Guiding Educators to Praxis:

Moving Teachers beyond Theory to Practice

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and report on the impact of coaching as an embedded part of professional development has on teacher learning and practice in the context of educating English Language Learners (ELLs). A close examination was made of what teachers, coaches and principals believe to be effective professional development and how the relationship between a coach and teacher affects understanding of and classroom practice with a specific population of students. The research questions were (a) How can coaching support implementation of professional development goals over traditional development activities as reported by the teacher, coach and administrator? (b) What is the relationship between the coach and teacher? (c) How does the coaching process relate to self- reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?

I used a qualitative approach to gather data through classroom observations and in-depth interviews. The 17 participants came from Title 1 elementary schools with high ELL populations located in the central and west valley of Phoenix, Arizona. I analyzed the data deductively then coded and categorized participant responses in relation to the literature on professional development and coaching.

The findings indicated that those involved perceived embedded coaching as an effective component of professional development. What I have now termed based on my study as Professional Development Praxis (PPD). They agreed that

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with a structured system of coaching in place, both teachers and coaches increased their knowledge of how to best instruct ELLs as well as enhanced their ability to put research-based strategies into classroom practice.

The recommendation of this study is that districts, schools and professional developers provide training and support for educators in a meaningful, effective and student centered way. Professional development were educators are provided knowledge about ELLs, opportunities for practice of what they are learning in and out of training sessions and on-going collaboration and support as they work with their students. It is the job of everyone involved in the system to better prepare educators to meet the critical needs of students who come to school with specific linguistic and academic needs.

DEDICATION

To my father,
for your endless encouragement, belief that I could do it, and most of all, patience,
and support in getting me through it.
You are my biggest cheerleader.
The passion within me is because of you.

To Eduardo,
for the many things you did to ensure our children were cared for, our house ran
effortlessly and that our lives stayed as normal as possible.
Thank you for making sure I could fulfill my dream.
You are my best friend. I love you.

To Caitlin and Eduardo José,
for understanding the importance of my education and hard work.
Thank you for giving me the inspiration and motivation to follow my dreams.
Most of all, thank you for your unconditional love.

To educators,
for your commitment and hard work to do what is necessary for students.
Thank you for allowing me to join you in the process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement, nothing can be done without hope and confidence.
-Helen Keller

Completing my doctoral degree has been a long hard journey that has taken me 10 years to accomplish. I always had *hope* that one day I would share with all those around me that I had made it through and that I was done. What I needed was the *confidence* to do so.

There are many people I must thank for helping me build the confidence needed to finish my journey. First, to my "padrino", and committee chair, Dr. Eugene Garcia: Thank you for making sure that I did not lose sight of what I was capable of and that I built the confidence to do what had to be done. His unwavering guidance and support throughout my study reignited the fire that started me down this journey in the very beginning. I also thank my committee members for allowing me to work alongside them on such an important project and for giving me the critical feedback and support needed to ensure that my work can be of benefit to other educators.

I would in addition like to thank the teachers, coaches and principals who took part in this study. I appreciate their willingness to open their minds, hearts and schoolhouse doors to let me into their world of education. What I have learned with them and from them will continue to inspire me as I work with other educators across the country in the area of English Language Learners and teacher preparation.

Finally, I am forever grateful to my family. I thank my father not only for supporting me through his kind words and, at times, harsh reminders that I needed to finish but, also for his financial support that made my dream of becoming Dr. Castillo a reality. Thank you Eduardo, my loving husband for doing all of the hard work, taking the kids to and from school, attending school and sports events, cooking their meals, washing their clothes, and putting them to bed at night.   I am grateful to him most of all for taking care of a teenage daughter; it was not something he was responsible for doing, but was more than willing and happy to do it. Thank you for the kind and motivating words that I needed to keep me going when I really wondered if I could. To my two beautiful children, I am thankful for them loving me and reminding me that they are the reason I do what I do. And for my son in my tummy who will be walking across that stage with me, I thank him for reminding me that whatever life throws at us, expected or unexpected, is for a reason. He is the reason that I see what a blessing it is to be me.

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Introduction

Problem Statement

Research has clearly identified that a gap exists between professional development opportunities for teachers and their classroom practice. An unprecedented amount of money is spent annually providing teachers with trainings, workshops and coursework that rarely changes teacher practice due to lack of consistent follow-up or support in the realities of the classroom. The U.S Department of Education (2002) states, "Professional development must be an on-going continuous activity and not consist of 'one-shot' workshops or lectures. Delivery mechanisms should include the use of coaches and other teachers who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put into practice" (p.26). Educational researchers Joyce & Showers (2002) considered training and coaching to be complementary and continuous operations designed to produce actual changes in the classroom behavior of teachers. One without the other is insufficient. Jay and Strong (2008) affirm, "An effective coach has the ability to remind, encourage and inspire individual teachers to hone their skills" (p.5).

The need for professional development is apparent; however, the type of professional development needed is rarely as obvious. Educational leaders must reconsider how teachers are prepared for the challenges they face in the 21st century classroom. Traditional trainings, conferences and classes do not provide

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the ongoing, relevant support teachers need to improve teaching and learning. The understanding of how students learn must also apply to adult learners. Teachers must be involved in an array of learning opportunities that engage them in real experiences, solving real life problems by using their own knowledge and background as classroom teachers.   They must also have authentic opportunities to work and learn from their colleagues.

Effective professional development should include four critical components; (a) presentation and theory, (b) demonstration of the strategy or skill, (c) time for guided practice, and (d) prompt feedback about the attempted implementation.   As these components are put into practice, it is also important to be mindful of the challenges that exist when working with adult learners.   The National Implementation and Research Network has identified three key challenges to consider and address when working with adult learners:

> ✓ **Newly learned behavior is crude compared to performance by a master practitioner.** Training is usually designed to introduce the learner to essential elements of a new set of skills.   However, there are uncounted nuances of when and how to use the skills. The new set of skills should be developed with the help of a coach who observes, describes and tutors the practitioner so that a personal style can be developed.   Research tells us that it takes as many as 30 instances of practicing a new instructional strategy or technique

before teachers can incorporate it effectively into their own practice (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

✓ **Newly-learned behavior is fragile and needs to be supported.** When practitioners begin to change their behavior, the reactions from those being directly impacted by the behavior may not be positive at first. This reaction can be discouraging to practitioners. Another role of the coach is to prepare the practitioner for the potential reaction and to support them through the early stages of implementation.

