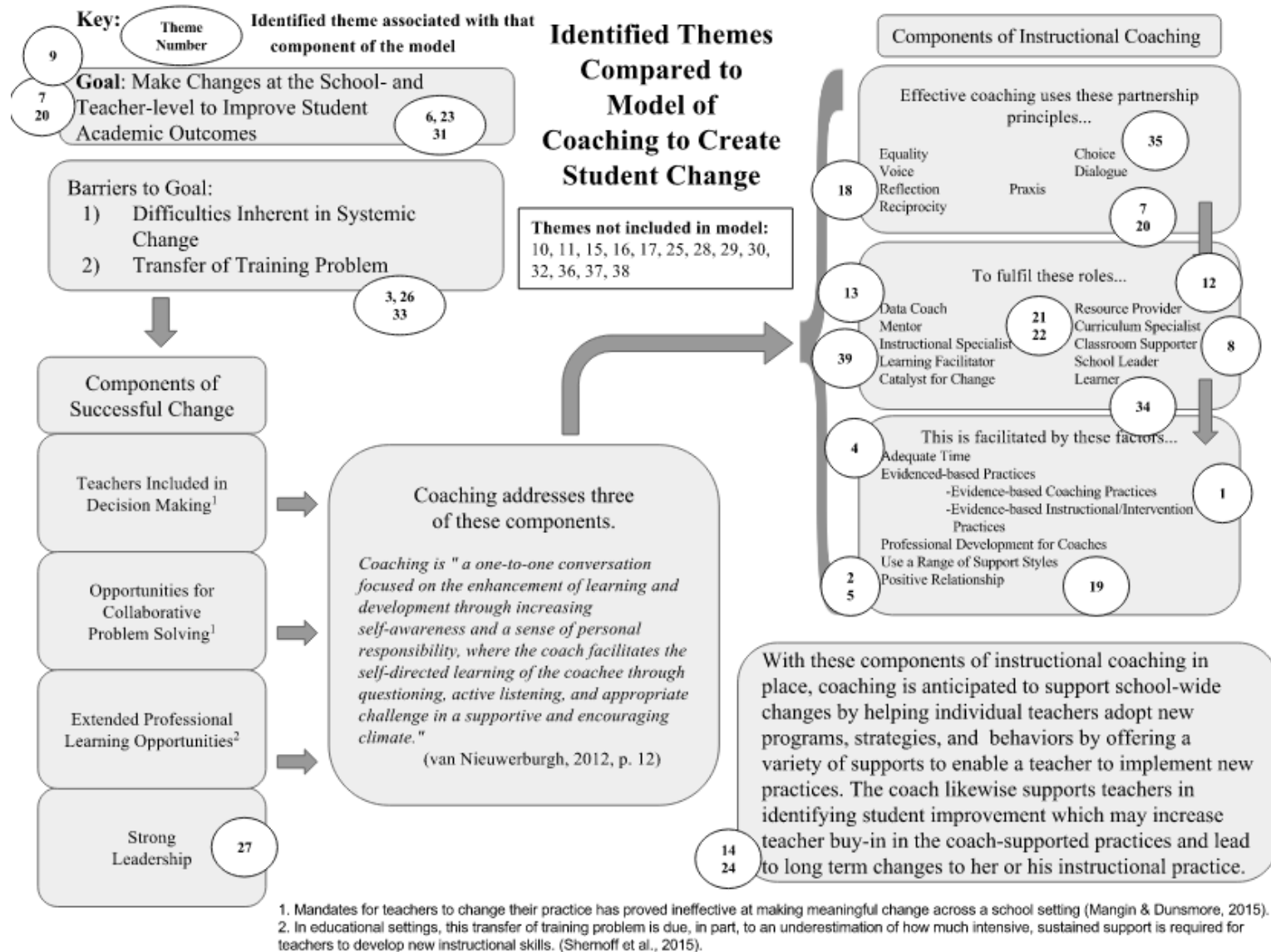


Figure 4. Comparison of identified themes to proposed model of how instructional coaching creates student change.

Alternatively, this lack of endorsement may mean that school-level change may be best understood as a byproduct of instructional coaching and may not be best represented as a core component of the goal of coaching in a school setting. This is consistent with the view that coaching changes system-wide practices by building capacity at the individual level (for example, see Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015).

**Barriers to Goal.** Three identified themes (Theme 3, 26, and 33) reflected the transfer of training problem (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Shernoff et al., 2015). Most specifically, respondents discussed initial negative teacher reactions towards the coaching process, such as Respondent 14 (teacher) who reported:

What was my first impression? You want to know the truth? "What else do we have to do!?" To be dead honest. I was like "arg, how much - I have enough things to do already. And now you're going to pile on something else. And we have to get all this stuff into this timeframe and make it all work out." My first reaction was not a positive one.

Respondent 2 (administrator) described the initial resistance of some of the teachers at her school by saying "teachers may have a tendency to say this [program] is this year; this won't keep happening." Respondent 15 (coach) agreed with this sentiment: "there's a lot of history of teachers, you know, fielding a lot of different sorts of initiatives and so it was very predictable that there would be a wide range of receptions. Some teachers were reluctant to move off of the sort of... traditional guided reading routines that's one set."

Respondents did not discuss the fidelity of implementation after coaching had occurred, however, which is a more fundamental component of the "transfer of training" problem. Endorsed themes also did not address the difficulties inherent in systemic change as a barrier to achieving improved, and similar conclusions can be drawn about this component's validity in the

*Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* as can be drawn about the inclusion of “school-level changes” as part of the goal of coaching.

**Components of Successful Change.** Responding administrators discussed the role of administration in successful coaching, which is related to Strong Leadership as a component of successful change (as identified by Pyle et al., 2011). None of the other three components of successful change (i.e., including teachers in decision making, providing opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, and providing extended professional learning opportunities; see Gallucci et al., 2010; Pyle et al., 2011) were explicitly identified by respondents as part of the coaching process. These components, however, are supported by the partnership principles that coaches used and the roles that coaches filled in their schools and were not specifically unendorsed by respondents.

**Components of Instructional Coaching.** All three main categories of components of instructional coaching were supported by the identified themes from respondent interviews.

**Use of partnership principles.** Two of the seven partnership principles (Knight, 2009a) were explicitly supported by identified themes from respondent interviews: reflection (Theme 18), and praxis (Theme 7, 20). The partnership principle of reciprocity was also suggested by “Theme 34: Coaches Reported That Participating in the Coaching Programs Developed Their Own Professional Skills.” Three other principles (i.e., Equality, Voice, and Dialogue) were neither explicitly endorsed nor contradicted by the analysis of respondent interviews. Some administrator respondents shared in their interviews that participation in the coaching program should be mandatory for their teachers, which is in conflict with the partnership principle of choice (Theme 35). This may best be interpreted as a conflict between the ideals of implementing policies that are expected to lead to better outcomes (i.e., participation in

instructional coaching) and in respecting educator autonomy than in an endorsement that teachers should not have choice when it comes to their professional relationship with a coach.

***Coaching roles.*** Seven of ten identified roles that coaches frequently fulfill in schools (Killion, 2009) were endorsed in the identified themes from respondent interviews: data coach (Theme 13), resource provider (Theme 12), curriculum specialist (Theme 21), instructional specialist (Theme 21), classroom supporter (Theme 8), learning facilitator (Theme 39), and learner (Theme 34). The roles of mentor, school leader, and catalyst for change were not endorsed by respondents but it is consistent with Killion's (2009) description of these roles that they are not all being completed by a coach at the same time; these are not necessarily the roles that coaches *should* be fulfilling, but are the roles that coaches most frequently find that they are required to fulfill in the schools in which they work. This conflict is perfectly encapsulated in the responses from "Theme 13: Coaches Aided with Progress Monitoring, Which was Seen as Both a Positive and Negative;" wherein teachers described the benefit of having coaches aid in progress monitoring (i.e., fulfilling the role of a data coach) while coaches described progress monitoring as a teacher responsibility that coaches should not help with in the future.

For example, Respondent 14 (teacher) reflected on the difficulty of completing the progress monitoring himself. He said:

[The coaches] come and do the DIBELS for you. Ah! Beautiful... If I had to [conduct the progress monitoring myself] I probably could. But it made life easier that they did it.

Yeah. [If you are going to ask teachers to do the progress monitoring] - please don't do that. Don't do that. That would be the add-on part that teachers would really complain about.

Respondent 15 (coach), however, said:

So we had... coaches conducting those DIBELS. We need to change that going forward...

1) the coaches don't have time for that in their scope, and 2) the teachers are the ones that need to be following the student progress and it's a lot of good information for them if they are actually the ones doing it.

***Factors facilitating instructional coaching.*** The majority of the factors included in the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* that are hypothesized to facilitate instructional coaches fulfilling their roles in schools were reflected in the salient themes identified in the respondent interviews.

***Adequate time.*** The amount of time coaches spend with teachers is a critical factor in changing teacher behavior (Piper & Zuikowski, 2015), but time is often lacking in public school settings (Shernoff et al., 2015). Approximately 60% of respondents endorsed these conclusions concerning time; these respondents identified that the lack of this factor was a significant barrier to instructional coaching. These responses are included in “Theme 4: Scheduling and Finding Adequate Time were Significant Logistical Barriers.” Respondent 6 (teacher) summarized the struggle reflected in the theme by saying:

And I found [coaching] valuable - it's just there's not... the time is so hard. I like the consultant. I like the ideas and I like working on these strategies. I just got so frustrated with the time. That really was my only problem,

Respondent 15 (coach) highlighted that time had to be scheduled not just for the teachers to give the intervention, or for coaches to come model and observe those interventions, but also for the other components of the coaching programs:

The most challenging the most challenging piece by far is juggling, is the scheduling part and the limited time available to cram everything in that teachers have guidance to do and

making the case for what's going to be the most effective for that limited amount of time and how to sort of meld or coordinate with the other parts of the comprehensive literacy plan. Yeah I would say that scheduling...

***Evidence-based practices.*** No respondents discussed the concept of “evidence-based practices,” although several of them discussed practices that matched effective instructional coaches identified by Knight and Cornett (Cornett & Knight, 2008; Knight & Cornett, 2008). Specifically, “Theme 1: Coaches Followed a Model, Observe, Provide Feedback Process,” which was the most frequently endorsed theme by respondents, reflects the following practices: modeling the lesson, observing the lesson, and collaborative data exploration (i.e., feedback) (see Figure 1).

***Use of a range of support styles.*** Teachers and administrators described participating coaches as supportive, and provided a range of examples of how coaches were supportive (Theme 19). These examples of supportive coaching activities demonstrated how coaches become more effective as they provide additional types of support beyond technical support to participating teachers, as suggested by Shernoff et al. (2015). This finding suggests coaches should employ a range of support styles to match the needs of teachers.

***Positive relationship.*** Themes describing positive relationships between teachers and coaches were highly endorsed by respondents (Theme 2 and 5; both were endorsed by 60.87% of respondents). This finding reflects that coaches worked to develop such relationships and that these relationships were, indeed, positive. Respondent 1 (administrator) identified the coaches’ manner of providing feedback and support as a factor in developing the positive relationship, which was representative of statements from other respondents. She reported:

Now they [provided feedback] in a manner that was non-harming. They made people feel comfortable, the way that they spoke. If things didn't go well it was confidential. The teachers didn't feel they were being told on or anything like that. That really strengthened the relationship [between the coaches and the teachers].

Participants, overall, did not comment on whether these positive relationships facilitated better coaching. The positive relationship between coach and teacher may best be described as an essential component for allowing the work of coaching to proceed (Knight, 2009a).

***Professional development for coaches.*** Only one respondent (Respondent 15 [coach]) discussed the explicit need to provide professional development for coaches, although both coaching programs provided such training to their coaches. As such, the need for coach PD was not considered a salient theme found in the interviews. No respondents suggested that coach PD was not a factor that facilitated successful instructional coaching. (See Gallucci et al., 2010 and Shernoff et al., 2015 for a discussion on the need for coach professional development.

**Summary Statement.** Many components of the summary statement for the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* have been represented in the discussion of other parts of the model (e.g., coaching supporting teachers, teacher adopting new practices, etc.). One additional component that has not been discussed is the impact coaching may have on teacher buy-in for new programs and for coaching. Two themes (Theme 14 and 24) reflect respondents' reports that their willingness to engage in additional coaching increased as a result of participating in coaching, and that these coaches had excitement about their current participation in the literacy interventions that the coaching programs supported. This increase in buy-in matches Piper and Zuilkowski's (2015) theory that instructional coaching helped teachers implement programs and that their success in those programs would then develop into teacher buy-in.

Interview data did not, and could not, comment on whether reported changes to teacher practice, teacher attitude, or student outcomes could be considered long-term changes or if they might cease after the end of coaching support.

### **Additional Findings**

Although the respondents largely supported previous findings and expert opinions on coaching, respondents also identified characteristics of successful coaching largely unidentified in previous coaching literature. Thirteen themes (33.3%) represented aspects of the coaching process that did not match elements of the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* (see Table 8 for a presentation of which themes are not included in the derived model and where those themes have been used to answer other research questions). Some of these themes represented aspects of the coaching process that may be more specific to the two studied coaching programs than to instructional coaching more broadly (Theme 17, 28, and 37) or factors related to the included reading interventions more than to the coaching component (Theme 11, 16, and 25). However, four unique findings were present in the remaining themes (Theme 10, 15, 29, 30, 32, 36, and 38, as well as Theme 2, 19, and 21 which also matched other components). These are coaching increased teacher confidence, program organization promoted effective coaching, teacher characteristics and behavior could be a barrier to successful coaching, and the personal character traits of a coach influenced the efficacy of instructional coaching.



Table 8.

*Presentation of themes used to answer each research question and themes not included in the Model of Coaching to Create Student Change*

RQ1: Teacher Change	RQ2: Student Change	RQ3: Factors Contributing to Success	RQ4: Barriers	RQ5: Changes to Programs
Theme 7	Theme 6	Theme 2	Theme 4	Theme 4
Theme 10*	Theme 11*	Theme 5	Theme 33	Theme 28*
Theme 14	Theme 16*	Theme 8	Theme 38*	Theme 35
Theme 18	Theme 23	Theme 12		
Theme 20	Theme 25*	Theme 13		
Theme 24	Theme 31	Theme 15*		
		Theme 19		
		Theme 21		
		Theme 27		
		Theme 29*		
		Theme 30*		

\*Theme not included in derived *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change*

Themes Not Included in Model and Do Not Answer a Research Question
Theme 17: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Students
Theme 32: Logistical Barriers, Besides Time and Scheduling, Made Participation in the Coaching Programs More Difficult
Theme 36: Some Coaches Worked with Teachers That Were Not Actively Participating in the Coaching Process
Theme 37: Administrators Felt That Teachers Need to Take Responsibility For Their Students' Learning

**Coaching Increased Teacher Confidence.** “Theme 10: Participating Teachers

Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence” describes a teacher-level change that is different from the two changes already included in the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change*: the implementation of new practices by teachers and an increase in teacher buy-in. An increase in teacher confidence is related to both of these outcomes. Teachers who have increased confidence may be more likely to implement practices and may have a higher level of buy-in related to those practices. Teacher confidence may therefore be part of a causal link between coaching and changes in teacher practice. Alternatively, increased confidence may be a byproduct of adopting more efficacious practices, similar to how buy-in is conceptualized as a result of a teacher observing positive outcomes among students as a result of following coach suggestions. With either hypothesized relationship between teacher confidence and the use of new and effective teacher practices, teacher confidence may play a similar role to teacher buy-in when instituting school reforms.

Interestingly, respondents reported an increase in teacher confidence even when teacher buy-in was initially high. This suggests that low teacher confidence may be a barrier related to implementing new programs; this barrier can therefore be thought of as existing alongside factors such as poor buy-in and lack of understanding as part of the transfer of training problem.

It is noteworthy that only one teacher endorsed this theme, however. The bulk of the respondents endorsing an increase in teacher confidence were coaches (n=6, 85.72%) and administrators (n=2, 50%). In comparison teachers were more likely to report gaining new skills as a part of coaching. This pattern may reflect a real difference in what kinds of support teachers feel they need to be more successful when working with underachieving students than what other educational professionals might see as important, with teachers being more eager to accept

actionable support (i.e., new knowledge and techniques; see also Theme 12: Coaches Provided Physical Materials to Teachers, which was Very Beneficial. This theme was endorsed by 8 teachers, 1 coach, and no administrators), whereas others may be more likely to ascribe low student achievement to internal traits (e.g., who that teacher is instead of what that teacher does). Both traits and skills, however, are likely to contribute to teacher effectiveness, and both are worthwhile outcomes for instructional coaching.

**Program Organization Promoted Effective Coaching.** Three themes highlighted the helpfulness of organizational factors on successful instructional coaching: “Theme 15: Implementation Checklists Were Very Helpful to Teachers,” “Theme 29: Clear Expectations Made Coaching More Successful,” and “Theme 30: The Organization and Structure of the Coaching Programs was Helpful to Participants.” Teachers reported that having a clear understanding of how coaching would proceed, having a guidebook or checklist that spelled out the interventions that would be implemented, and having a reliable and predictable coach that would meet with teachers at predictable times and had predictable mode of communication each made the instructional coaching process less intimidating, more enjoyable, and more beneficial for the teacher and their students. This finding suggests that coaches must prepare for instructional coaching and have a plan that teachers can follow. This further emphasizes that coaches cannot just be experts in their subject matter, but must also receive support in the craft of coaching (Mraz et al., 2008).

**Teacher Characteristics and Behaviors Were Sometimes Barriers to Coaching.** The suggested model incorporated teacher buy-in as an outcome of effective coaching and concerns with teacher acceptance of new programs are implicitly included in the barriers to the goal of coaching. Two themes from the respondent interviews suggest that a lack of teacher participation

and teacher resistance to coaching may need to be more explicitly acknowledged and addressed as barriers to coaching. These themes were “Theme 36: Some Coaches Worked with Teachers that were Not Actively Participating in the Coaching Process” and “Theme 38: Some Teachers Were Resistant to Coaching and Lacked Buy-in.” Although these themes represent minority opinions and experiences among respondents, 17.89% of respondents endorsed at least one of these two themes, suggesting that it is not a wholly unique experience to have a resistant teacher. Since a lack of teacher participation is incorporated under the two barriers already identified in the model (i.e., difficulties inherent in systemic change and transfer of training problem), “teacher willingness to participate in coaching” could be included under factors that facilitate effective coaching.

These themes suggest that more attention may need to be given to teacher characteristics and traits in coaching. Coaching research largely addresses relationships (Knight, 2009a) and strategies (Knight & Cornett, 2008), but not teacher traits. As such, there is a lack of suggestions as to what kind of teacher may best be supported through coaching (as compared to a different professional development strategy).

**Coach Characteristics Impacted Effectiveness of Coaching.** Although the themes related to personal traits of individual coaches fit within other aspects of the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change*, these traits usually are secondary to the actions that coaches are taking in the model as proposed (i.e., building partnerships, using evidence-based practices, sharing information). Teachers, however, often focused on who they perceived the coach was as a person in addition to, or instead of, the coaching related activities they were engaged in. As summarized in the response to research question 3, the coaches were described as being supportive, knowledgeable, flexible, having good communication, and being trustworthy (Theme

2, 19, and 21). These positive traits were a factor that contributed to effective coaching, and just as teacher characteristics should be included in a model of instructional coaching to create student change, coach characteristics belong in the model as a factor facilitating effective coaching.

Highlighting that the personal characteristics of teachers and coaches influenced coaching may seem an obvious conclusion to reach, even without data collection. However, as previously stated, little attention has been explicitly given in the coaching literature as to the types of demeanors, attitudes, traits, and characteristics are most beneficial, and detrimental, within the instructional coaching context. Without such considerations it would be easy to assume that a "one-size fits all" approach to instructional coaching would be effective; acknowledging the impact of personal characteristics on coaching may explain why some future instances of coaching will be successful while others may not.

### **Further Discussion on a Model of Coaching**

Although the results of this analysis provide support for the proposed *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change*, the model suffers from a weakness that much of the literature on instructional coaching does as well: the primary goal of improved student outcomes masks the importance of the teacher. Although, two of the hypothesized components of successful change in the *Model of Coaching to Create Student Change* are including teachers in decision making and the provision of opportunities for collaborative problem-solving between teachers and coaches, coaches in these reading programs were viewed as experts and were charged with helping teachers implement specific interventions. The premise behind this type of coaching is likely to limit the availability for true collaboration. Instead, the teacher is only a conduit through which instruction passes, instead of an important and dynamic contributor to the coaching

process. With this central role of the teacher in mind, it's important to look at some of the variations in how teachers responded in interviews compared to coaches and administrators, as well as to look at how the proposed model may be adapted to reflect that central role of teachers.

Teachers identified different student outcomes than coaches and administrators. Teachers were more likely to report that students improved in foundational skills and improved in confidence, as compared to coaches or administrators who instead focused on observable student behaviors such as the level of engagement and excitement students had in the reading intervention. This difference may be due to several factors, including the possibility that teachers placed more value on student growth compared to academic proficiency compared to coaches and administrators. The interview responses do not make the reason for this difference in perspective clear, but these responses do suggest that teachers may be valuing different outcomes than coaches and administrators.

Teachers also saw their own improvement differently, highlighting skills learned while coaches and administrators remarked on improved teacher confidence. As previous discussed, these differences may be due to differences in how classroom instruction problems are perceived: either internal or external to the teacher. Lastly, teachers reported needs that coaches and administrators largely did not address: the need for physical materials and the need for support for students who were meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations. These examples again emphasize the point that teachers may value different outcomes and welcome different support than coaches and administrators.

Even these comparisons assume a large amount of homogeneity among teachers. However, some teachers, although they were a minority, either reported being resistant to coaching, took considerable time to become motivated to follow-through on coaching activities,

or only began to buy-in to coaching towards the end of the pilot program. Instructional coaching is a process that involves a relationship between coach and coachee that evolves over time. Definitions of coaching often include this sort of language, but descriptions of coaching activities assume that what is effective in one coaching partnership will be equally effective in another, and more importantly, what is effective at one point in time in a coaching partnership will continue to be as effective over the course of that relationship. In other words, coaching is seen dichotomously as “effective” or “ineffective,” with effectiveness being achieved by including a certain number of factors that contribute to success, regardless to the development of that relationship or to the personal goals of the classroom teacher.