✓ **Newly-learned behavior is incomplete and will need to be shaped to be most functional in a service setting.** Workshops are used to develop entry-level knowledge and skills. Coaching can then help teachers put the knowledge and skills into the whole clinical context. Coaches can help teachers integrate their personal beliefs and attitudes with the targeted skills, knowledge, philosophy and values of the focus program or approach (Blasé, K., Fixsen, D., Friedman, R., Naoom, S., Frances W. (2005).

It is important to pay attention to the research studies on professional development that have demonstrated results for teachers and their students. Intensive professional development has a greater chance of influencing teaching practices and, in turn, leading to gains in student learning, when it provides

opportunities for application of the new knowledge through teachers' planning and instruction (National Staff Development Council, 2009). Educational institutions must be held responsible for identifying and providing what is necessary for educators to be successful in their classrooms. Time dedicated to trainings and workshops must be used strategically and responsibly, and it must include an ongoing plan for working with teachers dealing with the realities of their own classrooms with their own students.

Purpose of the Study

It has become a vital part of my efforts in working with districts across the state of Arizona to improve and change classroom practices for the betterment of their students.   Improving professional learning for educators is a critical piece in transforming schools and improving academic achievement (National Staff Development Council, 2009).   Well-researched curriculum and teaching models often do not find their way into general practice due to a lack of support during the phase of initial implementation (Horn, 2002). Studies have determined possible solutions for the breach between research-based practices and their successful implementation. One well-documented solution is providing teachers with learning opportunities that include job-embedded contexts, collaboration and specific feedback.

Coaching as a collaborative feature in professional development is a valuable component when working with educators on implementing research-based practices. At its best, coaching helps educators make informed decisions

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about instruction so that students gain a deep knowledge of subject matter and are then able to apply that knowledge to problems and questions that matter (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).   I would expect all educators to agree that this is the overall goal for teaching and learning.

My study will focus on what coaching is and how coaching, as a part of the professional development component of the Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners (ITELL) Academy, has impacted self-reported teacher changes in knowledge, skills and classroom practice. The Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners (ITELL) Professional Academy seeks to improve the academic achievement of English language learners (ELLs) in participating school districts in Arizona. An estimated 130,000 ELLs are enrolled in public schools in Arizona (Mahoney, MacSwan, Haladyna & Garcia, 2010). This growing number in student demographics has brought about several challenges for districts across the state. One of the most trying is how to prepare and support teachers in addressing the needs of this ever-growing population of students.

Recent state policy has had an insignificant impact on ELLs in overcoming the achievement gap, as shown by several studies (e.g. Garcia, Lawton & Diniz de Figueiredo, 2010; Rumberger & Tran, 2010; Losen, 2010), and has raised concerns about equal education opportunities for ELLs (Lillie, Markos, Estrella, Nguyen, Peer, Perez, Trifiro, Arias & Wiley, 2010). In a review of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Losen (2010) also defends that English-only instruction has not been beneficial to ELLs'

reading and math attainment in Arizona. His data shows that math scores for
ELLs in grades four and eight during the period from 1998 to 2007, increased at
first, but then declined, while the national average consistently improved.

In order to begin to reverse this effect, a comprehensive English
Language Development program designed to meet the linguistic and literacy
needs of these learners must be articulated and evaluated. In an attempt to do so,
The Office of the Vice President for Educational Partnerships at Arizona State
University has established collaborations with four school districts to create
ITELL (The Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners). The institute
is a two-year effort focused on targeting academic achievement growth for third
and fourth grade ELLs in selected schools.

The goals of the ITELL initiative focus on four areas:

1. Provide students with a classroom environment that optimizes both
   language development and the acquisition of content-specific
   knowledge.
2. Provide teachers with the instructional support needed to maximize
   student potential.
3. During the calendar year, increase the opportunity ELLs have to
   interact with their teachers and to participate in learning activities.
4. Improve and expand how parents and guardians contribute to the
   academic growth of their children.

Some research has identified a direct correlation between ELLs' academic achievement and the expertise and experience of their classroom teacher; however, as the need for much more research in this area exists, this study will focus on goal #1 of the ITELL project, *provide students with a classroom environment that optimizes both language development and the acquisition of content-specific knowledge* and #2, *provide teachers with the instructional support needed to maximize student potential*.

Classroom teachers were provided with professional development, coaching and support in an effort to better implement research-based practices that reflect the needs of their English language learners. The results of this coaching support will be determined by observing teachers, facilitating coaching cycles and by conducting in-depth interviews with participating teachers, coaches and principals.

This study will attempt to identify what and how professional development can meet the needs of districts and schools working to improve the academic achievement of their English Language Learners; it will also explore how coaching, as a component of this professional development, can impact teachers' understanding and implementation of research-based pedagogy specific to the needs of ELL students.

Research questions to be answered were

1. How can coaching support implementation of professional
   development goals over traditional development activities as reported
   by the teacher, coach and administrator?

2. What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?

3. How does the coaching process relate to self reported coach and
   teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?

Significance of the Study

More than ever in Arizona, it is important that teachers are able to deliver instruction tailored to the specific needs of ELLs. Along with the simple challenge of dealing with the growing number of ELLs in the state, preservice and classroom teachers of ELLs must also face changes in Arizona's educational policies. The Structured English Immersion (SEI) Models was created in Arizona after the passage of Proposition 203 in 2000. With this proposition, the local flexibility that had previously existed regarding the choice of program models for ELLs ended (Mahoney, Haladyna & MacSwan, 2009), and the implementation of SEI was mandated in school districts and charter schools across the state (Gandara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gomez & Hopkins, 2010). These regulations were made even more restrictive after the establishment of the Arizona English Language Learners Task Force, which was responsible for the implementation of what is called the *four-hour block* (Mahoney et al., 2010). This four-hour model, which is regulated by the Arizona Revised Statutes 15-756.01, determines that

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ELLs are required to receive English language development (ELD) services in an English-only immersion setting for a minimum of four hours per day for the first year in which they are classified as an ELL (Gandara et al. 2010). The changes in policy have also contributed to the quantity and quality of teacher training.

Educators continue to argue as to which program types will best develop the academic skills of students whose native language is not English. The overriding goal of the ITELL program described in this study was to ensure that participating teachers understood the issues and pedagogy relevant to the development of academic language and literacy in spite of the restrictions they faced under the mandates of SEI and the four-hour block. Teachers needed to learn what to teach and how to teach effectively. There is considerable evidence that the type of professional development teachers receive and the manner in which they receive it greatly impacts the results of their instructional practice. By better understanding how professional development should be planned, organized and delivered, those in charge of teacher preparation and support can make better decisions and ensure improved learning experiences for teachers.

This study will define the essential elements of effective professional development for teachers of ELLs and will also show how coaching as an embedded piece of professional development can directly influence teacher practice. By participating in effective professional development, identifying how the coaching process works and how teaching behaviors change in light of coaching, training and support of teachers can be better understood. Despite the

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challenge in an ever-growing population of students and restrictive policies, teachers of ELLs can and must be equipped to promote and facilitate a successful learning environment.

Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter presented an overview of the importance of professional development that includes ongoing coaching through a description of the statement of the problem, an outline of the study's purpose, and an explanation of the significance of this study. Chapter 2 will construct the theoretical framework of the study through a review of the literature related to the research questions. Chapter 3 will describe the research design and the procedures used to conduct the study. A description of the methodology, data collection and data analysis will also be provided. Chapter 4 will present the study's results in the form of data compiled and analyzed through the application of the research design. Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the study's findings and the implications of those findings for professional development practices, teacher implementation and research.

CHAPTER 2

What the Research Says about Professional Development

Effective teaching leads to positive student performance, and effective
professional development is the key to improving both.
(Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2005)

Introduction

Professional development has consistently been a fundamental topic in

education that has been discussed, researched and given attention at all

levels–federal, state, district and school. Central to the discussion is the growing

awareness that professional development and training for teachers is an ongoing

process that must be reexamined, improved, and then provided to teachers from

the start of one's teaching experience to the end. The process through which we

engage both in-service and pre-service teachers must be more carefully and

critically considered to best prepare them to enter and remain in the world of

teaching. This process must be specific to the diverse population of students these

teachers will encounter in 21st century schools. In order to ensure that all students

are provided the opportunity to achieve, teacher training must be thoughtfully

planned and delivered, highly rigorous, timely, effective, and most importantly

transfer to classroom practice. Classrooms must be environments where both the

teacher and the student understand how to challenge one another, places where

they regularly ask critical thinking questions. In a highly effective classroom,

students practice new content through activities that include analyzing

information critically, making connections to old and new knowledge, and

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applying that knowledge to the real word (Neufeld & Roper, 2009). Neufeld and

Roper (2003) emphasize this point: "What students learn has to do fundamentally

with how they learn it" (p. 2). To be able to create this type of highly interactive

and cognitively demanding classroom, teachers must first experience their own

learning in a similar environment. The way students are expected to learn in

today's classroom must be mirrored when working with adults in education.

The U.S. Department of Education (2002, p.26) states, "Professional

development must clearly align with the instructional program, including its

research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards and

include adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they

have learned. Professional development must be an ongoing, continuous activity,

and not consist of "one-shot" workshops or lectures". Delivery mechanisms

should include the use of coaches and other teachers who provide feedback as

instructional strategies are put into practice. Furthermore, the research has

concluded that if teachers are to stay current on educational topics and issues,

hone skills learned in teacher education courses, and develop understanding of

research-based best practices, professional development must be structured to be

comprehensive, systematic and sustained.

Learning experiences for teachers should include the same elements we

demand in their classrooms: opportunities to be highly engaged, creating and

solving real-life (classroom) problems, using what they already know, and

collaborating with peers to share ideas, make observations to identify strengths,

give feedback for support and continuous improvement in their efforts to learn new skills (Lieberman, 1995; Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

In this chapter, I will describe the national standards to be used in planning and measuring the delivery of professional development, as well as the elements or components that research has recognized to be effective in an effort to ensure quality professional development. In my review of the research, I will put an emphasis on one particular component of professional development: coaching. Coaching as a component or as an isolated process of professional development will be defined and discussed to explain what it is and why it is necessary in our mission to better prepare, follow up with and support teachers of ELLs. Three types of coaching models will also be outlined and described. Finally, I will review the research on each model of coaching and the effect coaching has on teacher implementation and development of instructional skills.

Effective Professional Development

Professional development as a course of action to increasing teacher effectiveness must be planned and organized to engage teachers regularly and to benefit all students (National Staff Development Council, 2009). There has been a great deal of research delineating what specific elements are necessary to ensure effective professional development. By synthesizing much of this research, the National Staff Development Council (2009), identified four key areas for effective professional development:

1. Professional development should be intensive, ongoing and connected to practice.

2. Professional development should focus on student learning and address the teaching of specific curriculum content.

3. Professional development should align with school improvement priorities and goals.

4. Professional development should build strong working relationships among teachers.

The discussion that follows will elaborate on these four key areas and is organized around what the National Staff Development Council (2001) has classified into standards: the *context*, *content* and *process* of effective professional development, as outlined below.

Context−where the learning will be applied and the organizational structure where the improvement is expected.

NSDC Standards for Staff Development (Revised, 2001) *Context Standards* *Staff development that improves the learning of all students:*
• Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
• Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
• Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

The context of professional development has several features that must be considered. To guide the process of creating a professional development plan, the National Staff Development Council (2009) lists a series of questions:

- Is it clear what the expectation for implementation is?

- Is there a plan for follow up and support?

- How will implementation be monitored, assessed and supported?

- How will a clear connection be made to current practice and any other professional development being provided?

- How will participants understand the role they will play in supporting each other after attending trainings?

Addressing these questions makes certain that when professional development begins; the purpose of the program can be well articulated to all participants so that participants know what they are expected to do with the information, knowledge and new skills being presented. It also ensures that there will be an expectation as well as an opportunity for actual implementation of what teachers have been taught (National Staff Development Council, 2009).

If staff development is to have a laser focus on improving student learning, the purpose of any proposed professional development must be unambiguous. Everyone involved at the school or school district has to be in agreement and prepared to deliver a clear and consistent message specific to the professional development goals and plans. All members should share a collective understanding as to the *why* and *how* of the professional development that is to

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occur, with no room for misinterpretation of its focus. Leaders, however, should

be mindful that this is not always easily accomplished (Echevarria & Short,

2007). Douglas Reeves (2008) makes it clear that we must not be naive in

thinking that everyone will agree to what needs to occur in an education system;

instead, it is up to the leaders of the school and/or district to make sure that their

teachers understand and commit to what must be done in the best interest of

students and their learning. In something as vital as education, we cannot simply

wait and hope for everyone to become highly motivated about new learning

through professional development. We must, however, agree that the priority of

professional development is aimed at student success (Reeves, 2008).

Professional development programs should take place in the setting, or

context, of where teachers work so they are given the opportunity to deal with the

actual issues and challenges they will face when implementing new practice.

While it is not always possible to be in the actual location of teachers' work, it is

important that those providing professional development make direct connections

through different activities, scenarios and discussion, to the roles, responsibilities

and challenges their audience faces with their particular group of learners

throughout the presentation. Whether training is provided by internal personnel

or by consultants outside of the district, the trainer must clearly understand the

context in which teachers are working daily and position the new learning within

that context. Intensive professional development, especially when it includes

applications of knowledge to teachers' current planning and instruction, has a

greater chance of influencing teacher practice (National Staff Development

Council, 2009).