Due to this disconnect between the identified need to have teachers as collaborators who make meaningful decisions and the partnership principals and facilitating factors that come across more as a checklist for coaches to perform while instructing the teacher, a few additions to an instructional coaching model can be proposed.

First, proximal goals centered on the teacher can be added while the distal goal of improved student academic achievement remains. These goals can include “the teacher and coach develop an equitable partnership” and “the teacher makes progress towards self-identified goals” in addition to “the teacher adopts or improves the use of evidence-based practices that meet the need of the students.”

Second, the factors that facilitate coaching of ‘evidence-based coaching practices’ and ‘the use of a range of supports’ both need to further developed and described. Specifically, these should be mapped to the developmental course of coaching relationships instead of assuming these practices are appropriate at every stage of the coaching process.

Third, the language of the partnership principals and the coaching roles can be developed and updated to reflect the actions that coaches take, instead of being static nouns that suggest these things either exist or they do not. Likewise, these components should reflect the actions that both teachers and coaches may engage in; such a change in focus away from being on the coach only to being shared between coach and teacher would more strongly reflect those partnership principals and reflect the collaborative nature of coaching instead of the often *de facto* coaching dynamic where the coach is telling the teacher what to do.

### **Application in Urban Schools**

Considering the unique nature of urban schools, it cannot be assumed that practices piloted and examined elsewhere will automatically generalize to an urban setting. The experiences from this study's respondents suggest that instructional coaching is effective in the urban classroom, and that coaching functions similar to how it is generally conceptualized. Respondents reported that students improved academically (Theme 6 and 31), were more engaged in reading instruction (Theme 23), more confident (Theme 16), and enjoyed participating in the programs supported by coaches (Theme 11). Several themes from the teacher, coach, and administrator respondents are particularly relevant to school staff attempting to have high-quality instructional coaching at their school; these themes are worth reiterating here.

Although teachers successfully adopted new practices (Theme 12 and 20), there were several perceived benefits for teachers beyond the adoption of instructional skills. Teachers who participated in the instruction coaching were more aware of their students' performance (Theme 18), more aware of their own capabilities (Theme 18), and more confident in their ability to meet their students' needs (Theme 10). In addition to the planned instructional support, teachers



gained assistance in areas such as classroom and behavior management (Theme 8), differentiating instruction (Theme 22), and progress monitoring (Theme 13). Overall, instructional coaching made teachers feel supported (Theme 19). Considering the difficulty urban schools have in *recruiting* and *retaining* effective teachers (Jacob, 2007; Shernoff et al., 2015), instructional coaching may be a way for urban districts to develop the teachers they have into more effective professionals and to provide a supportive environment where educators choose to remain.

There are actions schools can take to make instructional coaching more successful. Finding adequate time and prioritizing the scheduling of coaching activities is essential to the instructional coaching process (Theme 4). Administrators take the lead in insuring adequate time is provided for coaching as well as prioritizing coaching in their school's professional culture (Theme 27). Teachers responded well to program organization, which allowed them to both understand where the process was going and to remember and compare themselves to plans made with their coach (Theme 15 and 30). Lastly, coaches needed more than just an expert knowledge of the strategies being supported. Coaches also needed to utilize effective coaching practices (Theme 1), develop relationships with teachers (Theme 5), and come across as trustworthy, reliable, and non-judgmental (Theme 2, 19, and 21).

### **School Psychology**

Although this paper examines instructional coaching, these findings have implications for school psychologists as well. First, coaching shares many similarities to consultation which is a practice that school psychologists commonly complete. Many of the same conclusions concerning coaching may be extrapolated to consultation (see Appendix A for a discussion of the relationship of coaching to consultation and school psychology). School psychologists may, for

example, adopt the practices demonstrated by the participating coaches (e.g., modeling, observing, then providing feedback; Theme 1). Respondent perceptions of the importance of a positive relationship and positive coach characteristics are likely to apply equally to consultation as they do to coaching.

The findings of this study are also of interest to school psychologists as 4 of the 7 participating coaches were school psychology graduate students. These students were able to use the consultation skills they had already developed as practitioners-in-training to transition into the role of supporting the implementation of a specific instructional practice. School psychologists may therefore be untapped resources in schools for disseminating, supporting, and improving other teacher-focused instructional reforms. School psychologists may also be resources for other instructional coaches in a school or district; the school psychologist may provide support on coaching/consultation skills while educators with classroom experience may provide expertise concerning instructional strategies.

### **Limitations**

This analysis was successful in identifying themes common in the experiences of participants in instructional coaching. It was not without limitations, however. Many of these reflect the nature of qualitative research, and as such can be considered strengths in providing contextualized and constructivist information while simultaneously limiting the external validity of the results.

**Multiple relationships.** The dissertator of this analysis had multiple relationships with the participants of the study. These relationships allowed me access to the participants and also provided a richer context for the interviews which is considered a strength in a constant comparison approach to data analysis. However, these relationships may also serve as a source of

unconscious bias; as such these relationships must be acknowledged. First, I have worked with the co-principal investigators on the FRF and BRIGHT projects at other times. Second, I helped develop, edit, and implement the behavioral coaching component of FRF that some participants received. Third, I wrote the interview protocol, completed some of the interviews, and completed the analysis of that interview data. Fourth, I consider myself a colleague to many of the instructional coaches and have continued to have contact with them since completing the project.

**Perceptions.** These interviews provide rich accounts of how respondents perceived the process and outcomes of instructional coaching. However, it is beyond the scope of this analysis to independently verify how these perceptions would match an objective, observation of this coaching. In particular, student outcomes have been reported based on respondent perceptions of academic improvement and have not been compared to academic screeners, standardized test scores, or other measures of academic proficiency or growth.

**Limited sample.** The sampling frame for the study was limited to those who participated in the pilot studies. However, only 50% of possible administrator respondents and 75% of possible teacher respondents consented to participate in the study. (All participating coaches consented to participate). As with anytime that selected individuals choose to not participate in a research study it is possible that those consenting respondents are not a random and representative section of the sampling frame; instead they may have commonalities that explain why they participated while others did not. This limited sample introduces possible bias into the resulting analysis.

**Limited interview time.** Respondents were given only a relatively short time in which to complete an exit interview, which limited the amount of breadth and depth that could be encapsulated in the interview questions. However, the interview protocol was developed with

these constraints in mind. A larger limitation was the inability to go back and ask additional or clarifying questions to respondents after the qualitative analysis began. This prevented the researcher to provide the additional understanding of the coaching context to clarify answers respondents had previously provided.

**Contextual nature.** Although the themes from the respondent interviews provide information that can inform other instructional coaching programs, and supported a model of coaching based on existing literature, the results from this study are closely tied to the two literacy programs in which they occurred: FRF and BRIGHT. When interpreting these results, it will always be possible that the themes identified will only be true for FRF and BRIGHT coaches and not instructional coaches in other settings. This error is less likely to occur due to the comparison of these results to established literature on coaching, but that does not eliminate the possibility.

### **Future Directions**

Further research on the effects of programs such as the FRF and BRIGHT projects will be useful in enhancing the knowledge base on whether and how coaching impacts teacher and student outcomes. Based on such studies further development of models of instructional coaching are expected. More specifically, it will be important to examine what instructional coaching components lead to changes in teacher behavior and perhaps most importantly, to producing improved student outcomes. The results from this qualitative analysis on instructional coaching suggests future approaches that researchers could explore independent of the specific programs that informed the current study. Overall, these future directions involve applying the scientific method to clarifying ambiguity in the coaching process and differentiating effective evidence-based practices from other less-effective coaching activities.

First, there is some question as to which roles are most effective for coaches to hold. Killion (2009) acknowledged that not all of the 10 identified coaching roles were equally as valuable or utilized the coaches' unique position in the school. Within the analyzed interviews there was disagreement between coaches and teachers about whether or not coaches should be fulfilling the role of a data manager (Theme 13). Currently, these 10 roles are descriptive of what coaches most frequently do; there is room to identify which roles are the most effective in creating positive student outcomes and which roles have the least duplication between coaches and other school-based professionals. Such a study could change this descriptive list of coach roles to a prescriptive list of activities conducted by effective coaches.

Second, evidence-based practices were identified as a factor facilitating effective instructional coaching prior to this analysis, and coaches in these programs followed the coaching best practice of modeling a skill, providing opportunities for guided practice, and then observing and providing feedback to the teacher (Theme 1; Knight & Cornett, 2008). However, there are a limited number of identified coaching practices that can truly be considered evidence-based. This limited number is due, in part, to the fact that researchers rarely directly compare two different coaching practices to each other; it is more common for a coaching program to be compared to a control condition of "no coaching received." This lack of identified evidence-based coaching practices is a limiting factor in implementing high-quality instructional coaching. Future researchers can look towards identifying such evidence-based practices through a comparison of coaching involving different emphases or coaching approaches/ strategies.

Relatedly, there is a great need for coaching programs to be developed that place high importance of collaboration with teachers and on the role of teachers as decision makers.

Coaching programs can be designed to have these components as central coaching activities, and such programs should be compared to other instructional coaching endeavors.

Lastly, future studies can look to professionals already situated in schools who can become coaches to determine what support these individuals need to become expert coaches that respect teacher contributions while also providing necessary support and additional information that will allow those teachers to improve their practice. School psychologists may be one such group, but many schools may have other support staff who are ideally situated to move into a coaching role.

## **Conclusion**

The results from this analysis provides support for a model of instructional coaching based on existing literature, as well as identifying specific themes about instructional coaching. Participants in both the FRF and BRIGHT programs provided overwhelmingly positive reports about these specific intervention programs. These respondents also had positive perceptions of instructional coaching. Although it cannot be said conclusively, based on qualitative interview data, that the reading intervention coupled with the instructional coaching led to improved student outcomes, respondents reported that students performed higher in reading as a result of FRF and BRIGHT and also showed improved secondary outcomes such as increased engagement, excitement for learning, and confidence.

Respondents reported similar improvements in teachers: better teaching skill and more confidence in their teaching ability. Factors such as the positive relationship between coach and teacher, setting clear expectations for coaching activities, and the coaches providing support and physical materials to teachers increased the perceived effectiveness of instructional coaching. Factors such as a lack of adequate time for scheduling coaching activities and teacher resistance

to participating in the program were perceived as decreasing the effectiveness of coaching. Overall, administrators wanted instructional coaching to continue at their schools and participating teachers wanted to receive additional instructional coaching in the future.

This analysis provides support for many of the hypothesized factors of effective instructional coaching. The analysis also revealed additional factors that should be incorporated into a model of coaching: coaching increases teacher confidence, program organization promotes effective coaching, teacher characteristics and behavior could be a barrier to successful coaching, and the personal character traits of a coach influences the efficacy of instructional coaching.

This study is important in part due to its context: urban schools. Urban schools are more likely than urban schools to have low student academic achievement and low numbers of effective teachers. Instructional coaching may be a way for these schools to address these needs. This study also explored programs where school psychologists were acting as instructional coaches, which suggests these professionals may be able to provide or assist such coaching support in schools.

Continued research is necessary to better understand instructional coaching. In particular, studies should use empirical approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of specific coaching practices compared to other coaching practices. Future research must continue to identify factors that contribute to successful coaching, tasks and roles that coaches undertake that should be fulfilled by other educators instead, and evidence-based coaching practices. Such findings will allow models of instructional coaching to become more specific, prescriptive, and predictive of student outcomes.

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## Appendix A

### **School Psychologists as Coaches**

Traditionally, experienced classroom teachers are often those chosen for instructional coaching positions. This practice reflects the prevailing notion that coaches should be experts in the content area and able to understand that content in terms of the classroom setting (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). However, there is inherent disconnect between this tradition and expected requirements of a coach. As Knight and Nieuwerburgh (2012) explained:

There is broad... agreement that coaches ‘do not readily give advice’ and that coaching should help ‘learners to come up with their own answers and generate their own questions’. At the same time, it is accepted that mentors ‘will have had the same role as the mentees at some point in their careers’ and the ‘focus is on passing on knowledge from an experienced member of staff to an inexperienced one.’ This poses a dilemma in educational settings: to what extent does a coach have to be familiar with a particular teaching and learning practice [and setting] in order to support a colleague? (p. 102)

The following study examines instructional coaching programs in which both teachers and school psychologists act as instructional coaches; as such it warrants examining the fit between coaching and school psychology practice.

**Coaching versus consulting.** As consultation is a concept used more by school psychologists than coaching, a comparison of these two terms is needed. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) provide such a comparison: with coaching being used more by teachers who work with other teachers, and consultation being used more by school support staff to describe their work with teachers. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) further emphasize that both terms often overlap considerably, that practitioners often use the two interchangeably, and that both are indirect

service delivery models wherein student achievement is expected to improve as the coach/consultee works with the classroom teacher. In addition, research on collaborative consultation in special education has provided empirical and theoretical support for instructional coaching when direct studies on coaching are not available (Denton, Sanson, & Mathes, 2007).

The distinction is sometimes made, however, that consultation and coaching differs in foci. Consultation focuses on intervention for specific students and centers on the triadic relationship between the consultant, the consultee (teacher), and the client (student) with an emphasis on that single client/student; coaching may focus instead on changing teacher behavior by targeting in a more indirect way teacher skill, instructional practices, and classroom management (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Shernoff et al., 2015) which may impact a group of students. As such, the term “coaching” is used to describe the relationship between the other professionals and the classroom teachers in this study.

**Coaching and the *NASP Practice Model*.** After acknowledging the considerable overlap between coaching and consultation, despite their differing foci, it becomes much clearer that coaching matches the professional responsibilities of school psychologists. This is highlighted in the *National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Practice Model* (Skalski et al., 2015). In this document 10 domains of knowledge and skills are specified which school psychologists are expected to be able to carry-out with competence. Domain 2 directly relates to the topic of coaching. It reads:

Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration

School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, schools and systems, and methods to promote effective implementation of services. As

part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others. Examples of professional practices include:

- 1) Using a consultative problem-solving process for planning,
- 2) Facilitating effective communication and collaboration among families, teachers, community providers, and others.
- 3) Using consultation and collaboration when working at the individual, classroom, school, or systems levels.
- 4) Advocating for needed change at the individual student, classroom, building, district, state, or national levels. (p. I-2 - I-3).

This second domain of professional school psychology practice clearly identifies that school psychologists should be able to engage in consultation at the classroom level, which is a hallmark of coaching. Additionally, Domain 3: Intervention and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills and Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills identify the areas in which school psychologists may be expected to provide classroom-centered consultation, or coaching, to teachers: academic skills and social, behavior, and life skills. Other important roles that coaches may take, such as being a Data Manager (see Killion, 2009), are also supported in the *NASP Practice Model*. As part of the paradigm shift that has been occurring in school psychology, school psychologists are finding that their roles are shifting from predominantly assessment to an increasing amount of consultation services in public schools (Ysseldyke & Reschly, 2012); this shift suggests that school psychologists may welcome stepping into the process of instructional coaching.

Appendix B

**Focus on Reading Foundations Coaching Framework**

<b>Quality Instructional Coaching Practices</b>	
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Practice</b>
<b>Coaching Practices</b>	Coaches are flexible and demonstrate agility. Coaches show the ability to respond to emerging needs and issues in delivery of instruction.
	Coaches provide student-centered, useful, and meaningful feedback to teachers.
	Coaching feedback is prompt and thorough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Within session coaching feedback is given.</li> <li>· Prompt follow-up feedback conversation takes place, immediately post session, with extended follow up conversation.</li> <li>· Follow-up written feedback recapping in-session or post session feedback is given.</li> </ul>
	Modelling of tutorial, small group, and classroom level instruction.
	Coaches can demonstrate evidence of improvement. Coaches document student learning improvement.
	Coaching feedback is effective, as judged by teachers. Teachers report feedback helps them advance student learning.
	Coaching feedback cycles are in sync with assessment cycles.
	Coaching follows a consistent schedule and is differentiated based on teacher need.
	Coaches assist in setting and tracking goals for teachers and students.
<b>Data-Handling, Analysis, Decision Making</b>	Coaches spend adequate time reviewing student progress monitoring data, ensuring sound feedback.
	Coaches are skilled at interpreting high stakes, screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment data in order to

	make useful decisions about what students and teachers most need at any given point in time
	Coaches understand the purposes, uses, and audiences for various levels of data
	Coaches use collect and enter data into a common database or spreadsheet methods to track the coaching process.
<b>Knowledge-Base</b>	Master coach, designated expert, and/or resources are available to field coaches questions
	Coaches are knowledgeable about instruction methods
	Coaches are knowledgeable about subject matter
	Coaches are knowledgeable about education psychometrics

## Appendix C

### University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Consent to Participate in Research Supplemental Form for Audio-recorded Interviews

**Study Title:** Focus on Reading and Social-Emotional Learning Foundations

**Persons Responsible for Research:** Karen Stoiber and Rachel Lander

**Study Description:** The purpose of this research study is to document the implementation and impact of the Focus on Reading (FRF) and Social Emotional Learning Foundations project. Approximately 16 teachers and 5 coaches will participate in this study. As part of this study, interviews are being conducted with the participants to help evaluate the effectiveness of FRF. You are being asked to participate in these interviews as you have already been involved in the study. The purpose of the interview is to gain your perspective about the implementation and impact of the project. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes in June, 2015 and will be audiotaped.

**Risks / Benefits:** There is a small risk of breach of confidentiality in participating. In order to minimize this risk, audio recordings will only be shared with the researchers associated with this project. All files will be transcribed, identifying information (e.g., names) will be removed, and the audio files will be deleted. There will be no costs for participating. Benefits of participating include receiving professional development and coaching aimed at improving instructional practices. Information learned from the project may be useful to teachers and others who are engaging in similar work.

**Confidentiality:** All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. We may decide to present what we find to others, or publish our results in scientific journals or at scientific conferences. Such presentations may include direct quotations from your interview. The research team will remove your identifying information (name, position, institution) and all study results will be reported without identifying information. Only the evaluation team will have access to your information. However, the Institutional Review Board at UW-Milwaukee or appropriate federal agencies like the Office for Human Research Protections may review this study's records.

In order to protect the privacy of others, please refrain from including the names of other students or teachers in your responses.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Who do I contact for questions about the study: For more information about the study or study procedures, contact Rachel Lander at [landerr@uwm.edu](mailto:landerr@uwm.edu) or 608-354-2324; or Karen Stoiber at [kstoiber@uwm.edu](mailto:kstoiber@uwm.edu) or 262 391-8466.



Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject? Contact the UWM IRB at 414-229-3173 or irbinfo@uwm.edu.

**Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:** To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. By signing the consent form, you are giving your consent to voluntarily participate in this research project.

---

Printed Name of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

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Signature of Subject/ Legally Authorized Representative

Date

**Research Subject's Consent to Audio/Video/Photo Recording:**

It is okay to audiotape me while I am in this study and use my audiotaped data in the research.

Please initial: \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

## Appendix D

### 2014-2015 Focus on Reading Foundations

#### Teacher Interview Protocol

##### I. Background

*Hello, my name is (INSERT NAME OF INTERVIEWER) and I work with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which was contracted by Milwaukee Succeeds to conduct a formative evaluation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program. One component of this evaluation is interviewing teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the project. Your perspective is very important as we try to provide information to reflect on the project in order to continually learn, grow, and improve and as we try to document the project for future such work. During this interview, we would like to find out about:*

- *The current implementation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program.*
- *Your insights about the impact it has had on both your practice as an educator and on your students.*
- *Any suggestions you have for improving the program in the future.*

##### II. Procedures

*First I need to go over some housekeeping business: I want to review the consent information for participating in this interview today and tell you a little bit more about the process.*

#### **CONDUCT CONSENT PROCEDURE USING CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET.**

*Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started.*

##### III. Questions on Implementation and Impact

1. *How did you get involved with the Focus on Reading Foundations program, or FRF?*
  - a. *What was your first impression of the program?*
2. *Please describe your involvement with FRF.*
  - a. *What sort of activities were you involved in?*
  - b. *Can you tell me about a typical session with a FRF coach?*
3. *Can you please describe your relationship with your coaches?*
  - a. *What did you think when they first met with you?*
  - b. *What do you think of them now?*
  - c. *What did they do that developed that relationship? (\*Only ask if change in relationship is suggested)*
4. *How did your attitude about FRF coaching change through the experience?*

- a. Was there an “Aha!” moment where things fell into place for you? Can you tell me about that moment?*
- 5. When did you feel the most challenged during FRF?*
- 6. What changes, if any, did you make in your own teaching practices as a result of the coaching you received?*
  - a. Concerning your own skills related to teaching reading...*
    - i. Have you noticed that your teaching practices have changed related to shared book reading?*
    - ii. Have you noticed that your teaching practices have changed related to small group instruction?*
  - b. Has FRF influenced other areas of your teaching?*
  - c. Has FRF changed how you reflect on your teaching?*
  - d. Can you tell me of a time when you used something that you got from your coach?*
- 7. What changes have you seen in your students as a result of FRF? Please describe those for me.*
  - a. Have you noticed a “carryover effect” of FRF on any student skills not directly discussed in coaching?*
- 8. The model being developed with FRF is expected to be implemented in other MPS schools next year. We are interested in hearing what was beneficial about how FRF was implemented, and if there were any challenges to successful coaching.*
  - a. What about FRF was helpful to you as a teacher?*
  - b. What about FRF was challenging?*
  - c. What recommendations do you have for improving FRF?*

## **V. Closing**

- 9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?*
- 10. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me and for participating in this project. Would you be willing to be contacted if there are any follow-up questions about your responses?*

## Appendix E

### 2014-2015 Focus on Reading Foundations

#### Coach Interview Protocol

##### I. Background

*Hello, my name is (INSERT NAME OF INTERVIEWER) and I work with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which was contracted by Milwaukee Succeeds to conduct a formative evaluation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program. One component of this evaluation is interviewing the coaches to gain a deeper understanding of the project. Your perspective is very important as we try to provide information to reflect on the project in order to continually learn, grow, and improve and as we try to document the project for future such work. During this interview, we would like to find out about:*

- *The current implementation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program.*
- *Your insights about the impact it has had on the educators you coached and on their students.*
- *Any suggestions you have for improving the program in the future.*

##### II. Procedures

*First I need to go over some housekeeping business: I want to review the consent information for participating in this interview today and tell you a little bit more about the process.*