A final consideration in the area of context is that professional

development programs should support the overall objectives set by the district for

teachers and students. Ongoing professional development should build on what

skills, knowledge and expertise educators have already developed, experienced

and implemented in their own classrooms. Professional trainers must be well-

informed and able to make very clear links between new knowledge and activities

which practitioners are already able to do (Casteel & Ballantyne, 2010).

Professional development is often unsuccessful when teachers are asked to learn

and use instructional strategies that are very different from their familiar practices

(RAND Reading Study Group, 2002).

Content−what is being learned.

NSDC Standards for Staff Development (Revised, 2001) *Content Standards* **Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**
• Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
• Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
• Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

The content of professional development for teachers is as significant as the core content of instruction for students. The two factors that have the greatest effect on teachers' knowledge and skills and that lead to changes in instructional practice are (a) a focus on content knowledge, and (b) program coherence (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Binnan, & Yoon, 2001). No matter the context of the professional development, the goal must be to improve both teaching practice and student achievement.

Based on National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Standards for Professional Development (2001), teachers must think about how they organize and facilitate the environment in which students learn, what and how they expect students to learn, and how to engage all students in the process of learning. The expectation is that those working with teachers deepen their knowledge of instruction as well as the potential for application of *research-based* practices.

A word about research-based practices is in order as we discuss the content of professional development. As the National Staff Development Council (2001) website cautions,

> A problem in the use of the term "research-based" is that it is applied equally to practices that vary considerably in the scientific rigor used in their investigation. For instance, a person who reads an article in a professional journal in which the author advocates the use of a particular practice without providing any supporting evidence for that assertion may later carelessly describe that practice to others as "research-based." Other

studies may cite only teachers' reports of changes in their own teaching

practice and improved student learning as sufficient evidence for the value

of the innovation. Still other studies may have methodologies that include

pretests and posttests of students and teachers, classroom observation of

teachers' instructional practice, and random assignment of students to

control and experimental groups. Consequently, it is critical that teams of

teachers and administrators take the time to study methodically the

research that supports the claims made by advocates of a particular

approach to instructional improvement or whole-school reform.

Ultimately, teachers must be able to analyze studies and make decisions about

what their students need to be successful, based on local conditions. They then

must be competent in using the chosen instructional skills to teach students what

they must learn. The act of learning what needs to be taught and how to teach it

must be simultaneous in nature; one cannot be prioritized at the sake of another.

Process−how the learning occurs.

NSDC Standards for Staff Development (Revised, 2001) *Process Standards* **Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**
• Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
• Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
• Prepares educators to apply research to decision making
• Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
• Applies knowledge about human learning and change.
• Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

The process for professional development, like the context and content, is just as important in meeting the target of improved teacher practice and student achievement. Professional development that has established a focus and is integrated as a larger school reform effort based on data tends to be much more effective. Educators in the process of their learning must define precisely what student needs are in regards to specific concepts and skills. Teachers strive daily to improve upon what students already know as well as to close gaps in what they are struggling to understand and become skilled at. This dual task can only be done successfully if teachers comprehend clearly what those target skills are. Leaders must then ensure that the professional development and support provided to teachers is tied to those target skills. In the end, districts that use student data to inform lesson planning and monitor student progress as part of their work with teachers sustain continuous improvement (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

The national standards for the process of professional development make certain that teachers learn relative to what they do, as well as become reflective of their learning and its transfer to teaching. The process of learning for teachers should ensure that they will be far more likely to implement new knowledge and instructional approaches proven to be necessary for student learning.

A brief description of what the process of learning should include is as follows:

1. **Learning of Theoretical Knowledge**. Training provides an opportunity for participants to learn the instructional approach as well as its theoretical underpinnings, and to develop an understanding as to *why* it is critical for the student population they are targeting.

2. **Modeling.** During and after training, teachers are provided the opportunity to observe classrooms in which the skills or practices are observable, allowing a clear view of how a teacher facilitates learning using the targeted instructional approach and how students respond to it.

3. **Practice.** Participants are expected to practice implementing the new skill, strategies or techniques. They begin by first planning thoughtfully for the practice to occur with its initial intent.

4. **Provided Feedback.** Lessons are observed by coaches or peers, and teachers are provided objective feedback on implementation of the targeted skills or practice. In order to ensure teachers are provided with feedback that is objective and specific to what has been trained; protocols are developed and aligned to training. Focus for the feedback is consistent with trainings and expectations of implementation.

5.   **Independent application and analysis**. After the initial

process of learning and practicing, teachers apply their learning

independently, through independent lesson planning and

teaching. Teachers reflect on their lessons and make

adjustments and refinements as needed. Teachers also

document and gather evidence of the results of their teaching to

make concrete decisions on what is needed to continue to grow

instructionally. Leaders provide follow-up and support in areas

that have been identified by teachers, coaches and/or

consultants who are providing support in implementation.

Subsequent professional development should continue to be

linked to measurable outcomes in teacher and student

performance. (modified from Joyce & Showers, 1996).

As evidenced by the literature, professional development should also be the

means to building strong working relationships among teachers (National Staff

Development Council, 2009). The forming and facilitating of learning

communities as part of a comprehensive approach in working with teachers

provides them an opportunity outside of actual training for extended learning,

support, and accountability as they improve their practice in the environment of

their school setting. Countless districts and schools across the country are

implementing coaching models as a strategy or approach to build, advance and

sustain working relationships among teachers and other educators involved in student learning.

Coaching, the process of being observed and receiving feedback along with objective questioning of classroom practice has become the logical choice in working with teachers through the succession of moving from training to transfer of classroom application as a component of a professional development plan. Effective coaching is based on inquiry and reflection, is collaborative, is based on theory about new learning, is intended to focus on teacher practice, and meets the national standards for staff development. Coaching can sustain what is considered fundamental for professional development to be valuable.

Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners

For the purposes of my study, I will be looking specifically at teachers who have been prepared to work with English Language Learners (ELLs). For that reason it is important to review and identify what the literature on professional development has determined must be the same and different in order to be most effective for this group of teachers. Both the National Literacy Panel (NLP, 2006) and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE, 2007) reports take strong positions on the point of professional development, concluding that for schools to be successful at helping ELLs achieve academically, there must be sustained and focused professional development.

Professional development for educators of ELLs should be differentiated according to various criteria, including the teachers' grade levels and content areas, their understanding of different instructional and assessment approaches, and their knowledge and application of second language acquisition theory to include the use of native language and English for instruction (Genesee et al., 2006, Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010).

Note that what is expected in teacher learning and preparedness to work with this particular population (ELLs) is in many ways what we know is necessary to prepare teachers to be successful with all students. However, in thinking about the context, content and process of professional development discussed earlier in this chapter, what needs to be clearly different for teachers of ELLs is the content on how to work with their student population. English language learners have very distinct needs that must be addressed in their instruction if they are to be successful in school. High quality instruction does make a difference and impacts their academic success. However, Short and Echevarria (2006) make clear that teachers of ELLs need specific preparation: they need to know their students well−what their prior education was, what language and skills they have developed in their native language−and they need to have a strong background in English as a second language methodology, cultural awareness and *sheltered instruction*, a specific approach to teaching academic content and language simultaneously.

Based on their synthesis of studies proven to promote ELLs' academic achievement, Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) recommend the following:

- Ongoing professional development focused on helping teachers achieve learning goals for students.

- Professional development supported by routine and systematic collaboration among teachers focused on achieving specific academic goals with students.

Noticeably, what research is telling us about professional development for teachers of ELLs is consistent with what research has deemed significant for the training of all teachers, in that it must be comprehensive, systematic and sustained. What must unmistakably be different is the theory and instructional practices that are the focus for professional development in working with these educators. Just as we must differentiate for learners and their specific needs, the same must be done for teachers; professional development should ensure that the content of the training is tied to whom and what they will be expected to teach.

In the following sections of the literature review, coaching will be the focal point. The how and why of coaching as a part of professional development or as the principal approach to professional development will be reviewed. The term *coaching* will be defined, and coaching models will be discussed, along with the research on coaching's impact on teacher practice.

What is Coaching? Why Coaching?

Defining one concept of coaching and what it involves as well as how it should be implemented is quite challenging. I have reviewed many terms for and approaches to coaching and have determined that Neufeld and Ropers definition (Coaching a Strategy for Developing Instructional Capacity, 2003) is most appropriate, considering the work that I am doing with coaches for the purposes of this study. However, as a point of clarification, in the many descriptions of what coaching is and is intended for, I found very similar language and characteristics used. According to Neufeld and Roper (2002), coaching includes (a) activities related to developing the organizational capacity of whole schools (such as increasing leadership for instructional reform and helping principals and teachers reallocate their resources and improve their use of data in the service of improving instruction), and (b) activities directly related to improving instruction (such as one-on-one observation and feedback of teachers' instructional strategies, and small-group learning of new content and pedagogy). For the sake of this literature review, the second part of this definition−activities directly related to improving instruction−will guide the following discussion of the research on coaching.

Coaching is a means of supporting and enhancing teacher transfer of best practices within the professional development process. Teachers in every area of education are involved in more and more workshops, trainings and coursework that have no clear expectations for or detection of direct transfer to where the new

learning matters most: the classroom. The research-to-practice gap is well

documented (Abbot, Walton, Tapia & Greenwood, 1999; Kretlow &

Bartholomew, 2010), as are typically low levels of fidelity in implementing new

practice. Fewer studies have been done examining levels of fidelity; however,

those that have been published prove that without substantial and ongoing

support, fidelity levels are likely to stay low (DiGennero, Martens, & Kliemen,

2007; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Increasing the use of research-based

practice and improving the fidelity with which teachers implement best practices

is a critical variable for maximizing student achievement (Kretlow &

Bartholomew, 2010). Lower-achieving students are the first to benefit as teacher

effectiveness improves (Pipho, 1998).

The professional development process is a difficult one, since teachers

may have to go through a number of changes to fully implement new instructional

strategies and methods (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Research on the implementation

of new teaching strategies states that it can take as many as 30 instances of

practicing a new instructional strategy or technique before teachers can

incorporate it effectively into their own practice (Joyce & Showers, 1996). In

addition, research has concluded that teachers need at least 50 hours of

professional development, including practice, in any one area tied to improving

their skills and student learning, to begin to master understanding and

implementation (National Staff Development Council, 2009). Coaching as a way

to foster acquisition of knowledge, teacher practice, collaboration and

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instructional support has proven to be effective in increasing greater consistency

in instruction, as seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Effectiveness of Training Components

Training Provided	Knowledge Mastery	Skill Acquisition	Classroom Application
Theory (Lecture)	Middle/High	Low (5%)	Very Low (0-5%)
+ Demonstration	High	Low to Middle (10-50%)	Very Low
+ Practice	High	High (90%)	Very Low
+ Coaching	High	High (90%)	High (80-90%)

Note. Based on the research by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, 2002

The common progression of teachers attending training, learning new ideas and

developing new knowledge, not going back and applying, or, returning to the

classroom applying their learning not feeling successful at doing so ultimately

abandoning the idea, might then be avoided. The effect size of training that

includes information, demonstration, and practice for teachers goes from 0.00 to

an effect size of 1.12 when coaching is added (Erickson, 2010). Consequently,

we can view coaching as a strategy to bridge teacher learning with actual

classroom application.

Coaching also integrates methods of effective adult learning, which must

be considered when working with teachers. According to Gordon (2004), "Adult

learners are both autonomous and collaborative;" thus, coaching as a form of

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professional development allows teachers to practice their own skills in collaboration with a coach. Since teachers receive professional development at very different points in their careers, coaching allows for the training to be tailored to their specific needs as they relate to the implementation of new practices. Adults also bring considerable life experience to the learning process, so it is important to integrate time for reflection during professional development. Coaching models support this principal of adult learning (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

The practice of coaching can be considered and employed as an independent approach for professional development or as one component on a larger scale of professional development. No matter the approach, coaching must be designed to supplement and enrich a school's or district's reform agenda and be guided by the goals specific to those instructional and learning needs. The research is quite clear that if a coaching method is applied as a systematic part of a professional development effort, it will increase implementation of effective instructional practices. Although there is no widespread evidence that coaching can directly increase student achievement, according to Neufeld and Roper (2003), there is a promise that the act of coaching will increase the instructional capacity of schools and teachers, a known prerequisite for learning. Ultimately, the purpose of any professional development effort, including coaching, is to increase student achievement.

What are the Types of Coaching?

Literacy Coaching

The goal of Literacy Coaching, which can be traced back to the 1970s, is to provide job-embedded, ongoing professional development for teachers (International Reading Association, 2004). It is a model of professional development that can include both large and small group instruction, modeling, and further support for teachers on a one-to-one basis through observations and feedback (Erickson, 2010). The primary goal of a Literacy Coach is to work with teachers to construct complex understanding of teaching with the goal of enhancing student learning (Rodgers & Rodgers, 2007) specific to the acquisition of literacy, including the process of developing literacy, assessments and instruction.