#### **CONDUCT CONSENT PROCEDURE USING CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET.**

*Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started.*

##### III. Questions on Implementation and Impact

1. *How did you get involved with the Focus on Reading Foundations program, or FRF?*
  - a. *What was your first impression of the program?*
2. *Can you please describe your experience with FRF?*
  - a. *What sort of activities were you involved in?*
  - b. *Can you tell me about a typical session with a FRF coach?*
3. *Can you please describe your relationship with the teachers you coached?*
  - a. *How has that changed from the start of FRF to now?*
  - b. *What did you do to develop that relationship? (\*Only ask if change in relationship is suggested)*
4. *Did you see the teachers' attitudes change about FRF coaching through the experience?*
  - a. *Was there an "Aha!" moment for any of your teachers where things fell into place for them? Can you tell me about that moment?*

5. *When did you feel the most challenged during FRF?*
6. *What changes have you seen in the teachers you coached as a result of FRF?*
  - a. *Has FRF seem to change how they reflect on their teaching?*
  - b. *Can you tell me of a time or two when they used something you gave them in their classroom?*
7. *What changes have you seen in the students of the teachers you coached as a result of FRF?*
8. *The model being developed with FRF is expected to be implemented in other MPS schools next year. We are interested in hearing what was beneficial about how FRF was implemented, and if there were any challenges to successful coaching.*
  - a. *What about FRF was helpful to you as a coach?*
  - b. *What about FRF was challenging?*
  - c. *What recommendations do you have for improving FRF?*

## **V. Closing**

9. *Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?*
10. *Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me and for participating in this project. Would you be willing to be contacted if there are any follow-up questions about your responses?*

## Appendix F

### 2014-2015 Focus on Reading Foundations

#### Administration Interview Protocol

##### I. Background

*Hello, my name is (INSERT NAME OF INTERVIEWER) and I work with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which was contracted by Milwaukee Succeeds to conduct a formative evaluation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program. One component of this evaluation is interviewing the coaches to gain a deeper understanding of the project. Your perspective is very important as we try to provide information to reflect on the project in order to continually learn, grow, and improve and as we try to document the project for future such work. During this interview, we would like to find out about:*

- *The current implementation of the Focus on Reading Foundations program.*
- *Your insights about the impact it has had on the educators you coached and on their students.*
- *Any suggestions you have for improving the program in the future.*

##### II. Procedures

*First I need to go over some housekeeping business: I want to review the consent information for participating in this interview today and tell you a little bit more about the process.*

#### **CONDUCT CONSENT PROCEDURE USING CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET.**

*Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started.*

##### III. Questions on Implementation and Impact

1. *How did you get involved with the Focus on Reading Foundations program, or FRF?*
  - a. *What was your first impression of the program?*
2. *Please describe your experiences with FRF at your school.*
  - a. *What do you understand its purposes to be?*
  - b. *What has been your level of involvement with FRF?*
3. *What changes have you noticed in the teachers involved with FRF?*
  - a. *Concerning their reading instruction?*
  - b. *Concerning their behavior and classroom management skills?*
4. *What changes in the students of the teachers that are participating in FRF have you seen (that are a result of FRF)?*

5. *The model being developed with FRF is expected to be implemented in other MPS schools next year. We are interested in hearing what was beneficial about how FRF was implemented, and if there were any challenges to successful coaching.*
  - a. *Was there anything about how it was structured that was especially helpful to you as a \*principal/SST/etc.?*
  - b. *Was there anything that was especially challenging about FRF at your school?*
  - c. *What recommendations do you have for improving FRF?*

## **V. Closing**

6. *Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?*

*Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me and for participating in this project. Would you be willing to be contacted if there are any follow-up questions about your responses?*

## Appendix G

### **Full Explanation of Identified Themes**

The following 39 themes have been organized in order from the most frequently endorsed themes to the least frequently endorsed themes. The text from respondents who endorsed the theme has been included. The number and percentage of total respondents, teachers, administrators, and coaches that endorse each theme has been included in Table 2.

#### **Theme 1: Coaches Followed a Model, Observe, Provide Feedback Process**

The coaches participating in the coaching programs followed a similar process over the course of the school year. Early on the coaches modeled the teaching practice they were working with teachers to improve. Next they would observe and provide feedback on that process; this feedback could occur both in the moment or after the observation was completed. As teachers became more skilled in the targeted practice coaches primarily observed and collected data but still provided modeling and feedback where necessary. 18 respondents (78.26%) described this model-observe-feedback process, and did so when describing what it was that coaches did with teachers.

Respondent 2 (administrator) succinctly described the coaching program by saying “A coach has come in and modeled, coached, and provided feedback to teachers so [the teachers] can confidently provide that [intervention].” Respondent 4 (administrator) elaborated on this process and drew a distinction between the coaching and other PD teachers received. She reported:

What I really like about what my coach did was that she didn't just give us PD but she sat there and coached the kids while the instruction was happening like as a part of the rotation. She went in there and she modeled. It was more than just a one-time thing. She



stayed with them for the whole year... and she worked with them like closely... It was more like the I do - you do - you do type of model. She did it and then they did it together, and then the teacher did it on their own while she was there a couple of times. It wasn't just PD where does this connect to the kids? It was right there with the kids. She was in the trenches there with the teachers. I think that is very beneficial.

Respondent 9 (teacher) describe the process this way:

[The coach] would come in and model it for us and how to do it. And then I would do it and then she would let me know what I was doing okay and what I wasn't doing... She would always come in once a week. And give me feedback on the stuff. That was very helpful too.

Respondent 10 (teacher) expressed her gratitude for the modeling.

And you know once we saw - and then the modeling they did. That really helped. I keep telling them all the time, that modeling was so nice. And they did it over and over. And that kind of makes you realize Hey, this is what we've got to do with my students. I mean some of the things we do with the students they are like "we have to do that again?" And it's like until it's perfected.

Other times they will just observe and then they will write some information down.

Maybe give it to us later.

Respondent 13 (teacher) also described her need for modeling. She said:

Initially I had questions because everything I got from [previous professional development] I used. It was just brief. It wasn't enough time to get everything that you really needed. But it was the resources available. But it wasn't enough modeling that took place so I was really glad they modeled the skills when they came to my class.... [T]he

first couple sessions I was like "did I do that right? Did I do this right? Okay, what do you suggest for that?" We'd have like a little mentoring session.

Demonstrating initially, yeah. Yes. And then they would also give me pointers on what I could do. Some ways that I could kind of keep the group moving forward.

Respondent 12 (teacher) described how this coaching support was differentiated based on teacher need.

[At] the beginning of this year I didn't need as much modeling as newer teachers... but [my coach] still came in and made sure I was on the right track and modeled for me until I felt comfortable enough doing it for myself.

Respondent 16 (coach) described how the coaching process changed over the school year:

I think at the beginning of the year it was strictly modeling, modeling, modeling. Then we slowly had the teacher step in and start practicing some of the program. But if there was a situation midyear or end of the year when the activity that they were working on wasn't quite the way it should have been we would just gently model for them and that worked out very well. And they were really - at first I would say 90% of the teachers were on board. But the couple that were not on board really started to come around after the modeling.

Respondent 15 (coach) described the modeling and feedback experience by saying:

So I'm sitting right next to the teacher. I'm really watching student responses to what the teacher. So I'm watching for the teacher too...[At]t the end just a quick like recap if there is any corrective feedback I want to give that I want the teacher to remember for the next session.

So we're balancing instruction and practice in the session. So I'm sitting next to the teacher, and she's implementing her instruction, and I'm watching the students' responses relative to her instruction, and advising her to either do more instruction, so maybe like a discrimination task on somethings she's introducing that's in an acquisition phase for the students. Or helping her to navigate some of the fluency practices once kids have the skill and they're building mastery and fluency on it.

Respondent 22 (teacher) described modeling as the coach “teaching” her students while the she watched. She said:

So [the coach] would teach. First she started off teaching the first two groups and I would do the last group, and then she transitioned into she would do the first group and I would teach with the prompts the second and the third group... [S]he would teach them, I would sit next to her and kind of just observe what she was doing but I had to manage anything kids wise, and then after they switched then I would switch seats and she would sit next to me and have a prompt where she was tallying and marking what I did and didn't do or whatever. And then after the other groups were done then the kids would go back... [we] would talk about what went well, any concerns, any questions. And then she would leave.

Respondent 23 (teacher) was surprised when the coach stopped teaching and expected the teacher to take over, but she also reported that this modeling was helpful. She said:

Yeah, I didn't think... when [the coach] first came and he did it, he went through them, I listened and thought, ‘that's really great he's going to do that with them’ so that then maybe I can take some of the higher level kids’. But then he said I was supposed to do it next. Which makes sense so you can teach me what you're doing and stuff, so I thought that was good. He was an excellent model for all of the points in the book and stuff, I

really enjoyed that. That made it clearly easier to do, because I hadn't done that before. He was a good model.

Respondent 7 (teacher) described this also, saying:

In the beginning them modeling helped a lot too. Because I needed to see what it looks like. And they were good with doing that. And then when I got to the point that I was asking them to continue to model they were like 'well we need to see how you do it' so I start on my own and doing it as I thought it was supposed to be done and it went well.

Three respondents discussed the observation and feedback from the coaches, but did not mention modeling. Respondent 5 (teacher) reported:

[My coach] came in to observe in my classroom. And watch me implement those strategies I've been using... we just kind of talked about our progress and what was working and what wasn't working and then he gave us suggestions on where we can improve and what we can improve on.

Respondent 6 (teacher) added:

[The coach] would come in, they came on Wednesday. And they would observe me with my intervention group which is my lowest 3 to 5 students. They just basically for the most part observed and then as I was going anything that I would like - as I was saying "oh I've been doing this" they would give me recommendations.

...They were there so that when I was working on something either I was the way that I was doing it or saw it they would say I was right. Or they would say "it would be better if you did it this way."

Respondent 11 (teacher) described the coaching as:

Well [my coach] would come in and observe me in my small reading groups and she would give me different feedback on the skills that the kids were working on. And if they were having trouble with a certain skill, like blending sounds, she would give me different tips and strategies. And she would show me how to do that. And then have me do it and give me different feedback. Different tips.

Four coaches described modeling as the start of the coaching process, followed by observation and feedback. Respondent 17 (coach) said:

Usually it's just coming in and sitting next to the teacher as they have their small group of students in front of them. As they are doing the instructional activities we can interject things or say this might not work... pretty much it's the teacher's responsibility but we add things in and coach them along the way. Afterwards we give them a little feedback on what worked really well and what they might need to work on. That's what a session looks like... Towards the end a lot of it was just observation. Toward the end because they had it down. Cause they worked hard.

Respondent 18 (coach) made a distinction in her interview between “coaching” where she observed and provided feedback and modeling. She reported:

I went in once a week and I modeled the book reading once or twice for the teacher and she watched and then we switched and I'd watch her. And then she was really great, she never missed a prompt. She never made a mistake. She did it better than I did, really... so I kept track of what she was doing and if she needed to be coached afterward I would have, but she just did so great that I kind of told her ‘good job’ and you know, ‘you got all of them!’ and that was really kind of it. It was minimal coaching because she was so great...

Oh well I didn't do a whole lot of coaching, I would model... Yeah and I would just model it and then afterward- at the beginning I would give her a highlighted guide with all the things that she got on it... The modeling... well I initially, the teacher told me she thought the prompts would be really distracting and that they would just completely interrupt kids' knowledge of the like, the story and what was happening and that they wouldn't be able to follow the plot because we were interrupting every five seconds but after the first few books she was like 'oh my gosh they really get it! They get the book, they know what happened, and they're learning all this stuff. I never knew!' ... Now she said 'oh my god, now I know I can focus on things other than plot and setting.'

Respondent 19 (coach) added:

Basically I went in once a week, for me it was on Mondays and I went in and would have a book and a script and typically this was during their structured reading time... I would basically model for the teacher while she was watching me, go through the prompts on the shared book reading guide and sort of read the kids the book, and then the teacher would [show me those skills] twice and I would give her feedback.

Respondent 21 (coach) reported that the teacher did not always observe the modeling as expected, but that she made gains and eventually no longer needed modeling. She said:

During that [coaching] time the teacher was supposed to be observing me, whether she did or did not sort of fluctuated, and then I observed the teacher give the book reading and then I would give her a score at the end... By halfway through [the program] the modeling wasn't as necessary anymore... so we actually cut it down. At the end I might try to say something about how we could improve.

## **Theme 2: Participants Reported Positive Perceptions about the Coaches**

Fifteen participants (65.22%) shared positive opinions of the coaches. Three respondent's provided overall general praise for the coaches. Respondent 3 (administrator) said "The coaches that was just god sent;" Respondent 8 (teacher) said "I think one thing that is helpful is having the coaches;" and Respondent 11 (teacher) said "I mean I love them - they're great, so... I mean they are knowledgeable. They're supportive. I'm so glad that they are around, so. Yeah, nothing but positive things."

The coaches were praised for being knowledgeable, flexible, having good communication, and being trustworthy. The following quotations from administrators and teachers reflect this praise.

Respondent 3 (administrator) said the success of the program came from

having knowledgeable people who know what they are doing who are good with people coming in and developing relationships with our people here at [our school]...

The communication has been great you know we seen the emails and updates... you know communicating and everybody's doing their thing, but we are coming together and checking in with each other.

Respondent 5 (teacher) said of the coach that "He was very reliable and gave me great suggestions and if I had any questions he always was happy to answer them and great at answering. The coaches were all very nice, very helpful."

Respondent 6 (teacher) shared:

They were really flexible and they were there to help but they weren't there to - you know - telling me too much. They basically what I need help with and asked for they would do... So they were just super helpful, super flexible and effective... They are really flexible and

helpful, supportive, made me feel that I was doing - like to make me enjoy it more. So they were great, ...flexible, friendly...

Like okay, they are just going to be here and I - I had to ask kind of for the help. I had to ask for help, but if I had a question then they were right there to answer it. Or they were "we are going to find out and find a way for you to do that."

When asked about what was most helpful to her during the coaching program Respondent 6 (teacher) added "...the coaching. And the support. And just like the positive - how positive they were."

Respondent 7 (teacher) shared "The reading coaches were very helpful in places... like 'what do I do for advancement.' So they were very helpful in those areas... The coaches were friendly, helpful, insightful. They did what they were supposed to do." Respondent 8 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

They're very nice. You know, we get along well. They are very accommodating too, and then also too the kids, you know, like them too. Very personable and um they are easy to talk to and easy to work with too...

Just being available you know for one, like even just having each other's cell phone number. You know, because I'm the kind of person, unfortunately, that doesn't check their email all the time, but I was able to share um Cell phone numbers with [my coach] so when she would come in she would just text me, you know, or if I couldn't be there or she couldn't be there you know, so you have to be trusting and personable to do that with a person

Respondent 9 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:



Yeah, there was a trust. And to be able to help me with [progress monitoring]. If I didn't have enough time to do it myself they would be willing to come in and say "hey do you want me to do it" and I would be "yes, thank you." And also they were able to go like the extra mile to help us out...

The coaches always had an open door policy where you could go in and ask them a question or send them an email and ask "can you come in and help me with this" and she was here.

Respondent 10 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

Oh, it's all been I guess you could say very cordial... Yes, beginning of the year they let us be pretty flexible. And then we got to pick our time and it worked... You know, good two way communication.

Respondent 11 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

They were helpful. And it's nice to always have more people to help you because there is so many things to do in the day and not enough time...

I mean I love them - they're great, so... I mean they are knowledgeable. They're supportive. I'm so glad that they are around, so. Yeah, nothing but positive things. And if I no idea what I was doing they would guide me through my questions!

Respondent 12 (teacher) described the coaches by saying "Just you know being open and willing to answer question, and not forcing it on me. But kind of guiding me through the whole the process and what they expected."

Respondent 13 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

They were very supportive. That meant a lot to me. They were very open and they were approachable. You wouldn't feel like I'm bothering them. Or like I was a burden. I never felt like that towards them. They were amazing to me. That's my opinion.

Respondent 22 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

Oh I loved her she is very nice, very easy to talk to. Like I said, if I had any concerns or whatever I could email her, text her. She was great with the kids they felt comfortable with her right away.

I don't know any other coaches but I had such a positive experience because I really enjoyed her and because I know that she enjoyed the kids and made them comfortable and they bonded with her pretty quickly, so I think that helped a lot because when someone new comes in 90% of the problem is they don't want to listen to her, you know, that type of thing. So I think, I think the coaches have a big thing to do with how comfortable you are with them. Some people don't just click together."

Respondent 23 (teacher) described the coaches by saying:

I really enjoyed him. He took the initiative a lot... So he would try and find other stuff to do for maybe 5-10 minutes with the kids, like he would help me get started with the groups and help the kids for a few minutes and wait for me over here once we got done. So that was really good.

Three of the coaches also reflected on their positive traits that made them more successful coaches. Respondent 16 (coach) described her approach to working with teachers as "I think we were gentle. And kept it very light. We were not demanding at all. We just approached them delicately." Respondent 17 (coach) described her approach by saying "[I was] encouraging. 'Oh look. That really worked for her. Did you see that?' You know. Pointing things out."

Respondent 18 (coach)

Yeah I think so. And I think just following through on what I said I was going to do. You know, like 'I will bring you this next week' and then I did, I think that really helps. If you don't do that, you're just in trouble.

### **Theme 3: Some Respondents Initially had Negative Attitudes and Concerns about Participating**

Fourteen respondents (60.87%) reported that they themselves, or the teachers with whom they were working, had at least a partially negative initial response to the coaching program they participated in. These responses represented a mix of feelings.

One source of resistance were the feelings that the coaching program was another initiative that would be adopted for a short period of time before being abandoned by the school. Respondent 2 (administrator) described the initial resistance of some of the teachers at her school by saying "teachers may have a tendency to say this [program] is this year; this won't keep happening." Respondent 15 (coach) agreed with this sentiment: "there's a lot of history of teachers, you know, fielding a lot of different sorts of initiatives and so it was very predictable that there would be a wide range of receptions. Some teachers were reluctant to move off of the sort of... traditional guided reading routines that's one set."

Another negative response was that teachers were already busy and overworked, the coaching programs were seen as an extra responsibility. Respondent 19 (coach) reflected on one resistant teacher with which he worked. He reported "I think [her resistance] was kind of like "one more thing" honestly." Respondent 14 (teacher) expressed this by saying:

What was my first impression? You want to know the truth? "What else do we have to do!?" To be dead honest. I was like "arg, how much - I have enough things to do already.

And now you're going to pile on something else. And we have to get all this stuff into this timeframe and make it all work out." My first reaction was not a positive one.

Respondent 14 (teacher) believed this response would be typical of other teachers as well:

Initially no one is going to want to do it. I can just be totally honest. No one is going to want to take on a new challenge. We are being challenged enough by the district, the state, the way we have to plan. Everything is just - we have to do so much more than we had to do a year ago. Five years ago. So initially I think most people would be resistant. I'm just going to be honest. Those of us who aren't shallow are going to learn to open our ears and give it a shot. At the end of the day it doesn't matter if I wanted to do it or didn't want to do it, the bottom line is I'm a team player. Boss says you need to do this I may not want to but if the boss says it I'm going to do it. I found out after doing it that "hey, this is alright." Unfortunately, if I had to give my honest opinion about other schools adopting it, initially yeah, they are going to be resistant. They don't want the new task, something else to do, something else to be responsible for. Another thing to record and turn in. No one wants that, I'm telling you right now. They are going to be resistant. But when all is said and done, if they are really here for the right reason, which is the children, then they will be at the end of the year their exit interview will sound a lot like mine. That's just my take.

He further added:

I would probably say [it was most challenging] in the beginning. Obviously, like I said, most people would have a resistance to having to add something else to what they already do... First couple of days I was like "I don't want to do this" but then after that and I got into it.

Respondent 7 (teacher) expressed a similar thought:

Anybody will have second thoughts about changes. New things. And I'm going to be honest and say 'yes, I was [resistant] in the beginning. But once I knew the whole concept, the whole picture of it I was all for it. I welcomed it.

Respondent 3 (administrator) described having to address the teacher's initial concerns, saying "there were some teachers who were very skeptical at first and that was probably the biggest challenge: easing their concerns and making sure they understood that this won't feel like another thing."

Other respondents expressed feeling initially overwhelmed by the coaching programs. Respondent 12 (teacher) expressed this succinctly by saying "[What about FRF was challenging?] I would say just being overwhelmed at first." Respondent 6 (teacher) highlighted that it was not just the coaching process, but the amount of materials associated with the coaching programs that was overwhelming. She said:

The hardest thing is the way that we just got all of these materials - but you don't really know what to do with them. There was like lots of binders and books and it was kind of overwhelming because like when do I even have the time to sit and read through and figure out all this... we just kind of got them and it was like "oh, look through these." And I never really did get to look through everything. And a lot of it I just started doing like an exercise or two at a time. And most teachers in the first month or two were saying like "what are we even supposed to do? What are you doing?" So there was like - I feel like I showed a lot of them what to do. Whether it was right or not who knows? But there was like - that was hard. And the coaches eventually started coming and telling us "oh yeah" - but there was like no one who actually - you just kind of started it on your own. And you didn't know what you were doing.

Respondent 10 (teacher) expressed that she felt fear at the start of the coaching program. She describes feeling

Scared at first. You know all of a sudden you are trying to take these low students and you are just told that we have to bring these kids up. So you are thinking what am I going to do... Yeah I think that's how most people are. When you start something you are afraid you are going to make mistakes. Just like how the students are, though. And so we do the same thing.

Three responding teachers shared that their initial negative feelings were linked to the lack of clarity they felt about the coaching programs. Respondent 6 (teacher) said:

I didn't fully understand what they would be doing right away... I didn't understand what these coaches would be doing. I just knew that these coaches would be at our school and help. Which sounded good. But then once the program started it just kind of made more sense.

Respondent 23 (teacher) shared some specific misconceptions she had about the role of the coaches, which caused her to feel frustrated and overwhelmed in the beginning. She said:

Before we started I thought it would be a good idea because I thought it was a little different than how it actually played out. I thought that he would have... he would show me what he was doing and then he was going to do a group by himself. I didn't know he wanted me to do it after he did it. I thought it was a little different... When he first came and he did it, he went through them, I listened and thought, 'that's really great he's going to do that with them' so that then maybe I can take some of the higher level kids'. But then he said I was supposed to do it next. Which makes sense so you can teach me what you're doing and stuff, so I thought that was good.