A Literacy Coach (a) helps design and facilitate professional development; (b) works with teachers, demonstrating instructional strategies and guidance as they model; (c) evaluates students' needs and collaborates with teachers on how to meet those needs; and (d) provides opportunities for teachers to learn from one another (Casey, 2006; Erickson, 2010).
Although literacy is also developed in other content areas (math, science, social studies, etc.), Literacy Coaches spend most of their time working with teachers in the area of reading.

If a Literacy Coach is to be successful in her role, she must have specialized knowledge and skills in the area of reading and must have previously

been an effective classroom teacher of reading. In addition, coaches must have

participated in coursework, professional development and collaboration with

other experts regarding best practices specific to literacy development (Casey,

2006; Erickson, 2010). Just as teachers who are learning to improve their practice

benefit from opportunities to observe and to be observed by their peers, coaches

who are learning to improve their coaching will benefit from similar opportunities

to observe other coaches' practice and receive feedback about their own coaching

work (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Shaw (2006) suggests that the goal of Literacy

Coaching is to create a school-wide community of teachers, committed to

developing literacy instruction.   Because a teacher's ultimate goal is to increase

student learning and achievement and because coaches are there to assist with that

goal, the focus of Literacy Coaches should be to support teachers and help change

teaching practices (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010).

Beyond being well-informed in the effective instructional practices of

literacy development and intervention, Literacy Coaches must be able to work

well with peers and understand how adults learn. While there may be an obvious

motivation connecting the Literacy Coach and teacher in regards to best practices

and student achievement, they must still develop the essentials for a collaborative

relationship. Trust and respect must be developed and maintained between the

coach and teacher. In order for Literacy Coaches to work effectively with

teachers, it is critical that teachers view them as peers rather than as supervisors or

evaluators. A Literacy Coach must maintain confidentiality, communicate

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effectively, and openly respect the professional expertise that teachers bring to the relationship. Literacy Coaches must take into consideration the risks that teachers undertake as learners when they practice new knowledge in their own classrooms.

Much of the research related to Literacy Coaching is narrow and for the most part has focused on the roles and responsibilities of the coach as well as on the relationship developed between the coach and the teacher. However, a few studies have outlined the challenges and successes of Literacy Coaching.

One of the most difficult challenges that districts and schools have faced is the requirement that Literacy Coaches have very specialized knowledge in the area of literacy. L'Allier, Elish-Piper and Bean (2010) developed guiding principles to identify the characteristics and roles of an effective Literacy Coach. The first guiding principle addresses a Literacy Coach's expertise, suggesting that a coach must have been a successful classroom teacher who demonstrated a foundation of knowledge in the area of literacy and who actively participated in relevant professional development. The authors also propose that districts require Literacy Coaches to have or obtain an advanced graduate degree in the area of literacy.

According to one study conducted by L'Allier and Elish-Piper (2006), the amount of experience, education and expertise does make a difference in a Literacy Coach's effectiveness. The study was conducted in a diverse, low-income school district with 65 K-3 classroom teachers, and 1,596 students. Researchers collected students' fall and spring test scores as well as weekly

Literacy Coaching logs that used a structured protocol. Analysis of the data showed that the highest average student reading gains occurred in classrooms supported by a Literacy Coach who held a Reading Teacher Endorsement (24 additional course credits in reading). The lowest average student gains occurred in classrooms supported by a Literacy Coach who had neither an advanced degree in reading nor a Reading Teacher Endorsement.

In a second, much larger study (121 K-3 classroom teachers and 3,029 students) conducted by the same researchers, significant reading achievement gains were made by students

of teachers who received support from a Literacy Coach who had either a Reading Teacher endorsement or a Reading Specialist certificate (32 additional hours of coursework and training) (L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2007). Although the research tying Literacy Coaching and academic achievement is limited, the results of these two studies demonstrates a correlation between a Literacy Coach's level of education and her effect on student achievement scores (L'Allier, Elish-Piper & Bean, 2010).

While a Literacy Coach must be an expert teacher in the area of literacy, this person must also exhibit an ability to *teach* teachers. A Literacy Coach must possess the skills to work effectively in a collaborative manner with peers. In their work with Literacy Coaches over an eight-year period, Rodgers and Rodgers (2007) stated that coaches must take on the role of

co-learners. Rather than telling teachers what to do, a co-learning coach participates equally in a self-reflective process, so that both are considered active learners. The collaborative process of guidance and participation are also essential (Rodgers & Rodgers, 2007), so that a Literacy Coach's expansive knowledge is utilized to provide teachers with explicit feedback on their instruction while also promoting the teacher's self-analysis. In the process of making observations and conferencing with teachers, Literacy Coaches must establish a relationship of trust and respect that guarantees confidentiality so that the coach is seen not as an evaluator but as a partner. A study of 19 teachers and their Literacy Coaches found that the two essential elements of effective Literacy Coaching are trust and confidentiality (L'Allier, Elish-Piper & Bean, 2010).

Further insights can be gained about the power of collaborative relationships in coaching from the research on Literacy Coaches and their use of language during coaching sessions. Perkins (1998) found that when compared with novice coaches, experienced coaches' conversations with teachers included more paraphrasing of teacher concerns and comments as well as more open-ended questions, allowing them to build more collaborative relationships with teachers (L'Allier, Piper & Bean, 2010). Rodgers and Rodgers (2007) also concluded that language is a critical tool in working with teachers, as the communication between teacher and coach creates a reciprocal environment of learning. "Language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge" (Wells, 2000, pg. 57). A coach's expertise is only of value

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if it is regarded by teachers as a valid resource for improving their own instruction. Considering the research, in preparing coaches we must provide them professional development opportunities that include how to coach, what language to use when coaching, and opportunities to reflect on the process of coaching.

Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive Coaching is an approach that has also been around for many years and has been brought back to the forefront in an effort to improve teacher practice. Cognitive Coaching has one single purpose: to use the coaching process as means to help teachers improve instructional effectiveness through reflection (Batt, 2009). Arthur L. Costa and Robert J. Garmston (1994) developed the process for Cognitive Coaching based on the clinical supervision model of Cogan and Goldhammer (1973). Whereas the clinical supervision model aspired to change teaching behaviors, Costa and Garmston believed that the overt behaviors of teaching were the products of inner thought processes and intellectual functions (Batt, 2010). It is not enough for a person to behave in a certain way—what's important is the thinking that goes on behind the behavior. Changing the thinking can only occur by using the coach to serve as a mediator who assists teachers in reflection and self-determination to change their cognitive behaviors (Costa & Garmston, 2010). As the mediator, the coach is one who figuratively stands between a person and his thinking to help him become more aware of what is going on inside his head. Coaching is to "convey" a valued colleague from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be" (Dildy, 2001, p. 2).