One coach also expressed skepticism about the coaching process at the start of the program. Respondent 21 (coach) said:

I had my doubts a little bit because I was afraid that since ...we were modeling it for teachers, that teachers would be maybe offended that we couldn't just give them the guide and do it themselves, so I kind of didn't see the point of the modeling at first so I was a little bit skeptical about that. So that was probably my first impression.... I was curious as to maybe how the method was going to work.

Respondent 17 (coach) revealed that not fully understanding the coaching process was shared between teachers and coaches. She described her misconception by saying: "what did I think? I thought it would be more of a one on one tutorial program actually. I knew I'd be coaching but I thought I'd be working with the children more one on one."

Although over half of the participants expressed some negative response at the start of coaching, Respondent 16 (coach) expressed that she thought a minority of participants were truly resistant to coaching. When asked how many of the teachers she worked with were resistant to her coming to their classroom in the beginning she said:

I think maybe 10%... I mean we had 6 and originally like 7 or 8... so we had 14 teachers initially. And we had 2 that were very resistant. And they were very vocal about that. So it's a small percentage.

Respondent 17 (coach) shared that she was able to build relationships with coaches that were initially resistant, but when doing so she revealed that teacher's negative reaction at the start of coaching. Speaking of the teacher, Respondent 17 said "she even joked about it. 'I remember how I yelled at you in the very beginning. I didn't want anything to do with you. I was so mean to you.' "

#### **Theme 4: Scheduling and Finding Adequate Time were Significant Logistical Barriers**

Fourteen respondents (60.87%) reported several factors related to time were barriers to successful coaching and implementation of the supported literacy programs. These factors included scheduling concerns such as there not being enough time for meetings, that meetings conflicted with other activities, or with reading interventions occurring at times (i.e., the afternoon) which were not ideal for the students.

Respondent 6 (teacher) summarized the overall struggle reflected in all of the following comment: that ensuring adequate time for coaching activities was difficult...

And I found it valuable - it's just there's not... the time is so hard. I like the consultant. I like the ideas and I like working on these strategies. I just got so frustrated with the time.

That really was my only problem,

Respondents 8 (teacher) and 10 (teacher) also shared that they felt like there was not enough time. Respondent 8 (teacher) reported, "That's been the challenge: just time. Having enough time to implement everything. Yeah that was the most challenging part was the time, you know, having the time to implement it the way I would like to." Respondent 10 (teacher) reported that the coaches also seemed like they were short on time. "They seem really busy so it's - they are usually rushing around trying to get 30 minutes with me. And then they go to another class for 30 minutes and so they have to stay on a tight schedule."

Respondent 15 (coach) highlighted that time had to be scheduled not just for the teachers to give the intervention, or for coaches to come model and observe those interventions, but also for the other components of the coaching programs:

The most challenging the most challenging piece by far is juggling, is the scheduling part and the limited time available to cram everything in that teachers have guidance to do and



making the case for what's going to be the most effective for that limited amount of time and how to sort of meld or coordinate with the other parts of the comprehensive literacy plan. Yeah I would say that scheduling... I think just adequate time, adequate training time from the front end so much more instream training had to be done because we had such limited initial training...

A coaching schedule that's frequent enough is key. The progress monitoring is key and we need to make that better. Time with the teachers to brief away from students.

Those things really limited. Time was limited for those sorts of things so keep putting those in the structure will be really important.

Respondent 7 (teacher) reported that the rigidity of the intervention schedule was a large challenge for her. She said:

Having to do it at the same time everyday [was a challenge], because not every day I was on time with everything... There are some days where I'm not going to be sitting down with a student or students when [the coaches] came in. Sometimes I had to see them coming through the door and grab a couple of kids and then work with them because I may have had a student that couldn't get on the computer that day or I had a student in an area that wasn't comprehending what they needed to do that day and I had to help them. Or [my aid] wasn't in the room that day and I had to move around the room. So that was the most challenging to me. Having to be there at that time every day.

Respondent 1 (administrator) reported that one of her roles as an administrator was to coordinate the schedules of the other participants. She said:

So she's been the one that has been getting schedules together about when they can come in and get with the students, when they can watch teachers working with the students, and so forth. So it's been that kind of triangularization of schedules.

However, Respondents 16 (coach) and 17 (coach) highlighted the struggles with having someone else set the schedule for the work they were doing. Their complaints involved the fact that some teachers had afternoon literacy intervention time, which was seen as being less productive as other times in the school day.

Respondent 16 (coach) reported:

Scheduling at one school was - the SST, the school support teacher, really spent the whole summer on her schedule. And it was perfect. And they did all their literacy in the morning, which was perfect. Because kindergarten, 1st, and second graders get tired in the afternoon. And you need to be sharp when you are doing this. The second school had first grader literacy in the afternoon. That was challenging for us and that was challenging for the teachers. And it was challenging for the students. That was probably the trickiest part because these kids would come in after recess. It would take them a half an hour to settle down. And then they were tired. They'd lay down. They'd be hot. They'd be thirsty. They weren't ready to read. So we tried to redo that schedule. But there was really nothing we could do with that schedule.

...it was set at the beginning of the year with their SST. But it was tricky because I felt like the kids didn't get the biggest bang for their buck. And it wasn't the kid's' fault. They were tired. And think about kindergarteners. Or 1st graders. This is their first experience of not having any center time or recess. So in the afternoon it's tricky to focus. So I think that was probably the trickiest part, just the scheduling at the one school.

Respondent 17 (coach) agreed with these thoughts and said “Structure your day earlier in the day and not right after lunch. Though you can't change the schedule... unless you can.”

Respondent 9 (teacher) shared two reasons why an afternoon schedule for the coaching program didn't always work: student behavior was worse and it was easy for the program to get pushed from the schedule by earlier plans that took longer than expected.

Sometimes getting the intervention in in the afternoon was challenging for me... if we had a rough afternoon or something and I didn't get everything in it was a challenge to [get to it]. So that was a problem. That was a challenge. To make sure that I'd get it down.

Or maybe somehow change my interventions in the morning if possible. Or do it right at when we come in from recess as some of the kids get settled down I can take the small group here. I guess it's more tweaking the schedule on how the principal makes it work. It's hard because there is not enough time in the day. And afternoons are rough for all of us after lunch.

Except for implementing it when you had a rough day! That's the only challenge that I had was implementing it at the end of the day. It was from one thirty to two. So if you didn't get to your major subjects it was kind of hard. It was challenging at the end of the year. The end of the day time was really the biggest challenge.

Respondent 13 (teacher) reported that she struggled keeping to the tight schedule of her school:

[My challenge] wasn't anything with the FRF program per se. It was the scheduling. You know like we have a strict schedule to go by and some days with the behavior issues I would find myself scrambling. And then forming my groups to try to service their needs - that was really hard. And that was outside of your control. Moving forward I would like to

work on my being disciplined enough to like stick to my schedule and making sure that I get it in. Cause things would come up and I felt like, I'm just being honest, the reality of it the way I want to use it - I want to use it more so every day. And I couldn't do it every day and that would frustrate me...

[I tried to implement what the coaches taught me at] least three times a week. But I wanted five. Cause gym was scheduled in and those kinds of things. And then Friday was struggle... That would frustrate me. I was frustrated in that aspect... It was out of your hands, basically. The time constraints. We were under the notion that we would have the liberty to have the time... kind of have more liberty in our scheduling.

Respondents 5 (teacher) and 8 (teacher) felt like meetings held after school cut into other valuable training and preparation that teachers not receiving coaching received. (Not all coaches met with teachers after the school day.) Respondent 5 (teacher) commented on this saying:

The one thing I would say to do differently or change is it was hard to meet after school because on those Tuesdays and Thursdays because it always interfered with our staff meetings so we would be having the staff meeting at the same time. So we missed a lot of Information so we weren't caught up on - the meeting times were a little hard to do sometimes.

Respondent 8 (teacher) said:

Maybe have the meetings during the day? You know. Right, yeah because there's just so much to do and then a lot of times we feel like we're being cheated. Because for one we're missing out on the meeting the school is having the PD and then other times there's things that you know, we need to work on so that's always something.

Respondents 18 (coach) and 20 (coach) shared that scheduling conflicts sometimes prevented the teachers and the coaches from implementing the coaching programs with fidelity.

Respondent 18 (coach) reported:

Things happen in classrooms, right? My teacher wasn't always around to watch me model. There were a few weeks when things would come up. I showed up one day and she's like, 'oh my gosh, I have a meeting scheduled for this morning, I'm sorry I didn't tell you... Yes, scheduling things could be difficult but I think there are only two weeks when we ran into trouble and I don't know, I went for maybe twelve weeks- that might be an overestimate- but for the amount of time I was there it wasn't that big a deal.

Respondent 20 (coach) reported:

Alright so since March I've been going most weeks... we had a couple weeks in the beginning where we had some scheduling issues but after those were worked out we were able to be really consistent with going and the times and everything... We had three weeks at the beginning when we were supposed to be meeting but then I was gone, then she was gone, then something else happened and so things were already behind so she had less modeling and coaching than everybody else anyway. So that was a challenge.

Respondent 16 (coach) had a fairly positive attitude about these scheduling conflicts.

The teachers were really great about staying on the schedule. The only... towards the end of the year we ran into a few glitches with field trips and different things. But you are not going to be able to avoid that. And they were pretty good about communicating to us in advance if they needed to switch their time. Due to testing or something like that.

Respondent 17 (coach), however, shared how important she thinks it will be for future coaches to emphasize sticking to the coaching schedule:

One thing for next year is to really make clear to the teachers that your time to come in to coach is *your* time to come in and coach. And sometimes it is only once a week. That if they are running behind in science before that they have to stop it. Or if they are absent the day before and had a sub and they didn't finish their work... I had that excuse one time this year. Just reasons why - you come once for 20 minutes to half an hour. That's their scheduled time a week. They should really be there for that. And do their group for that time. So one thing that I need to be more stern about is this is your time and don't do anything else during that time. And I do understand that you have to be flexible. I was in the classroom too. I know. But some of those things could have been done at a different time. I realize that. Yeah, sticking to your own time.

#### **Theme 5: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Participating Teachers**

Fourteen respondents (60.87%) reported a positive relationship between the participating coaches and teachers. Respondent 1 (administrator) identified the coaches' manner of providing feedback and support as a factor in developing the positive relationship. She reported:

Now they [provided feedback] in a manner that was non-harming. They made people feel comfortable, the way that they spoke. If things didn't go well it was confidential. The teachers didn't feel they were being told on or anything like that. That really strengthened the relationship [between the coaches and the teachers].

Respondent 11 (teacher) identified the coaches' ability to offer advice and her comfort in asking for advice as an indicator of a good relationship. She said:

But my relationship with them? They always had advice for me and I always felt comfortable asking for advice from them for different things. And going over the data

with them and showing how good the kids were doing. [The relationship was] good the whole way through.

Respondent 15 (coach) described the range of relationships that existed between coaches and teachers, and the process of establishing these relationships. She reported:

[The relationship was] different for almost every teacher. Very customized. It was good with every teacher. There were slower starts and there were faster starts and there were you know less enthusiasm, or more enthusiasm the whole range...

And even the more resistant teachers really did not take very long to establish that this was a mutually um supportive relationship that we were embarking on and that there was a lot of freedom to express, you know, if it didn't feel mutually supportive. To just please state that. And so it was really good. Very satisfying...

[My relationship strategy was to] just sort of shape tolerance to my presence. I mean the initial training helped a lot because teachers knew what you were up to, what you were trying to help with. What you were asking them to consider infusing. And so on the strength of what their views were about the value of those interventions. It wasn't extremely difficult with any teacher. I think it was more, there were more logistical issues around when, and how, and with who. So basically it was just kind of scanning the landscape for opportunities to add value to what the teachers were doing and making your case for that and having some you know smaller slices early on and building from there.

Respondent 16 (coach) described how offering support built the relationship between coach and teacher, saying:

And we tried to build a relationship, a nice relationship, with them. You know. We tried to support them. And I think once they felt that we were supportive and that we weren't there to judge. We were there to help.

Respondent 21 (coach) discussed how the teacher supported her in her coaching role, even as she was in the position of providing feedback and support to the teacher. She described the two-way relationship:

Positive, I hope! I think they were both receptive to me. 2nd grade teacher very nice, I think she enjoyed the process. She might have been overwhelmed at times but I think she got over it, she hit her stride for sure. I would hope she didn't have any complaints, I don't know. I feel like maybe, like I said, felt overwhelmed and maybe like there were too many demands, but hopefully that wasn't me it's just the nature of the project. I think she would have liked to not have to sit and watch me all the time, but that's the nature of the project. K4 I think well. She called me 'Elizabeth' for a very long time and then I think was very embarrassed when she found out my name was actually [something else] but other than that I think it was good. She was very good; I was very impressed I actually felt like I was the weaker link there. Because she has all these... I don't know, techniques that she uses with her kids in terms of beginning and ends of words like she'll put her forehead and move it to her chin and be like 'where do you hear this'. So sometimes I would ask something and they would not respond and she would kind of take over and be like 'put your hand on there and feel, where does it come?' and it's like, 'oh now I feel... you're better at this than I am, why am I here?' but overall good, I think? I liked them both, I hope that they don't have any complaints about me. I tried to praise them when they were



doing really well. Of course when you have feedback, not being super critical, just ‘maybe we could do it this way.

Respondent 22 (teacher) reported that she felt the coaches have a responsibility to make teachers comfortable with the process and relationship. She reported:

Like I’m sure maybe I was – I don’t know any other coaches but I had such a positive experience because I really enjoyed her and because I know that she enjoyed the kids and made them comfortable and they bonded with her pretty quickly, so I think that helped a lot because when someone new comes in 90% of the problem is they don’t want to listen to her, you know, that type of thing. So I think, I think the coaches have a big thing to do with how comfortable you are with them. Some people don’t just click together. Not, you know, so I think...

Respondent 18 (coach) described her relationship with the teacher as collaborative, saying:

Oh it was great! She’s so great, I love her. Yeah, really positive. I was nervous initially about going in, you know, I’m not a reading teacher, I’ve never been a teacher, but we worked like really collaboratively, she’d ask me, ‘what do you think about, I don’t know, whatever’. I think we had a really good relationship. I really want to work with her again in the future. I think she, you know, I think she’s excited to maybe have me back if we can work that out.

Respondent 7 (teacher) shared that the coaches were complimentary and non-judgmental, which helped with the relationship. She said:

They were all so friendly and so nice and they would comment on our teaching styles or compliment us and just make us feel real comfortable. They were not real bossy and they weren't controlling. They were here to help us. And they let us know that right out of the

box that they were here to help us. Not to judge us. None of that. And they fed us once!

That was a nice gesture, something that they didn't have to do.

Other respondents simply identified the relationship as positive. Respondent 3 (administrator) said “I see them in the hallway and we’re like ‘Hi! Hi!’ ...[T]hey are part of the staff to me.”

Respondent 5 (teacher) said “I feel like [our relationship] was good. The time we had together was good.” Respondent 6 (teacher) said “I really still like the coach, the program, everything!”

Respondent 9 (teacher) said “We got along really good. I think we've gotten closer as we've been able to share, bounce off ideas and all of that. You know? But I think I had that from the

beginning, too.” Respondent 10 (teacher) said “[Our relationship] has just gotten better because we know each other better now.” Respondent 12 (teacher) said “I love working with [the

coaches]. I have nothing bad to say. We get along good, and they always have good information for me.”

### **Theme 6: Participating Students Improved in Foundational Reading Skills**

Fourteen respondents (60.87%) described that participation in the reading programs improved student literacy. Respondent 3 (administrator) reported that students at her school who received the coach supported reading intervention had exceeded school-based goals on standardized reading assessments. She said:

The data’s coming back saying this kid couldn't recognize the letter and now they know 20... one kid [has] just gone so far and they were moving so quickly... that the teacher was kind of having the problem of adjusting the plan because the kids were moving from book to book to book... [S]ome of the best data I think that I’ve seen is in the [standardized tests], so I’ve been drilling down on the data right now. I went to those rooms’ [results] and focused on the foundational reading [section] and we had a goal of by the end of the

year have at least 50% of those kids function out of the red and they have exceeded that in that particular area of foundational reading skills

Respondent 6 (teacher) reported that she saw:

Growth with all of them. But especially my lowest intervention kids that I really focused on with it. Their growth - but also their confidence builds for sure.

Definitely growth with all of them. They're still below grade level. And... their skills are there but they are not fluently reading. They are so close. But now that they have those foundational skills they just need the exposure to just more reading... they have all the sounds, they know how to blend their sounds. They just need more time to just read. In 1st grade they should be fluent readers. But from where they came in!

Respondent 7 (teacher) described how her students improved, although the level of improvement was not the same for all students. She said:

Some groups were able to advance to passages but some remain there. But for overall, every last one of the ones that I worked with advanced quite a bit. I'm sure they did more with me using that than they would have if I had not. I'm almost sure, I can actually swear to that...

I have two students that were the first ones I started working with... They were basically on the same level. And that was they may have known 50% of their letter sounds, actually 50% of their letters. They didn't even know all of their letters. They should at least know all their letters and all of their sounds by first grade. And have a list of sight words that they know. They knew no sight words whatsoever. I'm talking not even the one letter ones: like I or A. And I worked with them diligently together, those two together. One is actually reading books. The other one can read some passages. He

still struggles with sounding out words but my [goal] was to get my students, those two mainly, from where they were to reading three letter words. They can do that.

Respondent 8 (teacher) shared accounts of a student who was not referred for a special education evaluation due to the growth he demonstrated during the reading program and the increase in reading activity among her students. She said:

I [saw improvement] when the kids went to take like their second [assessment] and I saw how their scores were rising... I had [one student] last year he came in about April; March or April. And didn't do too well the year before or earlier in the year at the school he was at. And I was going to refer him to Special Education. And I thought, you know, I'll just hold him back to see how he does because he hasn't really been with me all year. And I see something. I think he can do better; I know he can. So I did hold him back, and this year he is doing much better, and I know FRF has something to do with that... I noticed he wasn't quite making the gains I wanted to see. So I decided I'm going to put him in this [FRF] group. Well he got in that group and then he just soared, he did so much better...

[The students in my FRF group] were reading more fluent than the rest of my students... Some of them when they first came in were kind of barely reading. Like knew the primer sight words, that kind of thing, but they weren't necessarily reading independently other books, but now they are. They'll go get different books and they'll make a really concerted effort, you know, to get through that book. They might get stuck on few words, but they really try. Before you could tell them go read a book and they would just kind of hem and haw and just kind of pout. But now they go get a book, you know, and they try to read it, or they read it with someone else... [T]o me as a teacher,

that's what's most important. To get kids to want to be motivated to read on their own because then you want to read more, you know you don't want kids to just read when you tell them too. You want them to grab books on their own and read. I see them doing that now.

Respondent 9 (teacher) reported that her students increased in reading ability:

I've seen a lot of my kids in the intervention increase their reading. Scores going up and all that. They made some great progress. Some kids who [were] at a pre-primer [reading level] had gone to at least first/second grade level in using those skills.

Respondent 10 (teacher) also described students improving in reading proficiency, even if they have not yet met grade level academic benchmarks. She said:

I had two that were basically non-readers. Not that they are proficient now... [but] they know the limits of what they can do, how much they can do now when before they would just quit. Now they can do work that we are doing in the class partially. And they can get some help from some other students. So I think that's helped them just so they are part of the class now as compared they would just sit there and make an excuse. They want to go to the bathroom; it's keeping them in the classroom. And, you know, more learning is going on for them.

...we've recorded their improvements. And also we've seen some confidence. I think it's also affected their writing. Now that they know how to spell better, because of their reading getting better. And I think sometimes it gives them more confidence in math, too. When they confidence in reading they can do a little more. So that kind of affects them all over for everything.

Respondent 11 (teacher) reported:

Oh my gosh. My kindergartners this year definitely [improved]. Their writing! I can't believe how much their writing has improved. Their reading and writing as far as high frequency words. And coming up with their own sentences and stuff like that... And then when we do like read alouds or discussions during science or social studies they have much more, I don't know, their questions are much more at a higher level. Everything is connecting somehow much easier than it did last year for my class.

Respondent 12 (teacher) also reported specific gains in early literacy skills among her students:

I was able to see a lot more improvement with the students that I work with this year... In the beginning of the year I had a couple of students who couldn't write their name. They couldn't distinguish between letters and numbers. A lot of them [had] never been in school before so to go from that to the end of the year where they can write their letters and know their beginning sounds and their ending sounds and they're starting to write their words so it's really exciting...

Yeah. Lots of growth in their skills with rhyming and syllables, stretching, shrinking, blending words a lot. A lot a lot of growth since the beginning of the year.

Respondent 13 (teacher) reported that her students improved so greatly that a parent came and complimented her on her teaching. She reported:

I just feel that overall they are decoding faster like most of them became fluent faster than ever before. First grade is very challenging because you do have all of those foundational skills that you have to build. And kind of cement in them and try to get them to love reading. And you know, help them move forward. That's what I feel like. Overall, all my kids did a phenomenal job this year... [some of them] may not have made like really like 'whoa' significant gains they made gains enough that I had a parent come to me and was

like "you did such a good job with... he knows how to spell this he knows how to read this." And that never happened before. She was just telling me that he didn't know any of that. So she [was saying] 'I could tell you've been working with him.' A lot of that is due to FRF.

Respondent 14 (teacher) said:

I'd say, overall, the group has done better with recognizing sounds in words. Sounds, syllables... Even with the rhyming words, selecting words that don't rhyme and do rhyme. Some of the things we haven't done in a few months since we've obviously made progressions and moved forward now that most of my kids are beginning readers. Some of them are really good readers. Laying down the foundation, yeah I see the connection. I see some of the benefits of it.

Respondent 16 (coach) reported that some students who were referred for special education evaluations did not need specialized instruction after making gains in the reading program. She said:

There were students that at the beginning of the year they were put in for [special education] referrals. And at the end of the year they were doing really well. They didn't need to go into a special [education] program. So I think that was eye opening for the teachers too. Because here they found an intervention program that works.

Respondent 17 (coach) shared the following anecdote about student improvement in reading:

[The teacher] got a new student from the South. And she did not know what rhyming was. She could not rhyme if her life depended on it! We were working some activities and I said 'use the whiteboard and do the Cat Cat Bat. Just take off the first sound.' And she was coming up with them on her own and the student was so excited. Because to see her face

light up you knew she got it. And the teacher did too. “Look at those words!” And she was giving me high fives and giving the student, the little girl, high fives. You could just see that she got what she was trying to get across for a couple of weeks. That was one. I remember that.

Respondent 18 (coach) reported:

Yeah, it was just overwhelmingly really, really positive and I think that the kids responded really well to it... I noticed after the first few weeks the kids became rhyming machines! They could rhyme like crazy and the teacher looked at me when they were doing this like ‘I didn’t know they could do that! I had no idea they could rhyme like that’. So that was amazing. That was really fun and I think probably they could rhyme before I got there but just seeing them do it so candidly, and so many of them, was just really cool to see. And to see them rhyming I would just read two words that rhymed and... they would say ‘those two rhyme and here are ten other words that rhyme with that!’ So that was really neat.

Respondent 23 (teacher) reported that the reading interventions especially help those students who were close to meeting grade level expectations. She shared:

[The reading program] definitely benefitted the ones that were on the border with their skills. They were able to sound out the words a little better and stuff like that. That made a big difference when they did their little phonics test with me. Some of them did much better.

### **Theme 7: Participating Teachers Adopted New Teacher Practices and Developed New Teaching Skills**

Twelve respondents (52.17%) reported that participation in one of the coaching programs led to the adoption of new practices and the development of new skills among teachers.



Responding administrators highlighted the general improvements in skill that all teachers in the coaching program demonstrated. Respondent 1 (administrator) described coaching as providing a toolbox for teachers to use that align with teacher best practice. She said:

That was another thing that I told the teachers, that [advice the coaches give you] is just something to put in your toolbox... I think it's the same thing that I was telling a lot of the principals when I was at the principal's' meeting: [coaching] can help. You just have to allow it to help. And like I told the teachers, it's just another toolbox. Even if you felt it was just another program it is something that can also help your teachers as well. So I think that some of the skillsets that FRF... is using to assist the students is also good best practices for teachers.

Respondent 2 (administrator) described that the benefit of the coaching was that it “built capacity in my teachers.” Respondent 3 (administrator) specified that participation in coaching helped teachers be more consistent in using high quality instructional strategies. She said: “I have seen teachers struggle with instructional strategies and using them consistently and I see them becoming more confident in their ability to help the students in this way.”

Respondent 9 (teacher) described how coaching changed her practice when assistant students who did not know a word they were reading. She said:

Beginning of the year I started implementing [the coach's suggestions] and using the skills. Even with reading... Helping [the students] break up the words. Having them take time to figure it out instead of me quickly giving them the word... The opportunity is to let them figure it out instead of having someone else do it or me quickly because my time is going down.

Respondent 10 (teacher) described how coaching impacted her reading instruction by saying:

I'd like to say [coaching] changed my reading, just because when we do the whole group it makes you remember or realize what you are supposed to hit with everybody. I mean those higher students still need some of the things that the lower students are getting.

Respondent 11 (teacher) also described specific areas of her reading instruction influenced by coaching:

My small groups have completely changed. I mean how I teach my small groups have completely changed. Like the routine. As far as doing rapid letter naming, then doing letter sounds, then doing beginning-middle-and end. Just all my reading stations have changed now that I have learned how all the skills work together... Infusing those sight words. And then really looking at the data and assessments to see what letters the kids need to work on.

Respondent 12 (teacher) reported that the coaches helped her to improve her ability for "...scaffolding during the small group instruction and that seems to work really well."

Respondent 14 (teacher) discussed one specific strategy given to her by her coach: Elkonin boxes. She shared:

The [Elkonin boxes] with... the empty squares. When I started doing that is when I think it all kind of came full circle... And then getting to the way they broke down some of these words; I'm thinking it's a blend but they don't have it broken up as a blend. They have it broken up as the <B> and <R> are both going to make two separate sounds. I'm kind of like "Okay. I get it now." I get it... Maybe a few months ago as we got further into the year, it all came full circle.

Respondent 22 (teacher) described how she was unaware of areas of reading instruction, and that her coach helped her to improve those areas. She said:

I was concerned that it was going to be too much... This is only my second year teaching first grade, so I didn't realize the lack of interaction the kids have with the book. I thought I was doing a lot of that, but then I realized, [the coach] was teaching them like how much they love to touch the book and look at it and they actually get to do that when they're reading by themselves. Within a month they started to do the same thing. Like 'oh what other words begin with this sound?' I could hear them saying that to each other. I didn't realize how much... that I didn't have them interacting enough with the book... Also I realized how valuable that was. It was more positive... I realized [my students didn't] know those skills because I didn't teach them.

Respondent 23 (teacher) shared a similar difficulty with not having the initial skills needed to reach all of her students on their academic level. She said:

...[T]he problem was I taught upper elementary, so I didn't have a lot of skills with working with the lower kids, so [the coach] brought another skill to me that I could use. That was good because I didn't know what to do with some of the lower kids besides the Elkonin boxes. And I just did that for the first time too. But the way [the coach] went through the book was really important for the lower kids, because I have kids that are like K5 level, so that was good for them to go over all those skills with the phonics and the double consonants, and the sounds and the syllables and stuff. So that was really good to learn that other added skill that I can use from here on out.

Respondent 18 (coach) described how she saw her coaching influence teacher practice. She said:

I was just excited to... pass the skills that you learn through the guides along to teachers I think is really neat. So I was excited.

...I think [the teacher I coached] feels more confident in using the phonological awareness and the print awareness knowledge into book reading... I feel like she's not relying as heavily on the guides as she used to. I think she kind of knows what to expect from the guides and has sort of has internalized these skills a little bit and I think they're easier for her to use now. I know she did, I don't know how she did, but I know we gave her a book and she just had to read it without a guide... I like to think that she used our skills to help kids with that. I think she got it.

Respondent 19 (coach) described how she saw her teacher improve in various aspects of literacy instruction. She said:

[The teacher] was just realizing that she was getting better at doing it, so I think she also mentioned that for her it seemed almost like professional development. There's phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness; so for her just going through coaching and having a guide that would really help to remain fresh on all these topics...

I think definitely increased confidence in her ability, especially she mentioned for reading and these categories that we talked about. She feels really confident doing small group and I think she realized as we were going she was definitely excelling and improving.

### **Theme 8: Coaches Addressed Classroom and Behavior Management**

Eleven respondents (47.83%) reported that coaches addressed classroom or behavior management during the course of coaching, even though it was not an explicit part of the curricula the coaches supported.

Respondent's 3 and 4 recognized that classroom management was a struggle for some of their teachers, Respondent 3 (administrator) said:

Those teachers [who have] been receiving reading coaching, their [behavior management is] about the same. Still screaming and it is and it is really hard because you can only focus on so many things at once... I thought some [classroom and behavior management] would rub off but it didn't and now it is really blatantly you can really see and hear it because it is not happening. First it was the norm because it was happening - boom boom boom - in all these spots and now... they are just trying the same thing and it just isn't working

Respondent 4 (administrator) echoed similar concerns saying:

Yes. I think towards the beginning more our newer teachers this year struggled [with classroom management], because of the curriculum and FRF program they don't know quite how to involve their paras. So there is one teacher trying to manage something that's really new and then trying to make - because they will have like 5 kids. Or 5 or 4 kids. And the rest of the kids are sitting off doing other things. And they are not quite well-versed enough to know how to manage that while they are working with their small group. Even though they have a para. They don't know how to delegate, like I'm going to do this I need you to do this while I am doing this. But also monitor this. And also teach their students how to be more independent like ask three before me kind of things.

Respondent 2 (administrator) described ways in which the coaches indirectly impacted classroom behavior:

Ultimately better planning decreases behaviors in the classroom. And then tailor what they are doing to meet the needs of the students. So that level of engagement from the students is higher which decreases the behaviors in the classrooms.

Respondent 7 (teacher) shared that the coaches provided classroom management advice, although she sometimes struggled to implement that advice. She said “I was given a few [classroom and behavior management suggestions and I did try to implement them as much as I possibly could. There were some slips and slides... back to my original behavior but I tried.” Respondent 12 (teacher) described the coaching helping with behavior management an indirect way.

[The coach] helped me know how to keep students on track. I feel that if I keep the students on track and I have a better flow of the lesson that we have less behavior issues. And if there is a student off task I can easily redirect them most of the time.

Respondent 13 (teacher) when discussing her challenges during the coaching program focused on classroom behaviors. She said:

There were a lot of battles or struggles that, you know, took place this year that I wasn't familiar with. With behavior needs and aspects of it. So [my coaches] gave me tips. And one of the strategies we received over the summer and one of the tips they gave me was like a reporting system. Like it was a reward system and we used to do it on a dry erase board. And then I went from the dry erase board to putting like a sticky note in front of each student and then giving them like a little point system. And one student I had to support more often... Like I said, the behavior issues. Like you know basically making sure that I acknowledged when students are facing those challenging moments and I was

just positive more. Because I felt, not to be arrogant or anything, but I felt like I was on the right track and this was like "Yes! Give me those resources."

Respondent 16 (coach), described directly helping with classroom and behavior management in order to let the teacher focus her attention on delivering the intervention they had been working on together:

We would try to deflect anybody that would try to interrupt [the intervention group]. And we would try to address that and then if we noticed something else in the room we would buzz over there and see if we could fix something on the computer or in a small group.

Just so that the teacher wasn't distracted. Because you need to be focused.

Respondent 17 (coach) described giving a teacher classroom management advice:

Yes, the issue [of behavior management] came up a few times. With children interrupting the group and they had - mine told me there is a set way you can handle interruptions, you just say "when I'm in group no interruptions unless someone is bleeding!" Or you know something important. There are different little things on how to settle them down. If one teacher would always do individual turns and the rest of the group was always off because they were not participating, well, you would just recommend doing more unison so you can get them involved and following along. Little Things.

Respondent 18 (coach) reflected on small behavioral problems she saw during coaching and the impact a teacher with poor behavior management skills might have on instructional coaching:

Well it's sort of funny they sort of misbehave a little bit, but they can't sit in their seats when we have the book they're always trying to touch it and they're standing up and they're shouting over each other. They're so excited and it's all about the book. So I think

to see them kind of misbehavior, in her words, and not sit in their seats and be quiet, but to see them be so excited was really, maybe, a good indicator for her of that.

I think – and I didn't – have any [significant behavior] challenges because my teacher was so great, but I think it would be really hard if your teacher has poor management skills because the teacher needs to be really engaged when you're modeling. I know some of my colleagues had trouble getting their teachers to watch them model because they were dealing with behavior problems in the room, so that would have been a real struggle had my teacher had poor management, but she didn't.

Respondent 23 (teacher) described how the coach helped directly with behavior management:

When their behavior – I have a lot of behavior problems in here and sometimes we couldn't get started right away, but [the coach] would find a way to go and help calm some of the other kids down that maybe weren't in the group and I would just go ahead and start and then he would come back. Once I knew how to do it that's how it worked. So it went pretty smoothly once we got settled.

Respondent 19 (coach) discussed this direct behavior management help from the coach's perspective:

There was a lot of kids in [the classroom] with behavioral issues that she became really frustrated with so typically I would also help her. I would come in once a week [to coach] but I would help with the kids, [too]... it was classroom management, to be completely honest, so she enjoyed having me there in that regard.

Taking it from- I don't want to say a more realistic standpoint –but some of these schools and [the school I worked at] specifically is a very high needs school and a lot of the kids in [the teacher's] classroom at least had a lot of behavioral issues. It was difficult during those times... I



felt like I had to almost watch over the classroom as she was doing that but I also realized that I wanted to watch her as she was [working with students]. So it was almost like a push and pull that we both kind of tried our best but there would be times that she was reading a book – this only happened once or twice – but she was kind of going through the books and going through the prompts and there would be something going on on the other side of the room and she needed to go deal with that, so I would take that time to just refresh with the kids and go over what we had gone over and sometimes if she wasn't able to come back I would finish the rest of it.

### **Theme 9: Respondents Recognized a Need to Improve Reading Proficiency Among Their Students**

Nine respondents (39.13%) reported that the coaching program they participated in met a real need in their school to improve literacy instruction.

Respondent 1 (administrator) shared that she already had a goal to improve literacy at her school, which is similar to what other administrators reported.

I knew [that the coaches] were here to help me. I knew it was right in line with my [goals for my students], so in essence they were helping me. So anything I could do to help them helped me.

She went on to describe how the focus of the coaching program, foundational reading skills, was needed even for older students:

...the reason [our students] had comprehension issues was because they couldn't decode, they couldn't read certain words. So a lot of kids who came into the 9th grade when I was a 9th grade administrator had to get [basic reading classes] or reading programs that didn't adhere to their credit.

Respondent 2 (administrator) reported similar goals:

Math and Literacy are areas of need for [our school]. Literacy was a greater area of need. So definitely wanted to continue on doing something that was going to not only build capacity in my teachers but also show its impact through students' love of literacy and of course showing in the standardized tests that we take.

Respondent 3 (administrator) likewise discussed setting goals to improve reading prior to the start of the coaching program.

When I came in I was just like yeah this is what we need... Well interestingly enough the summer after my first year as an [administrator] I was reflecting. I was at home reflecting, it was summertime, I was reflecting on my year. I'm looking at data regarding reading and I looked and said "wow." ...You know, this is our problem this is where we need to focus and so I said "man this is what we're missing." You know and I said next year I'm going to go in and my focus is going to be on foundational reading skills.

Six teachers identified that the focus of the coaching programs (i.e., to improve literacy) was needed at their school. Respondent 13's (teacher) perspective on the needs of her students motivated her to be a part of the project: "And I was on-board since day one because I needed this to help my students." Respondent 5 (teacher) reported "it is something that definitely is needed in our school." Respondent 10 (teacher) shared that she felt there was a need to try different teaching techniques to address the low reading performance of her students. She summarized this need by saying "I think just the students, how low some of them were... you have to get them to try a little different." Respondent 6 (teacher) identified the focused instruction on basic literacy skills as what the students needed to improve: "Those kids have made so much progress and it's just so simple to follow and they enjoy it. It's a lot of just drilling them with stuff on those basics. And that's what they need so that was great."

Respondent 8 (teacher) explained this sentiment, that students needed more or different instruction on those foundational skills more fully. She said:

That's what we do at MPS, you know the whole group, small group, whole group. And our curriculum is the *Journeys* program. And there is a phonics part of that. But for some kids there is not enough of that. Kids have to have a base to learn to read. After letter sounds they have to know phonics, they have to know blends, and also rhymes. And some kids just don't pick that up. So they have a real hard time just getting started learning to read. But with this program, that's what it addresses.

Respondents 9 (teacher) expressed the wish that the coaching program had started earlier, due to the need of her students. Respondent 9 (teacher) said "I kind of wish I had had it when I was teaching kindergarten with some of the kids that were struggling."

#### **Theme 10: Participating Teachers Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence**

Nine respondents (39.13%) reported that they perceived an increase in teacher confidence was an outcome of the coaching programs. Respondent 2 (administrator) reported that "...the teachers are more confident in what they are doing. Before I think it was kind of "ok. And because they are more confident about it they can plan more effectively."

Respondent 3 (administrator) described how their confidence improved as they saw their students improve, as well as improving in their confidence to be able to help students.

I believe one of the biggest changes has been in their confidence. When I first started you know when I first began working with them and I see that their believing more that the students are capable it's really because the data's coming back saying this kid couldn't recognize the letter and now they know 20 and so they are saying" whoa this works and I

did this along with the coach” and this is working and so then it helps them to be confident in other areas...

You know I have seen teachers struggle with instructional strategies and using them consistently and I see them becoming more confident in their ability to help the students in this way.

Respondent 13 (teacher) identified Tier 2 instruction, and described how the coaching support made her feel more confident:

I struggled with my Tier 2 instruction. Finding materials, what to teach. And so when all the material was kind of laid out for us I really enjoyed knowing - going... it built my confidence. I came in "I know where I'm going, what to teach." I didn't have to scramble. That's what I enjoyed the most about it. Just the resources that were available.

Respondent 13 (teacher) also expressed how the coaching program reinforced beliefs she already had on about her students, and that also built confidence. She said:

When I initially got the program. In the past I used a phonics book. Just like worked on these sounds. And I knew I should have - like that the skills they were requiring or asking us to implement due to FRF. I knew I should be doing that and I wasn't confident. Like I was just I think I should be doing this more. It made me realize that I was on the right track. I was thinking I was on the same - I had the same mindset. It boosts my confidence and I was like “yes! I knew it. I knew I should have been working on phonics.”

Respondent 15 (coach) reported that she saw an increase in teacher “...Confidence, and having more fun and greater belief that students can do things.”

Respondent 16 (coach) reflected on the teachers she worked with and described them saying:

I'd say I saw confidence and I saw excitement. That just gives you goose bumps. It's just such a good feeling. And the teachers, I think, felt maybe for the first time in a long time that they were being successful. So it was great."

Respondent 17 (coach) shared similar thoughts on the teachers she worked with:

I thought they were more confident in teaching the material. I can see them carrying that over to their large group and the rest of their class as well... You could just see them, they were strong. They were confident. And they knew what they were doing there really well...

The teachers and students were just so much more confident it seemed.

Respondent 18 (coach) stressed the teacher's confidence in the specific reading strategies they had worked on together:

I don't know, I guess I think she feels more confident in using the phonological awareness and the print awareness knowledge into book reading... I think- I feel like she's not relying as heavily on the guides as she used to. I think she's- she kind of knows what to expect from the guides and has sort of has internalized these skills a little bit and I think they're easier for her to use now. I know she did.

Respondent 19 (coach) shared how a teacher he worked with described feeling more confident in a more broad way than just in those specific coaching-related activities. He said:

I think definitely increased confidence in her ability, especially she mentioned for reading and these categories that we talked about she feels really confident doing small group and I think well she kind of realized as we were going she was definitely excelling and improving and she liked that I would show her the data and say 'oh you got them all this week, good job!' and she was excited about that.

Respondent 20 (coach) shared a similar observation to these other respondents, saying “I think she got less nervous and so she seemed more comfortable in doing it herself.”

### **Theme 11: Students were Excited to Participate in Reading Interventions**

Nine respondents (39.13%) described the students as being excited about participating in the reading interventions. Respondent 2 (administrator) succinctly said “The students are actually very excited.” Respondent 3 (administrator) described the impact of the programs on her students by saying:

This is going to sound weird but I feel like they are happier. I feel like they are happier because they are little people and it looked like they were just afraid, nervous all the time some of them or not confident, I see that same confidence in them they come up they talking about I did this and I read this. Now really honestly I know it sounds made up, but they seem a lot more excited, a lot more confident. Just a lot more involved in and engaged.

Respondent 4 (administrator) described this excitement and highlighted that the students preferred reading software to games during their computer time:

I've noticed the kids very excited to read... they love it. And they almost want to show off, like "look what I can read." They love, love, love, love to read... I've never been in a setting where kids are that excited to read. Even though they are not where they should be, a lot of them, they are excited. And that excitement is there, you know what I mean? So it's like "okay you want to read? Let me help you to read." It's easier than trying to convince them they can do it. So they are excited... and the teachers are starting to see that... They see the excitement when the kids are reading in class. They are not afraid to try.

They use to go on the computer and go to like Disney or PBS kids, but now they are going to [reading websites and software] and reading for understanding. Reading! And when they get to like a benchmark book, like they will raise their hands and look around for adults and "please come and listen to me read so I Can move on." So they are excited which is very different because a lot of times they just want to get on and play games on the computer.

Respondent 9 (teacher) talked about her students saying "They loved doing [the intervention], they loved to beat their friends when it came to [progress monitoring]. So it was great. They were excited." Respondent 12 (teacher) described her perceptions of her students. She said "I've seen confidence in them, they're excited to come to our small [reading] group here... They know what to expect... They love [reading] with me and they can't wait to do it... So they're excited." Respondent 16 (coach) described her students by saying:

I think the eagerness to learn and to be at school. I think behaviors became less of an issues the more confident they became and the more excited they were because it was something they were interested in. And they wanted to do it. And they really couldn't wait for some of these sessions. They enjoyed that. I think we noticed an increase in positive behavior. Probably an increase in attendance because they wanted to come to school. An increase in confidence and wanting to do the schoolwork.

Respondent 18 (coach) described how students' excitement helped the teacher she was working with. She said:

I think seeing how engaged all the kids are when [the teacher] does this I think was a really big, cool moment for her. And it was for me too knowing that the kids get really

excited about this stuff and they really like interacting with print in this way is really cool. And that was exciting.

Respondent 20 (coach) saw similar effects with the teacher she worked with. She said:

I think she was a little skeptical at first but then she saw how into it her kids were getting because you could see the first time and the second time I was reading she was like, ‘oh they love rhyming, they never do this when I read with them!’ because the kids had been really into finding words that rhymed with each other and finding words that started with the same letter so they were really excited about it. She’s like, ‘oh they never do this for me, they’re never this into it!’ so she was really excited about that.

Respondent 21 (coach) described both the excitement students had as well as disappointment they expressed when they were not receiving reading instruction. She said “Over the course of the year. They are definitely very enthusiastic; they definitely enjoy it. They are excited when I come in the room because they know they get to read and they’re disappointed if it’s not their turn.”

### **Theme 12: Coaches Provided Physical Materials to Teachers, which was Very Beneficial**

Nine respondents (39.13%) identified the physical materials shared with by the coach as being a benefit of the coaching program. Respondent 6 (teacher) shared:

We needed materials to work on [reading] skills and it was perfect. It was exactly what we needed. Just the way they - because we were just given all of these materials. [That] was most helpful to me as a teacher.

Respondent 7 (teacher) described the materials how finding out that the materials were provided increased her enthusiasm for the program. She said:



[W]e found out that [the coaches] even supplied the materials that we need. It was even better... [the coaches were helpful] as far as getting me the supplies and the things that I needed to give [my students] what they needed as far as the basic skills for reading.

Respondent 10 (teacher) described how her coach supported her by providing materials. She said:

Sometimes they brought me materials that I asked for, so they were just dropping it off.

Things like that... She has this or that and she'll give me [additional materials] and I can make copies of it. Or she'll have copies of it or they will make these booklets up for you

Respondent 11 (teacher) added “Yeah, they gave us different materials for it. And then during one of our coaching sessions she told me how to teach it.”