A fundamental difference between Cognitive Coaching and other models, such as Literacy Coaching, is that the coach need not be more of an expert than the person being coached. Technical expertise is less important than the ability to empower people to improve (Batt, 2009). Similar to other coaching models, Costa and Garmston (1994) understand the need to facilitate collaboration and mutual learning through trust and respect, leading to what is called *holonomy* in Cognitive Coaching. Holonomy occurs when an individual makes independent decisions while simultaneously acting interdependently within a group (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Dildy, 2001).

What Costa and Garmston (1994) consider to be a nonjudgmental way of working with teachers consists of a three-phase cycle: pre-conference (planning conversation), observation and post-conference (reflecting conversation). The pre-conference is to clarify goals that the teacher has set for her learning and to determine how and what data will be collected. The observation is the event of collecting the data, and the post-conference consists of a discussion on how the data compares to the impression the teacher has of her lesson. As the coach proceeds through each phase with the teacher, the coach's job is to mediate the thinking of the teacher by asking open-ended questions, paraphrasing responses and providing positive reinforcement of a teacher's beliefs tied to her classroom practice. During the coaching conversation, the coach also facilitates movement through and monitoring of what has been identified as a teacher's five states of mind by Costa and Garmston (1994): efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship,

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consciousness and interdependence. A more detailed description of the five states of mind are as follows:

> **Efficacy**: Knowing that one has the capacity to make a difference and being willing and able to do so. The hallmarks of a person with a high level of efficacy are an internal belief that one can make a difference, resourcefulness, self-modifying behavior, and a strong internal locus of control.

> **Flexibility**: Knowing that one has and can develop options to consider; being willing to acknowledge and demonstrate respect for diverse perspectives. Characteristics include being able to view things from different perspectives, demonstrating tolerance of others, and solving problems creatively.

> **Craftsmanship**: Seeking precision, refinement and mastery; striving for exactness of critical thought. Characteristics include taking pride in one's work, always wanting to improve, looking to deepen expertise and knowledge, and striving for perfection.

> **Consciousness**: Monitoring one's own values, intentions, thoughts and behaviors, as well as their effects. Characteristics include being aware of external and internal events, thinking metacognitively (thinking about one's thinking), and adjusting and monitoring behaviors according to the situation.

> **Interdependence**: Contributing to the common good and using group resources to enhance personal effectiveness. Characteristics include working with others to learn and provide support, and setting aside personal agendas for the goals of the group. (Costa & Garmston, 1994)

It is important for a coach to understand that each state of mind is transitory, transforming and transformable. It is merely a snapshot of a teacher's thinking at the moment (Dildy, 2001). A teacher who may consistently show efficacy in what he or she is doing may feel less capable depending on the experience or circumstances at the moment. The goal of the coach is to make certain that teachers understand and reflect on their state of mind in an attempt to avoid getting stuck in any particular state of mind; to the premise of Cognitive Coaching is that together, the coach and the teacher can work through the filter of each state of mind, thinking at different levels and ultimately leading to better choices and decisions of practice in the classroom.

Costa and Garmston (1994) build a rationale for coaching, suggesting that "few educational innovations achieve their full impact without a coaching component (Batt, 2009).

Studies both formal and informal have been conducted on Cognitive Coaching. In one study, Edwards, Newton and Rae (1995) researched the effects of Cognitive Coaching on teacher efficacy and empowerment. A total of 143 educators were broken into two groups: those who participated in Cognitive

Coaching and the control group, who did not. The Teacher Efficacy Scale

(Gibson, Sherri; Dembo, Myron H, 1984) was used to measure teacher efficacy

(the belief that teachers can make a difference in student achievement), and the

Vincenz Empowerment Scale (examines the personal empowerment and efficacy

of teachers, and relates these constructs to environmental characteristics in order

to provide information for principals to assist teachers in personal growth)

(Vincenz, 1990) was used to measure teacher empowerment. The researchers

concluded that teachers who received Cognitive Coaching showed significantly

more efficacy than teachers who did not. They also compared the level of self-

efficacy correlated to the amount of coaching teachers participated in throughout

the school year and found that those who received more coaching scored higher

on both Teaching Efficacy (teachers can make a difference) and Total Efficacy (I

can make a difference). The same relationship was evident between coaching

cycles and empowerment. Qualitative data gathered through questions specific to

teacher's attitudes found that teachers who participated in coaching

communicated more positively about their careers, positions and the Cognitive

Coaching approach.

In another study, Batt (2009) sought answers to two important questions:

(a) To what extent does Cognitive Coaching produce additive value to the

traditional Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training activities?

and (b) What specific changes in classroom practice do teachers make as a result

of their professional development in SIOP when further supported by a phase of

coaching? The SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004) is a research-based approach used to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners who are learning to speak English as a second language, most often called English Language Learners (ELLs).

Participants in this study consisted of 15 mainstream teachers whose classrooms included a high number of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It is important to note that teachers were carefully chosen by their administrators and considered to be teacher leaders. As a part of the study, all teachers received a 3-day training on the SIOP Model prior to the coaching that was to occur throughout school year. Data collection methods included teacher surveys addressing the level of implementation of the instructional approach (SIOP) before and after coaching and interviews that explored how teachers viewed the coaching process as it influenced instructional changes and student learning.

Costa and Garmston state that Cognitive Coaching is capable of moving application of newly learned skills to 90% (as cited in Batt, 2009). The researchers found even higher levels of implementation when a coaching phase was added after traditional training activities and suggested that the coaching phase adds substantial value to the professional investment value. Teachers also reported student success as a result of implementing SIOP with the Cognitive Coaching process, citing higher assessment scores, more participation by English Language Learners, more student engagement and accountability, to name a few.

In her findings, Batt (2009) also found that although Costa and Garmston (1994) believe that technical expertise is less important than the ability to empower teachers to improve through self-reflection, teachers in her study who did not have specialized knowledge in language minority education benefitted a great deal from coaches who understood language acquisition principles and strategies.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional Coaching has only begun to gain attention in the last decade. Jim Knight, who has led the charge in this style of coaching, began in an attempt to determine what type of professional development was needed to ensure that teachers would be able to implement research-based practices. Like many trainers in the field of education, he came to realize that the traditional approach to staff development was unsuccessful at increasing teacher implementation of best practices in the classroom. He also concluded that the worst consequence of an overreliance on traditional forms of professional development may be that poorly designed training can erode teachers' willingness to embrace any new ideas (Knight, 2007). As a result, instead of coming away from trainings feeling more prepared, teachers are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and even more resistant to opportunities for new learning. In his quest to discover what model of professional development could provide the kind of support teachers require to implement new proven practices, Knight (2007) came up with yet another model of coaching, Instructional Coaching (2007).