Respondent 5 (teacher) responded that the materials were beneficial, but also that she wished she had received all the materials at the start of the year. She reported:

I definitely think the positive was the materials. If we got this at the beginning of the year and were really to be able to sit down and plan for it and you know be prepared for the strategies and things you were going to implement I think it would be great.

Respondent 9 (teacher), however, reported she had the materials at the start of the year while agreeing they were very helpful:

All of the materials were put together before us to start the school year so that was great... everything [was] already there for you. They gave you the books, they gave you the materials. Everything else they had for you. The most helpful thing was having everything prepared ahead of time.

Respondent 13 (teacher) shared:

I struggled with my Tier 2 instruction. Finding materials, what to teach. And so when all the material was kind of laid out for us I really enjoyed knowing - going... it built my confidence. I came in "I know where I'm going, what to teach." I didn't have to scramble. That's what I enjoyed the most about [the coaching experience]. Just the resources that were available.

That helps so much. The materials, having the materials is half the battle. So like those materials are just, you know, I couldn't have - I feel like it made me a better teacher having those materials.

Respondent 18 (coach) described one way how coaches went beyond minimum requirements to provide resources.

The teacher was very, very happy and very – you know, she was always very prepared for lessons. She would ask me to bring the book and the guide the week beforehand so that she could prep and mid-way through she was really, really excited about all the materials I was bringing and she asked for like, everything we had. So I ended up giving her a binder with all the guides and she's been trying to get her principal to buy the books that we have guides for so she's really kind of taken that on.

Respondent 12 (teacher) thought the materials provided were helpful, and wanted even more resources to be provided:

What was helpful? Sitting down with [my coach] and reviewing the materials. Last summer I went to a PD where she handed out materials and went over them again. and then because I had already been doing the program I kind of helped with the other K5 teachers that were there in showing them what to do and how to do it. And it, that was beneficial because you're not with your students.

Additional teaching materials would be helpful. Like, Elkonin boxes for the words. We go through them rather quickly and now that the students know them it's like memorized in their heads. So to have additional CDC Elkonin boxes would be helpful. Just more stuff.

### **Theme 13: Coaches Aided with Progress Monitoring, Which was Seen as Both a Positive and Negative**

Eight respondents (34.78%) discussed data collection and progress monitoring as a part of their interview. Five of these respondents who were teachers and administrators reported that they found it to be very helpful that the coaches completed the progress monitoring. Three coaches reported that they felt completing the progress monitoring should be the teacher's responsibility and not the coaches.

When asked what was helpful about having the coaches in her school, Respondent 4 (administrator) answered:

I think [having the coaches do] the data collection, the progress monitoring, [was helpful]. When teachers are not able to do it coaches were able to pull those students and administer DIBELS. So that was helpful because sometimes when the teachers had it set up that they were going to do it today and the kids are not here it's hard to just set aside that little extra time when they do come to do it. Because then it would mess up their rotation. So it was helpful to have those two to come in and pull the kids and just do it.

Respondent 9 (teacher) identified help with progress monitoring as a time that the coach provided necessary support in the classroom. After describing the tasks, the coach asked the teacher to complete, she added “but when we had to do progress monitoring on some of the stuff they were able to come in and help us out on that.” Respondent 10 (teacher) reported:

[The coaches] will also take them out of the room and test each student individually in DIBELS. And then they will bring the results back to us. And say [the scores] are going up to here now. Things like that. The work we do and they kind of test them from what we've been working on with them...

Respondent 11 (teacher) describe the coaches' support by saying "They would come in and help me a lot with my intervention assessment. Like tracking how the kids were moving along with DIBELS. They would record my data - help me record my data - and also help me test the kids."

Respondent 14 (teacher) reflected on the difficulty of completing the progress monitoring himself. He said:

They come and do the DIBELS for you. Ah! Beautiful. Um, if I had to [conduct the progress monitoring myself] I probably could. But it made life easier that they did it.

Yeah. It could be done but again that's going to be the added - please don't do that. Don't do that. That would be the add-on part that teachers would really complain about. Like we have to test certain kids who are in our [progress monitoring] plan. But everyone isn't. So those kids, yeah, yeah, if they could continue the DIBELS testing that would be great because that's something that does take away from - when am I going to throw this in?

When am I going to test 6 kids and not lose structure in my class because I don't have an aide anymore to watch the class. Or even an aide to test the kids. That part when I initially did it, oh God, I don't want to do this. But then a couple of weeks later they came in we're going to do the DIBELS. I'm like "Yes!"

So yeah, keep that part up. I'm telling you know that's the one part you don't want to get rid of, only because and I'll say this the record keeping and the accuracy will diminish. It will go down if we have to do it. That part was probably the most challenging

part. I did it probably once or twice and I was like "man, I have to sit back her and put this kids to work and there's no one in the room with me." I'm not doing it on my lunch break, I'm not doing it when my kids are at gym. So that right there is probably the most important piece.

The three coaches who spoke on the topic expressed both how having coaches complete the progress monitoring helped teachers but was unsustainable for the coaches. Respondent 15 (coach) said:

So we had FRF coaches conducting those DIBELS. We need to change that going forward. But I think it was good to just do that and get it off the ground and figure out how we're going to make progress monitoring manageable, not burdensome for teachers, but yet systematize it. So that... 1) the coaches don't have time for that in their scope, and 2) the teachers are the ones that need to be following the student progress and it's a lot of good information for them if they are actually the ones doing it.

Respondent 16 (coach) explained why the coaches began doing the progress monitoring to begin with. She said:

There were a couple of teachers who actually did test them every five days - or when they were supposed to. But then a lot of them weren't doing them. Or weren't doing them on time. And we needed to see where they were...

Once we would get them the data they were really excited because it shows great growth, or it shows if somebody is stagnate, or it shows if somebody is regressing. So they like to look at that but they were a little apprehensive about performing DIBELS. I think they were a little nervous about it. But it's not that difficult.

I guess [in the future we need] to be really clear about what they need to do as far as progress monitoring. What are your responsibilities? Maybe it needs to be in black and white on a piece of paper just so they know that this is a requirement. We were a little lenient with their reporting. So I think we need to have another guideline as to when they need to submit their reports and how they really need to fill in their sheets in. Document who is getting what and on what date. Because sometimes they would do it at the end of the month and they couldn't remember who was absent. So I'm not sure that that is really valid towards the end of the year for how many students were getting each session. So I think the record keeping might be an important issue to just have something documented and state that this is the teacher's responsibility.

Respondent 17 (coach) added:

What else do we do? We do a lot of data recording. We record lots of progress monitoring reports... We did a lot of DIBELS testing with the students one by one to help the teachers out.

[We need to] make it clear it's their responsibility from the beginning. We won't be doing DIBELS for you. [Once we started] it was almost like "Okay, now they are accustomed to it" ... we'll be finishing them for the rest of the year!"

#### **Theme 14: Teachers Expressed Excitement for the Coaching Program, Even if Initially Resistant**

Eight respondents (34.78%) described excitement for the coaching program and positive teacher buy-in. Respondent 3 (administrator) reported "I was even more excited. I was in it from day one. When I came in I was just like 'yeah this is what we need.'" Respondent 5 (teacher) said:

I was excited I thought it was a good material and our kids have a lot of social-emotional issues and I think that learning how to deal with those in an effective manner is always something we can all work on... I was just kind of “I’m not sure what we were going to be doing” but I was excited to, you know, to be able to try the program.

Respondent 8 (teacher) reported:

My first impression? I thought it was good... I was excited for it because I realized being an early elementary teacher in the early grades - I’ve taught first, second, third - phonics is key to learning how to read... So I thought it would be interesting. And I was very interested to see how it was going to help our students.

Respondent 11 (teacher) described her feelings as a new teacher concerning the coaching program. She said “I mean I started off with a positive attitude about it. Because I’m a new teacher. And I still have a lot to learn. So it’s still positive that I feel good that I am learning more.” Respondent 12 (teacher) reported:

I was excited. I really wanted to help my students with the early reading foundations so as soon as I heard about what [the head coach] wanted to do and saw some of the materials we would be working with I wanted to get on board right away.

Respondent 15 (coach) described her initial buy-in with the coaching program and her hope for where the coaching work will lead in the future. She said:

Fabulous. Great. We can make a difference. It’s a good start and hopefully what we can do is show how this, sort of like a proof of principle. You can have students make considerable progress and you can have teachers gain considerable capacity. I thought it was a great opportunity to get started and show that a modified plan could begin to make some serious dents in the ultimate Milwaukee Succeeds goal.

...I think just generally there was hope and a plan. Hope and a plan was a good combination and I think teachers appreciated having more so they could make their plan more solid.

...I have really high hopes for it where it will lead. I think its lead to some places that were, that are, beyond what I had hoped for. I think that it's not going to be easy though to map onto the goals in the current configuration. I'm hoping that what it does is helps continue to move things toward just really truly embracing that continuous improvement idea and help... to repurpose district resources and time such that things can move more efficiently and we can get to the end game

Respondent 16 (coach) described the teachers she worked with by saying “They really embraced the program.” Respondent 18 (coach) discussed one teacher’s excitement in detail, saying:

The teacher was very, very happy and... she was always very prepared for lessons. She would ask me to bring the book and the guide the week beforehand so that she could prep and mid-way through she was really, really excited about all the materials I was bringing and she asked for everything we had. So I ended up giving her a binder with all the guides and she’s been trying to get her principal to buy the books that we have guides for so she’s really kind of taken that on.

### **Theme 15: Implementation Checklists Were Very Helpful to Teachers**

Each coaching program had an implementation checklist that identified the crucial components of the literacy intervention that teachers were expected to complete. Eight respondents (34.78%) reported that these checklists were a helpful, or even essential, component of the coaching program with which they participated. Respondent 23 (teacher) described how these checklists were the foundation of what happened during coaching sessions. She reported



“Ok. A typical session... well he had the [checklist], and he made sure he went through everything in the [checklist].”

Respondent 10 (teacher) shared that the checklist helped her remember what she was supposed to be doing with her students each time. She said:

...They gave me a list that I could follow as I work with the students. That was helpful because as I said I don't always remember what comes next. And I work with these group of girls more on fluency and so on and I just kept forgetting what to do with them. You know, they gave me a list and said this is what [we do each time]. That really helped.

Respondent 12 (teacher) reported that the implementation checklist was helpful as she reflected on the lessons she taught to her students. She said:

Yes, [what was most helpful was] using the checklist... [my coach] came and observed me one day and she was like you know you're supposed to use [the checklist] So once I got that I felt like I was on a roll then and I was seeing a lot of improvements once I got the checklist... Using the checklist, I'm able to reflect on, okay what did we do that day, do we need to go back and review it, can I move on to something else. So it really makes me aware of what the students are getting so I'm able to go back and change it if I need to or adapt it to their needs. The checklist definitely helpful.

Respondent 13 (teacher) reported that the checklist helped her manage her instructional time better, which allowed her to cover my skills with her students. She said:

It was more - I think I managed the time betters. And I was able to cover a lot more skills. And I feel like I got a lot more out of it. You know as far as in the quality of the work. I didn't feel like I wasn't... I was hitting on skills. Like this is what I want to do, this is what I want to do. And that checklist helped me so much to drive the instruction and focus on

the instruction to make sure that I got out what I needed, I mean the things that I needed the most. That's how I feel... [The thing that was most helpful was] that checklist.

Respondent 15 (coach) explained why she felt the checklist was an important tool for teachers to use:

So we've set the stage so that the teacher has, knows exactly what they are going to do in that session. Um, they've got literally a check list, and so that they can follow along the steps and the things that they're going to cover the students have materials in front of them.

[The checklist answers for the teacher] "what do I do?" Just what do I do and in what sequence. That just seemed to fall much more into place teachers felt like they had an answer to that question. I think they always said we know these kids need interventions for the intervention kids, but we don't know what to do.

Respondent 16 (coach) agreed that the checklists were helpful for the teachers, and added that teachers had a tendency to not implement all aspects of the intervention at the start of the school year. She said:

There is a nice check off sheet, or checklist and the teachers use that as a reference... At the beginning of the year we had a tendency for teachers to really focus on one or two things [from the checklist]. And we wanted them to hit more... but it was really great to have this check sheet that they can look at, and then we can look at and kind of help them and guide them.

Respondent 19 (coach) shared how he used the checklist during the coaching process to help the teachers improve. He reported:

Yes, so I would kind of track... [The checklist with the points]. So she would go through and I would just check them off and keep a running tally of if she was hitting each time and initially she started out and she would maybe get like half of them and toward the end she would get all of them pretty easily... Part of it was I would show her what was missing so she could improve it for the next time, and typically there were not necessarily related, but you could tell the ones that she would miss. So we would talk about that and how we both can improve.

Respondent 1 (administrator) did not mention the checklist explicitly, but as an administrator observing the process she noticed the benefits of the scripted nature of the literacy interventions. She said:

What I've noticed in my teachers is... a scripted skill set where they know exactly what components or aspects that they are working on. Whether it's nonsense words or whether it's fluency and so forth... Even how they correct and how they redirect and so forth like that. I've noticed that improve. I've also noticed that record keeping has improved as they want to know exactly where to go next with the students and so forth.

### **Theme 16: Participating Students Demonstrated an Increase in Confidence**

Eight respondents (34.78%) described how participation in the reading interventions for which teachers received coaching improved student confidence, particularly related to literacy. Respondent 3 (administrator), when asked if she had seen improvements among the students at her school, said:

Yes, you know, I really have. This is going to sound weird, but I feel like they are happier. I feel like they are happier because they are little people and it looked like they were just afraid, nervous all the time, some of them, or not confident, I see that same confidence in

them. They come up [and talk] about “I did this” and “I read this”. Now really, honestly, I know it sounds made up, but they seem a lot happier. A lot more confident. Just a lot more involved in and engaged.

And even with like we implemented a school wide policy for math and constructive response and they kids were like “I can do this” and it wasn’t such a hard thing. These changes [in the students] were sometimes so small or little, but I can tell that something is going on to build that confidence

Respondent 6 (teacher) reported “Yes. Growth with all of them. But especially my lowest intervention kids that I really focused on with it. Their growth - but also their confidence builds for sure.” Respondent 8 (teacher) described the impact of the reading interventions on one student. She reported that the program “helped his confidence too, and then it got to the point that I could tell that because he wanted to do what the [higher level] groups were doing.”

Respondent 9 (teacher) reported “I’ve seen a lot of kids who have grown confident in reading.”

Respondent 10 (teacher) discussed how students gained confidence as their reading skills improved. She said:

Yeah I think this year more so than last year. It was finally like oh! I see this. I see how they were having success last year the way they worked with these students. And now it’s - and then you see the confidence in the students. And the happiness that they have. Because I had two that were basically non-readers. Not that they are proficient now - but when they sit with me they have more confidence. So it’s just helped me feel more confident as well from what they’ve done.

Like I’ve said we’ve recorded their improvements. And also we’ve seen some confidence. I think it’s also affected their writing. Now that they know how to spell better,

because of their reading getting better. And I think sometimes it gives them more confidence in math, too. When they confidence in reading they can do a little more. So that kind of affects them all over for everything.

Respondent 11 (teacher) saw both confidence and interest increase in her students. She said “Or even as far as like non-fiction. They just seem more interested. They will be like ‘you can't fool us. We're too smart.’ So even like their confidence or like their interest in learning is higher.” Respondent 12 (teacher) reported that her students’ increased confidence has lead them to want to help other students in their class. She said:

I've seen confidence in them, they're excited to come to our small group here at the table during reading group. They know what to expect... They love doing the [work] and they can't wait to do it... A lot of them now, because they feel more confident in what they can do, they want to help the other students. So I noticed that in the classroom.

Respondent 17 (coach) succinctly said “The teachers and students were just so much more confident it seemed.”

### **Theme 17: Coaches Developed Positive Relationships with Students**

Although the coaches work directly with teachers, 6 coaches and 1 teacher described the relationship that was present between the coach and the students in the classroom (n=7, 30.43%).

Respondent 17 (coach) reported conducting progress monitoring with students, and although it was not part of the original plan she described the positive coach-student relationship that developed:

But then, you know it was nice, because the kids got to really know us on a one to one level. Which I think is great and they felt comfortable with us. So when we came in it

wasn't like there was a strange person in the room. They were excited to see us. And they were comfortable leaving the classroom with us too. I enjoyed it.

Respondent 21 (coach) shared a similar experience saying “I enjoyed going in and seeing classrooms and interacting with the kids. And I liked that they were enthusiastic about that.”

Respondent 20 (coach) reported that “we just got more comfortable with each other and with the kids and the kids knew me and the kids knew what to expect with everything. So it went smoother as we went through.”

Respondent 19 (coach) described her relationship with the students in the classroom by saying:

I ended up building a pretty good relationship even though I was only there once a week. I was able to go a good amount of time that the kids knew me by name and would greet me when I walked in, gave me hugs when I left, so it was fun.

Respondent 19 (coach) also described putting additional time in with the students to build this relationship. She reported “I would come in once a week but I would help with the kids, I would help them with homework, and when I wasn't doing the shared book reading activities I was helping with her.

Respondent 18 (coach) shared a story where she was caught doing a reading intervention alone without the classroom teacher, which was not how the program was designed. She chose to work with the students anyway to not disappoint the students. She recounted “One day I showed up and she had a sub and I was like, ‘oh’. So I stayed and I read anyway because I know the kids look forward to it.”

Respondent 22 (teacher) spoke of the relationship that she saw between her students and the coach. This coach also spent extra time with the students to build that relationship. She said:

Right away [the students] loved [the coach] right away and they enjoyed it. And then she would come in, she usually came a little early which the kids really liked so I thought that was nice. She came earlier than she had to so that she could – like we meditate in the morning so she would meditate with us and do thing so that she was a bit more familiar with the kids and they were comfortable with her. And then sometimes if she came a little earlier then she would just kind of sit with the kids and talk to them during breakfast and then she would sit down, she would – we’d call them to group and she would teach the first group... She was great with the kids they felt comfortable with her right away... I know that she enjoyed the kids and made them comfortable and they bonded with her pretty quickly, so I think that helped a lot.

### **Theme 18: Participation in the Coaching Programs Made Teachers More Aware of their Students’ and Their Own Current Level of Performance**

Seven respondents (30.43%) reported that coaching made teachers more aware of their students’ and their own current level of performance.

Respondent 23 (teacher) reported that the coaching process made her more aware of her student’s reading level, and with that understanding she could seek out help. She said:

Yes. Most definitely. I think that it influenced me looking for other things to do with the lower kids because I felt so lost, like ‘what am I going to do with them, because I don’t have any... my license starts at 1st, but then I have below 1st grade readers. I had to know where my kids were at [then] I could ask the coaches for help. Plus, I found some other activities that were similar.

Respondent 4 (administrator) likewise shared “I think they have a more solid understanding of what their kids should be able to do.” Respondent 6 (teacher) also expressed being able to be able to more readily know how her students were learning:

It makes me more aware of where each individual kid is. Without doing like regular assessments like all the time. Because we are doing these drills and speed drills and they have they have a little book they are tracking, and I see them doing this in front of me every day it's like I know exactly where each kid is at. And I can like easily say like "he's got this, he knows this," you know? So, it's just - it makes me feel like I really know what they need. Where they are at. And there's not a kid where it's like "oh, I didn't realize he was struggling." I just feel like I really know my kids so specifically on these things.

Respondent 9 (teacher) described how one coach aided her in becoming more aware of her students:

So she was there to help me know when the kids were ready to progress. You know, try these kids here. So that was very helpful. So she would help me see how to have them progress and taken them to the next level.

Respondent 5 (teacher) shared that coaching helped her to become more aware of her own teaching strategies and where she needs to improve. She said

I'm definitely more aware and reflective of what I'm teaching and how I teach it and the strategies I'm using and implementing. It's gotten me to be more reflective and you know the self-evaluations those kind of make you think what you need to focus on to improve yourself and to improve your classroom environment.

Respondent 22 (teacher) also described becoming more aware of her teaching practices:

I would say yes because like I said I am more I guess I am more reflective as far as how much am I really having the kids engaged. And even pushing them more because I really didn't think that they could do – the work that they did



Respondent 16 (coach) felt that the teachers she worked with “may be more aware of the literacy component. And they might be more aware of the whole phonemic awareness and implementing it in all of their activities with all of the kids.

### **Theme 19: Teachers Described Coaches as Supportive**

Seven respondents (30.43%) used the word “support” to describe the relationship between coaches and teachers. Respondent 3 (administrator) described the way coaches built relationships with teachers was “to support, you know. That support has been huge in letting the teacher on their side and in this with you and supporting the teacher in every way possible through this process.”

Respondent 4 (administrator) described how coaches supported teachers in areas of need instead of expecting them to already master certain skills by saying:

And if [teachers] don't have the necessary skills at least they know who to reach out to for support in that area so it's not just "they should be here already" versus "they are not here so where can I go from here to the end of the year."

Respondent 6 (teacher) shared that the coaches “made me feel that I was doing... like to make me enjoy it more. Really supported. Respondent 10 (teacher) described the coaching sessions as supportive when she said:

When [the coaches] come back and work with us, sometimes [one coach] is here or sometimes [a different coach] and different people, they are just ready to work. They usually put in a good 20 sometimes 30 minutes of good work. Cause it's just one on one or two on one support.

Respondent 13 (teacher) shared how the coaches were especially supportive when she felt like she was not being successful at her job. She reported:

A lot to me as some days I was ready to put my head down and quit. I was like "this is my last year! I can't do it!" And they were like "I know you can do it, you are doing a great job." So I needed that support a lot this year.

Respondent 23 (teacher) described the program as being supportive of what she was already doing, instead of using "support" to describe the coaches. She said:

I thought it was really nice, I thought it really, really supported what I was already doing in the class, especially with the intervention students. Because it was kind of similar to what they do with the Elkonin box activity. So I thought it was really good support for that.

Respondent 17 (coach) summed up her perspective of working with teachers succinctly as "...we are here to support you, not criticize you."

#### **Theme 20: Teachers Used Skills Developed with Coaches during Other Instructional Times**

Seven respondents (30.43%) reported using skills developed with the coaches during instructional time outside of the specific reading intervention blocks. Respondent 6 (teacher) reported that the information presented from the coach impacted her instruction with all of her students, and influenced her math instruction. She said:

I used [the skills I worked on with my coach] with pretty much my whole class instead of just the bottom 40% [we focused on] ...

[I also use it] in my math, like especially in my interventions... Because my reading intervention got so structured because I have these specific materials that I use every day my math got a little more structured where I really drilled them on specific skills. Where I feel like it was way all over the place last year. It's just a little more

organized as I've tried to form it as the same as I am doing with reading. It helped with that.

Respondent 12 (teacher) also reported using the coach supported skills with her whole class. She said:

I use FRF for my small group reading, I use it for all my students even though [my coach] only focuses on my intervention, my lowest 40%, I still use it with my other students as well. I feel that it still helps them.

Respondent 13 (teacher) likewise extending those skills to her whole group instruction. She reported:

When we are [working with my coach on] decoding I started changing that in my whole group. The little decoding sheets that they would give us, they had like little dots under each sound or a digraph. So I started using that. I used that during my whole group. I'm putting a dot by each sound. I didn't use to do that before.

Respondent 16 (coach) reported "And I think there was more inclusion. They didn't just take the lowest 40%. They noticed how well these kids were doing and they started doing it with other groups. And before long the whole class."

Respondent 17 (coach) reported that the coaches were supportive of teachers using the skills developed with the reading intervention with whole classes. She said:

They would say "I'm doing this with the rest of my class." And I would say "Oh, great." I think it is interesting that in the beginning they were mandated to do something with the 20%, and they were willing to try the program, and by the end it's for their whole classroom.

Respondent 20 (coach) reported “[The teacher I work with] is really trying to incorporate [the skills we work on] more into her everyday [instruction] with the big book that they read, and with the other stuff that they’ve been doing.”

Respondent 22 (teacher) reported using techniques she practiced with her coach during reading other reading instruction times. She said:

Not all the time, but when I did the whole group read-aloud, I would alternate. I would have added those prompts in where I completely wouldn’t have before. So I tried to include some of those prompts in my read-aloud as well.

### **Theme 21: Coaches were Viewed as Experts**

Six respondents (26.09%) highlighted how they viewed the coaches as experts who could successfully advise teachers. Respondent 1 (administrator) shared that she saw the coaches at her school as experts and warned against hiring less experienced coaches in the future:

I think that is one danger I would look for. A lot of time what happens when a program tries to grow you have to get as many people in as possible and sometimes those people's expertise is not as good as the expertise as those, so I think was the great thing the three coaches that we had were all experts in the field in which they lived...

With that being said, a lot of times when you get new people depending if they’ve been teaching for a while, depending on how long they’ve been in the program, that creates an issue when you can’t get the questions answered that you need...

When you asked them questions they had quick answers, quick answers that they got back to you quickly and turn around was pretty quick.

Respondent 3 (administrator) described the coaches as:

...really number one. They were knowledgeable.... and I was like “these people know what they are talking about.” I love being around people who know what they are talking about. I can follow these people and I don’t have to worry.

Respondent 11 (teacher) emphasized how the coach not only provided information during coaching sessions, but were readily available to answer questions and to review data:

Well I get coached once a week... [on] how to do intervention, different strategies and different activities. And how to do the different assessments for it too.... I would always knock on her door and be like [to my coach] "Look at their scores." or "look at what went up" or "they're having trouble." But I was always knocking on her door and asking questions. And if they were having trouble with a certain skill, like blending sounds, she would give me different tips and strategies... They always had advice for me and I always felt comfortable asking for advice from them for different things.

Respondent 17 (coach) discussed having a coach being available to answer specific questions and respond to specific needs from the coaches’ perspective. She reported:

... If they had questions or anything they would ask us the next week. But then we were at certain schools two days in a row. So we could the next day come back and show them what they needed or show them how to do something. So it worked well time-wise.

Respondent 6 (teacher) shared how coaches gave direction on how to modify strategies to meet class needs. She shared:

I had certain groups where I would like totally lose their attention if each kid did this for a minute because it was so hard. So it was like I would do like 10 second sprints, or I would change it up. So I wouldn't have to do exactly what the instructions say, you can modify it. And they gave me good ways to modify the drills. So it worked for the group.

Respondent 10 (teacher) likewise shared that her coach helped her to meet her specific students' needs, and did so in the moment, saying "[there were] some difficult students that I had. And [my coach] really showed me a lot of things to do so this year [that] made it even easier... Anytime they bring something in I want to use it right away so I am familiar with it. And then sometimes they will show me too... So usually not like "sorry I can't help you today I've got to go real quickly." Not that.

### **Theme 22: Coaches Helped Teachers Match the Content of Interventions to the Instructional Needs of Students**

Six respondents (26.09%) identified the coaches' role in helping teachers match the content of their intervention to the instructional need of students.

Respondent 3 (administrator) saw this coaching role as a major purpose of the coaching program:

I believe the purpose [of the coaching program] is really number one is "diagnose first". To go in and diagnose what is going on... diagnose what the students need. And then comes the actual strategy for how to support - you know what is needed and so providing teachers with... research-based best practices strategies for how to really help this student. [It is] almost individualized in that you know so many resources are used to find out what this particular child needs and then helping the teacher to drill down on some really good resources to help the child to really develop those foundational reading skills.

Respondent 9 (teacher) described how when the coaches aided her identify the present level of her students it helped her feelings of being overwhelmed. She said:

I think [the coaching] helped a lot. It helped me come up with interventions for the kids where they were struggling. [The coaches] did... pretests with the kids first and told us where they were. What areas to put them in. So it kind of gave you an intervention unit.

You didn't have to do the extra work to figure out oh my God, how am I going to do this?

What kind of work am I going to have to do? It was there.

Respondent 12 (teacher) described the role of the judges as “just making sure that I was doing it correctly and in the right order and not too fast for the students, but still giving them that rigorous activity.” This reflects the role of the coach in helping teachers match pacing to the current instructional level of students. Respondent 23 (teacher) also reported that the coaches helped her match her teaching to her students’ level:

I have kids that are like K5 level, so that was good for them to go over all those skills with the phonics and the double consonants, and the sounds and the syllables and stuff. [The coaches] helped me with that.

Respondents 16 (coach) and 17 (coach) described how they went about identifying students’ instructional levels and the impact this practice had on teachers. Respondent 16 (coach) said:

...Basically in their small groups [the students] were pretty much all on the same level. And that was done primarily based on how they scored in their MAP testing and their PALS testing and some of their DIBELS. But they maybe had not spent much time [matching students based on data] prior to this program. And I think the program was instrumental in doing this.

...Believe it or not some of the second graders need to do first grade activities. Or Kindergarten activities if they were that low. So it was a little bit of stretch for those second grade teachers to go back. But once they did these kids made the gains. And they were where they needed to be at the end of the year. So that was great.

Respondent 17 (coach) added “[Teachers began] differentiating their instruction. I remember a couple of teachers saying "Oh, this person isn't that far yet." I could see them - they appreciated differentiating instruction more so at the end of the year.”

### **Theme 23: Students Were More Engaged in their Reading Instruction as a Result of the Coaching Programs**

Six respondents (26.09%) identified that the students were more engaged in their reading instruction as a result of the coaching programs. Respondent 3 (administrator) described the students as “A lot more involved in and engaged [with reading instruction].” Respondent 15 (coach) described how she coached the teachers she worked specifically on increasing engagement. She said:

I'm also coaching on the methodology, how to make sure you're getting the unison responding so there is not the leader child that's giving the answers to the children that don't know. How to have really rich reinforcement and acknowledgement of the things the kids are doing right both from the behavioral side and you know getting responses. Getting high rates of responses that are correct. Really coaching on getting high, high rates of responses you want the kids to be doing a lot of responding during the session

Respondent 18 (coach) described her perception of the teacher’s reaction to the students’ interaction during reading intervention. She said:

I think seeing how engaged all the kids are when [the teacher] does this I think was a really big, cool moment for her. And it was for me too knowing that the kids get really excited about this stuff and they really like interacting with print in this way is really cool. And that was exciting.



Respondent 19 (coach) described how the teacher used tips provided by the coach to improve student engagement.

[W]e want to keep kids engaged during... reading times. I remember a couple times when she would use tips that we'd talked about to keep the kids engaged and just have more opportunities to respond. I think that was pretty evident [and the students] were more engaged.

Respondent 22 (teacher) described how coaching made her more aware of student engagement. She said "I am more reflective [because of the coaching] as far as how much am I really having the kids engaged. And even pushing them more because I really didn't think that they could do the work that they did." Respondent 23 (teacher) reported that students stayed engaged throughout the intervention block: "A typical session lasted about maybe 15-20 minutes, and he went through all the points and the kids really participated, they really liked doing it."

#### **Theme 24: Respondents Shared Positive Attitudes Towards Future Coaching**

Five respondents (21.74%) shared positive attitudes towards future coaching, either from the same coaching program or other sources. Three specifically mentioned wanting to work with the same coaches in the future.

Respondent 3 (administrator) shared that she hoped the coaches at her school would stay working with their staff.

I want [the coaches] to stay and I don't want them to leave and it's been it's just been a blessing for us... I hope we are in the running for them to come and help us next year. I feel like a lot of the gains we made, a lot of the things we've been recognized for from our

district has been from this effort you know and yeah we've gotten "what are you guys doing over there" I know it's been all those people working with us.

When discussing the future of the coaching program at her school Respondent 22 (teacher) also expressed the want to keep the same coach that she had been working with, saying "I'm hoping next year if we do this I get to have the same coach." Respondent 19 (coach) reported that the teacher he worked with also had requested him back as well:

Yeah it was really good. I thought we got along great, I only came in once a week but it sounded like she asked if I could be back next year working with her so I'd assume that it is going well on her end as well.

When asked what she thought would be an improvement to the coaching program Respondent 9 (teacher) answered "Just continue with the coaches. You know, giving us feedback and having the materials ready for us."

Respondent 3 (administrator) reported that the teachers who received coaching were more accepting of coaching and collaborating from other sources as well. She said:

It has helped my work (as a support teacher) because now when we're working in other areas that is transferred over into those things too and they are a lot easier to work with those people we are talking about they weren't difficult but they are more open to coaching and more open to collaborating.

### **Theme 25: Students Wanted to be Included in the Reading Intervention Groups**

Five respondents (21.74%) reported that students wanted to be included in the reading intervention groups. Respondent 7 (teacher) shared:

If I call one student over [and another student] knows I usually work with them without calling them I will hear about it. So if I call this person over and I have a person over

there I usually work with they will say "Do you want me to come too? Do I come, too?"

So the eagerness for them to come over and work with me, and knowing the fact that they are getting better, and they are progressing and they know where they started and they know where they are now... [T]hey want to go further. They want to continue to grow and that's amazing. Because a lot of times students don't want to learn, they don't want to be here. But I've noticed that they want to, there is no reluctance from them when I call them to the table. They are always ready to go.

Respondent 13 (teacher) described her students' reactions by saying:

I think a lot of students want to meet with me [in my intervention group]. I couldn't meet with everyone but... they really wanted to meet with me. Like everyone wanted to meet with me. It was just like "oh my gosh". So [I need to balance] that out a little bit better. I tried... whole group, small group, whole group with them. And they liked that. So the specialized instruction, or that individualized instruction, like just having that small group carried over I think with the other kids [during whole group].

Respondent 21 (coach) described it this way: "[The students] are definitely very enthusiastic, they definitely enjoy it. They are excited when I come in the room because they know they get to read and they're sometimes disappointed if it's not their turn."

Respondent 19 (coach) attributed the students' response, at least in part, to the fact that they were able to understand the intervention material. She said:

The kids understood [the intervention material] ... Sometimes when I would come in they'd be like 'can I be part of the group today?' It was something that the kids enjoyed and I think she realized that... The ones we were working with really enjoyed it so from

week to week they love running over to the table and getting all set of and waiting for [the teacher] to come over.

Respondent 23 (teacher) also attributed this desire to be in the intervention group to the instructional material being on the students' instructional level. She said:

The kids were really excited about it, they really liked, you know, the days that he came and the activities and stuff because it was [more on their level] than the work that I had for them. So they really liked [the coach] coming.

### **Theme 26: Coaches Reported Feeling Overwhelmed at the Start of Coaching**

Four coaches (17.39%) reported feeling overwhelmed at the start of coaching.

Respondent 16 (coach) described her level of feeling overwhelmed by saying:

I would say I was a little overwhelmed in the beginning. Not challenged so much but there was a lot of material. So we would go and we would discuss just figuring out the next step. And making sure we had everything in the back of our head. M is so knowledgeable. She just has it all down. But for us, I think the beginning. At least for me. It was a little bit tricky. A little bit challenging. Because how am I going to remember all of these kids, all of these teachers, where their rooms are, when they meet, and what they need. So that was the most challenging. But it was never terribly challenging. We never were very frustrated at all. So it was really a positive experience.

Respondent 17 (coach) described her initial feelings this way:

Overwhelming at first with all the different material. And meeting everybody and how this runs at this school - this runs at this school but... it never felt like that after [had some experience with the program].

Respondent 18 (coach) described feeling nervous not just from the newness and scope of the particular coaching program, but from the fact that she had never been a teacher but was instructing the teacher on things she should do in the classroom.

was nervous initially about going in, you know, I'm not a reading teacher, I've never been a teacher, but she was- we worked like really collaboratively, she'd ask me, 'what do you think about... I don't know, whatever. I think we had a really good relationship. I really want to work with her again in the future. I think she... you know; I think she's excited to maybe have me back if we can work that out...

I think initially I was a little bit, just nervous about her liking me and thinking that what I was bringing her was valuable and that I wasn't, you know, the master of all shared book reading knowledge. I was really, like, the girl who had material that my teacher didn't and I brought it every week. And I think after I got past worrying about her thinking I was mean, I think... I think it gave me confidence in working with teachers. I don't do a whole lot of like, explicitly helping teachers. I might point them in the direction of something that could help, but I've never sat down and shown teachers how to do something before [becoming a coach], so like I said before that was really scary to me at first but because I know that this is such a valuable thing and that it works, I feel really confident about presenting it to teachers now, so... that is really cool.

I can't think of anything [challenging] other than just my nervousness in presenting information to teachers when I was not a teacher.

Respondent 19 (coach) responded that getting comfortable with the coaching process and with the classroom was the most challenging part of the coaching program for him. He said:

For me it was my first or second time doing it so I think just getting comfortable with the whole process. I think we were pretty prepared going into it but I mean until you really do it there's only so much you can learn and expect and I think being in the classroom you have to kind of figure out the dynamic, which kids are quiet and we'd work with the same kids from week to week typically, so I think I got more comfortable... as we went on.

**Theme 27: Administrators Saw Their Role as Setting Expectations and Ensuring Adequate Time was Provided for Coaching Activities**

The four responding administrators (17.39% of total respondents) agreed that their role was to set the expectation that teachers would fulfil their commitment to the coaching programs and ensure that time was provided for coaching meetings and activities. This allowed the administrators to focus their time and attention on other responsibilities.

Respondent 1 (administrator) described his role this way: “a lot of my level of involvement has been, you know, some of the planning and preparation.” Respondent 2 (administrator) described her role this way:

My involvement with FRF is just the teacher side, really making sure the teachers are doing what they are supposed to be doing as a part of the grant. And just to kind of drive that this is important without me saying ‘hey this is important, this is what you should be doing...’ Teachers may have a tendency to say ‘oh - this is this year, this won't keep happening” but the teachers... know this is NOT going away.

Respondent 3 (administrator) described her role in the coaching process by saying:

[It was helpful for] me not having to be a part of the ground work. Those meeting were great where [the coaches] met with teachers and my only role was to say ‘hey what time

do you have to meet' and sometimes I didn't even have to do that. It was more like hey I talk to this people is this time available.

My role has been, because we have the coaches come in, I've been able to take a kind of back seat of watching and monitoring the work of what is happening. Because the coaches have been so instrumental in the actual in classroom work... Its' just been a partnership. A true partnership of, you know, this work. And that has been my role to just collaborate with the coaches. It has been refreshing that I get to have not as much contact with teachers in this space because I have so much contact with them on all these other things that exist in this school so I've been able to collaborate with the coaches mostly and not the actual work in the classroom and just kind of... scheduling meeting and making sure schedules are open for the work that needs to be done.

This year I came in more as a person who told the teachers that they needed to do certain things at certain times. That data needed to be collected, that progress monitoring needed to happen.

Respondent 4 (administrator) highlighted how she was able to focus her attention away from the work of the coaches to her other administrative responsibilities. She said:

Because [the coach] was here and working very well with the teachers, I didn't have to do as much. I only came in when she needed reinforcements. So then I could focus on other areas, like the older grades that weren't getting FRF. And the other subject areas. And assessments. Like all of the million other things that are a part of my job.

Respondent 1 (administrator) also identified a feature of how the coaches operated in the schools; coaches attempted to resolve problems with the teachers they were working with and did not report to administration. Respondent 1 described this boundary this way:

Also when I go in and do observations I always notice what's going on - I notice the kind of direct instruction which they are using and I put that in my observations as well. If there is something that I see it is something that I see - versus something that the coaches come to me and say that someone isn't implementing the program. They try to make those changes themselves.

**Theme 28: Respondents Expressed a Need for Coaching Help in Supporting Students Who are at a Higher Academic Level**

Four respondents (17.39) expressed that they wanted support from the coaches or within the coaching program for higher level students in their schools or classrooms.

Respondent 4 (administrator) discussed getting information from a coach that could be used upper grades not currently being supported by the coaching program. She said:

Having [our coach] to work with directly when I have questions. For like the older grades, then I can ask her and tweak it so it's not so childish for the older grades. I love the program! I wish we could use it for like up through 5th grade.

Respondent 13 (teacher) felt at a loss for what to do to support reading skills beyond the foundational level:

But moving forward I wouldn't even know how to address it. You know it's just like, the higher level skills I think it's the foundations that we are building and instilling. Like a wish list, basically if I had a wish list like what kind of strategies can I use to work on the higher level skills. I found when they took their MAPs tests and their PALs tests and all of the assessment that we do, they perform very well at that foundational level. In my opinion I just focus so much in there. And I have to work on that too myself. Is my tier one instruction higher level? Teaching those higher level strategies and skills. I think I



focus so much on phonics this year. And I found that my students, by January, were reading. Not all of them fluently but better than my students last year. But I think I dropped the ball on the higher level.

Respondent 14 (teacher) recognized that the reading intervention provided services for struggling students, but that she needed help providing support to students who were meeting and exceeding grade level expectations:

The only - I don't - how do I say this. I had some really smart kids and it really wasn't challenging for them early... We always worry about the kids that struggle... My coaches never said "for those really high kids try this, try that..." But there are some really bright kids in [my class] and so just putting a little more emphasis early on the bright kids I think is the only thing that could be done differently. Because I had kids who were reading when they came in. We had them doing some things that they could probably couldn't benefit on, but as the year went on there were things they could benefit from. As the year went on there were things they could benefit from. But I could have been doing that with them in October. I don't know what 1st grade and 2nd grade does. I don't know how challenging they get, but I have a couple of kids that I probably could have don't some higher level stuff with that I didn't get to because I just sat back and waited on the introduction of the new stuff and how to do it. I would say push the bright kids a little sooner, a little harder. I've got some kids now that I'm done teaching so it's all review, but I'm curious to see what the first grade and second grade does. Because I have some higher level kids that if I have some next year I want to push instead of just have them ride along and cruise.

Respondent 22 (teacher) shared similar thoughts:

I think for my higher groups sometimes they went through it quicker – a lot quicker than my lower groups... I don't really have anything that I would say to do differently besides maybe the kids who are faster, have something to do when they're finished.

### **Theme 29: Clear Expectations Made Coaching More Successful**

Four respondents (17.39) described how setting clear expectations made coaching more successful. Respondent 1 (administrator) described the work coaches put in before the school years began, saying:

They met our teachers during the summer-time and just kind-of gave them a brief synopsis of what the program is about. And then they trained them on the program and then they actually came to the school and talked to the entire school and let them know what they would be doing.

Respondent 16 (coach) reflected on challenges she had as a coach and surmised that “So I guess the expectations for what we need from the teachers needs to be really clear.” Respondent 18 (coach) however, made sure that expectations were very clear during coaching. She reported:

I think for her I made sure that she knew exactly what to expect of me. We would always plan for the next week together; I would always bring her the next book... So I think just making sure that she knew what to expect with me and that I was really clear with expectations really helped a lot. Because teachers want things that are predictable...

I think being really clear with the teachers right off the bat [is essential to the relationship]. Helping them know exactly what to expect of the coaches, when to expect it, what they're working on. Just being really, really clear from the get go about what the program is and what it's going to teach them and what they're expected to do. I feel like my teacher was really flexible and really great, but when I got there on the first day she

was like ‘hi, what are you doing?’ So I’m not sure what the best way to convey that to teachers is but I think it would be good to do that in a very clear, very direct, organized way for next year, just so they know what they’re getting into.

Respondent 20 (coach) reflected on a debriefing meeting that was happening between program organizers and participants, and felt a meeting to set expectations would have been better at the start of the program. She said:

Maybe just giving the teachers more directive information just about- because I know they have that meeting, later, to talk about what was expected and everything, but maybe doing that more at the beginning just so they have more of a better understanding of their responsibilities too as observers of the modeling.

### **Theme 30: The Organization and Structure of the Coaching Programs was Helpful to Participants**

Four respondents (17.39%) reported that the organization and structure of the coaching programs was helpful to them as participants. Respondent 3 (administrator) reported:

It was great because there were all of these checkpoints throughout. It's just nice. It felt, you know, the program was already set up...

I am by nature get in and take off but this was so nicely put together it wasn't like that... [I]t was refreshing to know this was my part and so I was very impressed and excited... I was just impressed number one the amount of work I knew was happening behind the scenes in order to even produce something like that and for it to be so cohesive and so I was just like where is my part where do I fit in.

Respondent 9 (teacher) reported “They gave you the books, they gave you the materials.

Everything else they had organized for you. The most helpful thing was having everything

prepared ahead of time.” Respondent 11 (teacher) shared “Last year [my intervention group] was not as structured. But this year was a lot more structured and [the students] were a lot more [engaged] this year.” Respondent 16 (coach) reported, that as a coach, “We came in after [the coaching program] was put together... I think it's structured really well. The overall structure is very organized, easy to use, straight forward.”

### **Theme 31: Participating Students Demonstrated Growth in Other Academic Areas Besides Reading**

Four respondents (17.39%) described how students of the teachers who participated in the coaching programs demonstrated growth in other academic areas.

Respondent 3 (administrator) reported that the students were more confident in other academic areas because of the reading interventions they received. She said:

And even with like we implemented a school wide policy for math and constructive response and they kids were like I can do this and it wasn't such a hard thing - these changes were sometimes so small or little - but they were just like I can tell that something is going on to build that confidence.

Respondent 10 (teacher) saw improvements in many subjects as reading skills are needed in those areas. She reported:

I guess [I saw growth in] the writing, the math, even social studies. Because we might have something in reading and they'll say “Oh, that's right, we did that with this” or they will also do things at home. Like they might see something on the internet and they will bring that information back and you know they went out and looked at it. And they had to be able to spell it to go on the internet, so...

Respondent 11 (teacher) saw her students become more independent, particularly in as writers.

She said:

They are a lot more independent in writing. I've seen how intertwined writing and reading are. As far as when I teach them the high frequency words, I mean I have them up on the board, but now they can spell them like automatically. And they are a lot more independent in reading stations. And now that I've been looking at like the assessments, like what they need to work on, I can give them activities at their different stations that are right where they need to be. You know, like right on their level.

Respondent 12 (teacher) reported:

In writing it influenced how I teach writing, how I get students to do their own writing thinking about the first sound in words, the last sound in words, and then if they are able to identify the middle sound um having them write the whole words.

### **Theme 32: Logistical Barriers, Besides Time and Scheduling, Made Participation in the Coaching Programs More Difficult**

Time and scheduling were the two logistical barriers discussed the most by respondents. However, three respondents (13.04%) highlighted other logistical factors that would have been experienced by other respondents as well.

Respondent 11 (teacher) expressed frustration that she did not have time to coordinate with other teachers in the building, particularly those working with other grade levels:

They were helpful. And it's nice to always have more people to help you because there is so many things to do in the day and not enough time. I mean there is never enough time to do as much as you want. But I think as far as like working between grade levels, collaborating, like k5 with first grade. If we had more time to do that. Because I had a lot

of kids that were moving so fast that they started doing first grade work. So if I could see what the first grade teachers were doing at the beginning of the year and start doing that then they could start moving along. Pick up and move along in first grade to, you know, harder stuff.

Respondent 6 (teacher) shared that the amount of adults in her room because of the coaching program was a barrier to effective teaching:

[A challenge was] when so many people were coming into my room. It didn't bother me so much to have people in my room. But it's hard for my kids when there are already two or three people and - you know I might already have two coaches in here, and then [the head coach] would be here too. And then they would bring someone else showing the program to. And then someone ELSE comes in and is walking around. There's like 7 or 8 adults walking around my room. And I can barely see my kids through the crowd of people. And it's like too much going on.

Respondent 2 (administrator) stressed the importance of provided space within the school building for coaches to work.

[It is important] to make sure that there is space in the building for the tutoring that is happening, to make sure they have the materials in their classroom...

Having the space for the [coaches] to really be able to have a home for them in the school. I think it would be very difficult for them to do what they have to do if they were living on a cart or out of a bag or having to be in different places. And so they are able to do some coaching and modeling for teachers after school, if they need to work with a student or teacher one on one there is a space to do that. Also any data collection that they have to do there is a computer there and they can it without moving around. I know it

sounds very simple but it's crucial to the program to be able to have a home to do everything that the program needs.

### **Theme 33: Some Teacher Characteristics Hindered Coaching**

Three respondents (13.04%) highlighted characteristics that they felt may be common among teachers that might hindered coaching. Respondent 1 (administrator) identified that since teachers are in charge of their own classrooms they might be resistant to another expert coming in and offering advice:

And teachers are proud people and they don't like to be corrected because they are required to know everything. When you are in the classroom you are on an island and you are the captain of that ship. It is really hard sometimes to let other people come into your classroom and make corrections on instruction

Respondent 2 (administrator) highlighted how teachers see a lot of new initiatives that last only one school year:

Teachers may have a tendency to say "oh - this is this year; this won't keep happening" but the teachers... know this is NOT going away. So besides being a cheerleader of FRF I have other teachers who are cheerleaders as well.

Respondent 21 (coach) suggested that some individuals are more willing to make changes and therefore be a better fit for coaching:

I'm suggesting "the right type" of person [is needed for coaching] ... the personality type or the willingness of the person to want to change their teaching or improve.

### **Theme 34: Coaches Reported That Participating in the Coaching Programs Developed Their Own Professional Skills**

Three coaches reported that participating in these coaching programs helped them develop a coach's professional skills. Respondent 15 (coach) was an experienced coach who described her role in training and supporting other coaches. She said:

I've been [coaching] forever so it's automatic to me. [I'm] making sure that the coaches, the new coaches, were prepared to coach... so that we were always really really valuable to the teachers so it didn't sort of veer into just this like "I'm observing" kind of coaching. So I guess just we were always short on time to just keep everything going. Just as to max out the success of everything so

[When] modeling and then you're um sitting next to a teacher saying "okay do this next, yeah you're doing great, do this next. Okay you try it I'm not going to do any comments unless you ask me and then okay go for it you're doing great." That cycle would continue with every sort of new thing that you were introducing depending on how far along the kids were. So I would train the coaches and they would shadow me, and same thing so then I would, I did not get to observe them coaching as much as I would have liked to, just because I didn't have as much time to do everything as would have been nice, but yeah so they got a lot of training and practice in coaching as well.

Two respondents specifically reported this growth supported professional training they had already received through a university. Respondent 19 (coach) said "Well for me, [being a coach] ... solidified... skills [I've learned in] my [college] classes. It was nice to put those skills into practice and I feel I have a pretty good grasp on reading, literacy development in kids [now]."

Respondent 21 (coach) described a similar occurrence saying:



I think it helped, like, we took [a] consultation [course] this semester and it was helpful for that kind of thing... I think that [coaching and consultation] are useful skills in general for someone who works in schools... I learned how to do it along with the teachers, which I appreciate.

**Theme 35: Administrators Reported that the Coaching Programs would have been More Effective if they had Been Mandatory**

Two of the four responding administrators (8.70% of total respondents) expressed that they felt like the coaching program at their school would have been more effective if it had been mandated for staff, instead of voluntary. Respondent 2 (administrator) said:

I would also say that the teachers have been voluntarily participating in FRF, up until June 12th which is the last day of school. Next year it will be required of all teachers... I was like ‘if it was mandatory for all the teachers could we be seeing even greater gains?’ Absolutely. So making sure that all of the teachers in the grade-levels that FRF touches are participating.

There is a balance between buy-in - and then a balance -I can’t even say balance there is the need for children. So if we are all looking at the children and looking at even the vision for [our school] and empowering all students then you shouldn't have an option. And it's something I think is an added bonus. As I think back on my own teaching career I would have loved to have someone come and watch me and give me feedback on a regular basis around reading interventions. I think it's a great thing to have and as compassionate as I am for my teachers - and yes I want them to have some professional voice in something - there are things I have to say “this is something you are going to have to do.” It's just like the comprehensive literacy plan, it is just what we do in MPS. FRF is just what we do at [our school]. They already know that all teachers at grades k5 through

second grade will be participating in FRF. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. So they are getting their minds right now since this is what's coming.

Respondent 4 (administrator) echoed these thoughts.

I thought it was very challenging at the beginning just because it wasn't rolled out in the way it was mandatory. It was optional. So some teachers participated and some didn't. So when you look at data it didn't reflect the work we put in because it averages out those scores overall... It wasn't mandatory so it was hard to get the data that we wanted.

### **Theme 36: Some Coaches Worked With Teachers That were Not Actively Participating in the Coaching Process**

Two coaches (8.70% of total respondents) shared their experiences working with a teacher who was not actively participating in the coaching process as expected.

Respondent 20 (coach) responded to the following interviewer question with her experience:

Interviewer: Ok and you said that in the beginning she would sit with you and kind of watch the modeling, and near the end she would walk away. Was she dealing with behavior? Or other tasks?

Respondent 20 (coach): Well the last two times she wasn't there because of the testing, and before that I'm not sure? I think it was behavior but it wasn't ever like crazy behaviors that needed to be addressed because she did have two aides in there with her, so sometimes I was confused as to why she was the one who was leaving. But I mean typically she was- she could at least watch from across the room but it's not really efficient that way.

Yeah, it wasn't that she was disinterested, she just prioritized other things. So I am not sure if she could have done her testing on another day or another time, but she chose to do it when we were doing our book reading. So that was difficult...

[It was challenging] trying to convey to her the importance of her observing the modeling sessions – at least one of them, even if she didn't have two – it would have been better if she had been there for all of them. But oh well.

Respondent 21 (coach) shared a comparable experience of working with a teacher who was not fully participating:

During that time the teacher was supposed to be observing me, whether she did or did not sort of fluctuated...

Well I had two different teachers. One of them was K4 and she had an aide in there so that was good because she was able to sort of, for the most part keep the class under control, so that teacher attended to me pretty well... The second grade teacher there was a lot of 'I need to do this, wait' so there might be twenty minutes between when I sat down with my group and she could finally sit down to observe us. For the first few weeks I sort of waited, after that I just kind of gave up and started. One time she fell asleep when I was reading. I looked over and her chin was on her chest and she was just completely asleep. Other times kids would come up and she would just go away with them when I was in the middle of it and I just kind of kept going. That's one reason why we did it twice, especially at the beginning...

I was a little bit frustrated. It is hard, she's so busy and I respect that, I've been a teacher, and I know how hard it is to do everything all the time that everyone wants, and you do really have to budget your time. But at that point I was like 'I've tried so hard. I've

tried telling her ‘you really need to watch this, can you please sit down with me?’ and even when I finally get her to that point she just falls asleep! So it was probably the most challenging part.

### **Theme 37: Administrators Felt That Teachers Need to Take Responsibility for Their Students’ Learning**

Two respondents (8.70%) reflected on the need for teachers to take responsibility for their students learning instead of expecting previous or future teachers to do that. Respondent 1 (administrator) shared:

I always used to blame the middle school and k-8 principals for sending kids that weren’t ready. And as I became a k-8 principal I began to do the same thing - that systemic issue of sending kids along who weren’t ready foundationally.

Respondent 4 (administrator) shared:

So at least they know that.... I don't know from my past experience a lot of teachers were saying "by this time they should already know this" and a lot of times they should know that but if they come in to you low from the beginning then they are not going to be there. They are more ready to work with the kids at their level and understand that if they don't know it at least there is somebody else in the building that will be able to help. So they are more accountable for their students and their progress versus throwing it off on and blaming previous teachers. Or expecting next year's teachers to catch them up."

### **Theme 38: Some Teachers Were Resistant to Coaching and Lacked Buy-in**

Two respondents (8.70%) described teacher resistance to participating in the coaching program. Respondent 2 (administrator) described the range of buy-in for the coaching program

among the staff at her school. She reported that she saw her role in the program, as an administrator, to be a cheerleader for the program. She said:

I would say my biggest challenges are the teachers who have not bought-in. I have those very dedicated teachers who were looking forward to [the coaches] coming in, looking forward to this PD, we are looking forward to working with our students about what we learned. And then we have those middle of the roaders who they have highs and lows. Sometimes they are very dedicated and then it falls off for some reason and then they want to say “Hey! Hey come back and help me!” And then I have those that are “I don’t have to do it, so I’m not going to do it.”

That has been a struggle. Trying to message the same thing to a group when some things are voluntary. I learned very quickly that I can’t say the same thing to everybody because they are not all in the same place. That has been my greatest area of growth because the program will be required for everybody next year.

[My role has been] to kind of drive that this is important without me saying “hey this is important, this is what you should be doing...” Teachers may have a tendency to say “oh - this is this year, this won’t keep happening” but the teachers that were here through Project Rise and everything else know this is NOT going away. So besides being a cheerleader of FRF I have other teachers who are cheerleaders as well.

Respondent 14 (teacher) gave an account of his initial resistance to receiving coaching, which was partially due, in his opinion, to the mismatch in gender between himself and the coach. This respondent also shared having a generally positive opinion about the coach and reported receiving helpful support. He said:

Oh, the [relationship has] always been positive. They were great. Yeah, nothing but good things to say about them. Yeah. Initially - no let me back up - initially when they came, if I'm not mistaken, remember, I'm a man, when they came in with our coach here. They started talking about the need to rearrange my room and this and that. What the hell does that got to do with how I teach? So they questioned the layout of my room. But then I went... "I'm not changing my room for these people". I'll do this stuff but the way my room is set up has nothing to do with the small group instruction that I'm doing. That went away, but I was kind of peeved at first. I don't remember which lady it was said something about the layout. But again, I'm a guy! It's not going to be all pretty and rosy and things on the walls all the time. The thing is 'do I teach effectively' and the answer is yes... [I said] "Yeah, I'm not moving my room around." I'm not sure why they thought that but I'm not going to worry about that. That was like the only thing all year round that really bothered me. When they first came in. Other than that these ladies are great. They do a great job.

...At one point I had to say "hey, I'm a guy." I just had to let [the coaches] know. Some of the things you guys are doing I just can't do that. I can't do it that way. I'm going to do it my own way. Some of the language you use I've got to add a word, take out a word, make it fit the flow for how I talk, how I speak, and honestly for how my kids are used to people talking. Not broken English, but you know - our own little way. Sort of like that... Yeah, more so fitting my style. Because again, I'm a guy. I've got to make it work for me! Which is what I did.

...I would probably say [it was most challenging] initially in the beginning. Obviously, like I said, most people would have a resistance to having to add something else to what they already do. But once I saw how it flowed into my plan and it gave me for

my small group every morning it gave me other things to do. And other things to use. After that. First couple of days I was like "I don't want to do this" but then after that and I got into it I was like "Let me add that blank to my lesson plan. And then I'm going to add this" and then I'd start asking them what else I can do because I'm just tired of just this. And as I asked for more things to do they started bringing me more things to do. Every now and then I go backwards, I'd leave out something one day. It gave me options and that's the thing that I think was the coolest. Having options.

### **Theme 39: Teachers Became Learners in their Own Classrooms through Coaching**

Two respondents (8.70%) discussed the unique dynamic created through coaching as teachers become learners in their own classrooms. Respondent 10 (teacher) described this simply by saying "it's kind of like [the coaches] teach us, we're the student. We teach [the children], and they're the students." Respondent 2 (administrator) elaborated on this idea by saying:

The students are actually very excited about seeing their teachers as learners. I've actually been observing one of the teachers in particular because it's an evaluation year for her - just watching like when she's been coached the students are like oh my goodness she's a student too! They're watching that interaction between the teacher and the coach. And then when the teacher becomes, if you will, the coach for the students you see their whole disposition changing because I saw my teacher as a learner. That doesn't always happen. Students don't see their teacher as anything other than this teacher! So to allow them to see their teachers as learners and let them know that I am not in this education journey by myself.

Curriculum Vitae

# Samuel Reese Purdy

Updated May, 2017

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D.

***Educational Psychology: School Psychology***

*University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee – Milwaukee, WI*  
May 2017  
(APA accredited & NASP approved)

***Dissertation***

*A Qualitative Study of Instructional Coaching Based On an Analysis of Interviews from Teachers, Coaches, and Administrators*

M.S.

***Educational Psychology: School Psychology***

*University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee – Milwaukee, WI*  
August 2014

B.S.

***Psychology***

*Brigham Young University – Provo, UT*  
April 2011

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## CREDENTIALS

***Pupil Services: Initial Educator License***

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
August 2014 to Present

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## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

***Research Assistant***

*University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, August 2011 to August 2016*  
Consulting Office of Research and Evaluation (CORE)

***Selected Grant-funded Projects***

"An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates" (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2016)



"An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates and Implementation Fidelity" (May 2, 2011 - June 30, 2013)

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## **APPLIED EXPERIENCE**

### ***School Psychologist***

*Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI – August 2015 to Present*

*Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language - August 2015 to June 2016*

*Starms Early Childhood Center - August 2016 to present*

*Starms Discovery Learning Center - August 2016 to present*

### ***Violence Prevention Program Team Member - Professional Development Facilitator***

*Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI – December 2014 to August 2016*

Primary training topics: bully prevention, social-emotional learning, classroom management, behavior management, trauma sensitive schools, restorative practices, specific learning disabilities, facilitating professional development for teachers, the use of ropes and challenges curriculum as experiential learning

### ***Practicum School Psychologist Experiences***

*Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI*

*Health and Wellness Department – Denise Sather – September 2013 to June 2014*

*Bradley Tech High School – Mark Vincent – January 2013 to June 2013*

*Hampton Elementary School – John Berger – September 2012 to June 2013*

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## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Courses**

***University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee – Milwaukee, WI – January 2017 to Present***

*Assessment and Intervention: Personality, Social and Emotional Functioning (EDPSY 851)*

***Alverno College – Milwaukee, WI – January 2015 to Present***

*Behavioral Science Research Methods (BSC 255)*

### **Guest Lectures**

***University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee – Milwaukee, WI***

*Assessment and Progress Monitoring in Special Education, Introduction to Intelligence*

*Tests: What They Are, When to Use Them, and How to Interpret The Results.*

*December, 2015.*

*On-going Teacher Professional Training, SLD and RTI: The Role of the Classroom*

*Teacher. June, 2014.*

*Current Topics in Education Psychology: Multi-tiered Systems of Support, SLD*

*Evaluations in Wisconsin: Application of the New Rule. June, 2014.*

*Social/Psychological/Biological Basis of Learning Disability, SLD Evaluations in*

*Wisconsin: Application of the New Rule. May, 2014.*

*Field Study in Exceptional Education, SLD and RTI: The Role of the Special Education*

*Teacher, May, 2014.*

Advanced Therapeutic Interventions, *Peer Rejection, Social Skills, & Friendship*, April, 2014.

Consultation Strategies in Counseling and School Psychology, *Decision Making Teams*, April, 2014.

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## PRESENTATIONS

- Stoiber, K., Purdy, S., Kaminski, A., & Carse, S. (2016, March). *Implementation of Evidence-Based Social Emotional Learning Strategies in Urban Classrooms*. Paper accepted for presentation at The 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Positive Behavior Support, San Francisco, CA.
- Stoiber, K., Lander, R., Kuether, D., Brennan, A., Schmidt, M., Copek, R., Johnson, M., . . . & Purdy, S. (2015, May). *Evaluation of Transformative Reading Instruction: Implementation and Outcomes*. Poster presented at Annual UWM Department of Educational Psychology Doctoral Student Poster Session, Milwaukee, WI.
- Lander, R., Baldwin, C., & Community Partners (2015, May). *Developmental Evaluation of a School-Community Partnership for Collective Impact; Preliminary Results and Implications*. Poster presented at Annual UWM Department of Educational Psychology Doctoral Student Poster Session, Milwaukee, WI.
- Short, R., Rice, N., Purdy, S., & Walker, C. (2014, May). RtI: What Works in Wisconsin. Paper presented at the International Reading Association 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- Sather, D., & Purdy, S. (2014, February). Bully Prevention: Working Together. Presented at Bullying Prevention and Intervention Conference. Milwaukee, WI.
- Short, R., Rice, N., Walker, C., Purdy, S., & Westrum, R. (2014, February). RtI: What Works in Wisconsin. Paper presented at Wisconsin State Reading Association 2014 Convention, Milwaukee, WI.
- Purdy, S. (2013, April). *Survey of Wisconsin Public Schools' Implementation of RTI*. Poster presented at Annual UWM Department of Educational Psychology Doctoral Student Poster Session, Milwaukee, WI.
- Westrum, R., Purdy, S., Walker, C., Rice, N., & Newell, M. (2013, August). *Survey of Wisconsin Public Schools' Implementation of RTI*. Presentation at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI.
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## PAPERS & PUBLICATIONS

- Lander, R., Stoiber, K., Kaminski, A., Mousseau, I., Walker, C., **Purdy, S.**, . . . Lynch, R. (2015). *Evaluation of Transformative Reading Instruction (TRI): Evaluation report for the 2014-2015 school year*. Technical report prepared for Milwaukee Succeeds Transformative Reading Instruction Steering Committee, Milwaukee, WI.
- Purdy, S.**, Ning, L., Rice, N., Short, R., Westrum, R., & Walker, C. (2015). An overview of RTI implementation in Wisconsin 2011-2013. *Wisconsin State Reading Association*, 52(2), 26-35.

- Stoiber, K.C., **Purdy, S.**, & Klingbeil D.A. (2016). Evidence-based practices. In N.N. Singh (Ed.). *Handbook of evidence-based practices in intellectual and developmental disabilities* (pp. 41-68). New York: Springer Science.
- Walker, C., Rice, N., **Purdy, S.**, Chan, K.T., Lynch, R., Mitrayani, D., & Westrum, R. (2016). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates: Fall 2015 District-level Survey Results and Analysis*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- Walker, C., Rice, N., **Purdy, S.**, Chan, K.T., Lynch, R., Mitrayani, D., & Westrum, R. (2016). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates: Fall 2015 School-level Survey Results and Analysis*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- Walker, C., Rice, N., **Purdy, S.**, Chan, K.T., Lynch, R., Mitrayani, D., & Westrum, R. (2016). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates: Spring 2016 District-level Survey Results Panel Studies Report*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- Walker, C., Rice, N., Newell, M., **Purdy, S.**, & Westrum, R. (2015). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates, Executive Summary*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- Walker, C., Short, R., Rice, N., **Purdy, S.**, Ning, L., & Westrum, R. (2013). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates and Implementation Fidelity, Year 2*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- Walker, C., Short, R., Rice, N., **Purdy, S.**, Ning, L., & Westrum, R. (2012). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates and Implementation Fidelity, Year 1*. Technical report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee, WI.
- 

## **OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES**

**Contributor** to Zirkel, P.A. (2016). "Appropriate" school psychology practice? You be the judge VII. *Communicé*, 44(7).

**Planning Committee Member** for the November 2016 Bi-annual *Wisconsin Gang and Youth Violence Prevention Summit*, Sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Justice

**Review Committee Member** for the *Milwaukee Public Schools Violence Prevention Grant Program*, which awarded \$250,000 in grants of up to \$15,000 to community partners

**Student Reviewer** for *School Psychology Quarterly*, Volume 29, 2014.