In his theory of coaching, Jim Knight (2007) discusses the parallels between a coach of athletics and an Instructional Coach. He believes that a good coach is an excellent teacher who possesses the attributes of being kind-hearted, respectful, patient, and honest. A good coach has high expectations and provides affirmative and honest (objective) feedback that helps people meet expectations. A good coach can see something special that a teacher might not recognize in himself and can help make that something special a living part of the teacher (Knight, 2007). Knight's theory aligns closely with what Joyce and Showers (1993) have called the "Tiger Wood Syndrome." Taking a closer look at how coaches in athletics have enabled athletes to succeed by helping them strengthen their skills before game time, Joyce and Showers (1993) concluded that the more successful one becomes, the more coaching is needed. As Tiger Woods improved in his sport of golf, he could no longer be coached solely by his father. He needed coaching by experts, coaching specific to the skills he had so he could continue to achieve success. Educators like Joyce and Showers (1993) and Knight (2007) have come to understand that there is much to be said about this approach and how it might be directly related to working with teachers. Coaching should not be considered something we do only for those who are new, struggling or failing as teachers but should instead be looked at as an approach to improve the skill of teaching to the best of one's ability before "game time."

Instructional Coaches are full-time *professional developers* who work with teachers on site in schools to help them incorporate research-based instructional

practices (Knight, 2007). Like other coaching models, the coach takes time to

model, observe and provide feedback for teachers regarding specific strategies

and skills. Resembling a Literacy Coach, the Instructional Coach must be skilled

in the area of literacy and highly experienced in a large number of research-based

strategies. Different from other models of coaching, the Instructional Coach

focuses on a broader range of instructional issues, such as classroom

management, content understanding and assessment. Teachers are able to choose

from a menu of options provided by the Instructional Coach (IC) to help students

learn more effectively in their particular classrooms.Within Instructional

Coaching there is a strong emphasis on building relationships with teachers by

making an emotional connection, comparable to the theory of Cognitive

Coaching. John Gottman and Joan DeClaire (2001), who have studied thousands

of hours of videotape of people interacting, conclude that "emotional

communication is the basic principle that regulates how relationships work" (as

cited in Knight, 2007, pg. 75). If Instructional Coaches are to be successful in

working with teachers, they must skillfully communicate with teachers to

establish that personal connection. In the endeavor to facilitate an emotional

connection, coaches adopt what is called a *partnership approach*. This

partnership is rooted in a deep belief that the coach is no more important than the

teacher and that therefore everything should be done with respect and equity. The

partnership approach is built around seven core principles (Knight, 2007):

➢ **Equality**: The partnership is a relationship between equals. Each person's thoughts and beliefs are considered valuable. No one's view is more important than the other's.

➢ **Choice**: In the partnership, one individual does not make decisions for the other. Because the coach and teacher are equals, they make their own choices and decisions collaboratively. When applied to Instructional Coaching, teacher choice is implicit in every communicative act, and to the greatest extent possible, teachers have a great deal of choice in what and how they learn.

➢ **Voice**: All involved in the partnership have a voice and opportunities to express that voice. Teachers are free to express their opinions about the content and approach to their learning. Since many teachers are usually involved in the Instructional Coaching process, an IC should encourage conversations that give voice to a variety of opinions.

➢ **Dialogue**: Partners engage in conversation that encourages and facilitates all involved to speak their minds and to listen authentically to one another to fully understand all points being made. When this happens effectively, partners begin to think about things collaboratively. In the partnership between the IC and teacher, the IC listens more than she speaks, avoiding manipulation of the conversation.

➢ **Reflection**: Partners do not dictate to one another. They provide each other enough information to make independent decisions. The IC

encourages teachers to consider ideas before adopting them and

recognizes that reflective thinkers must be free to choose or reject ideas.

> **Praxis**: The partnership enables individuals to have more meaningful

experiences. When the coach and the teacher in the partnership reflect on

ideas and then put them into practice, the experience is much more

meaningful. In the Instructional Coaching process, the coach and

collaborating teacher focus their attention on how to use ideas in the

classroom.

> **Reciprocit**y: In the partnership, everyone benefits from the successes,

learning and experiences. All involved feel rewarded by what each

individual contributes. What this ensures in the Instructional Coaching

process is that the coach's goal was to learn along with the teacher and

reinforces that the teachers' knowledge and expertise is as critical as the

IC's (Knight, 2007).

Instructional Coaches believe that knowledge is more effectively and efficiently

learned on the job, so they spend the majority of their time working with teachers

one-on-one or in small groups, modeling, observing and providing feedback.

What is fundamental in the Instructional Coaching process is that while

collaborating with teachers, coaches manage a fine balance between the

partnership and true implementation of what is necessary for students to be

successful in the classroom. The coach is expected to validate, support and affirm

what the collaborating teacher already does, while simultaneously encouraging

the teacher to refine or improve on instructional practices. Consequently, coaches are most effective when they act as critical friends, providing support and empowering teachers to address areas where they can improve (Knight, 2007).

A coach's role is not only to teach, encourage and support a teacher in implementing new strategies; they are at the same time helping teachers change existing behaviors. Instructional Coaches must be strategic in their attempts to encourage teachers to learn and implement best practices, staying sensitive to the teachers' reactions to their recommendations as coaches. Instructional Coaching has very clear components that equip coaches to counter the challenges they will face when working through the stages of change (Reinke, 2005); by recognizing where teachers may fall along the stages, coaches can better decide how to handle each situation.

At the *precontemplation stage*, a teacher blames others–students, parents, principals–for a lack of student achievement. Teachers at the *contemplation stage* are considering the causes of failure and begin to think about recourses and possible methods they can use to improve their instruction. An educator working in the *preparation stage* begins to take the time to thoughtfully think about and plan what has to be done to implement the needed changes. In the *action stage*, a teacher practices new techniques in the classroom. Teachers in the *maintenance stage* continue to work on desired change; change never ends with the just the action. In the *termination stage*, a teacher has mastered a new teaching practice and can move on to another with or without the support of the IC.

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The first three components of Instructional Coaching (Knight, 2007) are as follows:

➢ **Enroll**: This stage consists of a one-on-one interview and/or small group presentations based on principal referrals, the goal being to inform and attract teachers to the process of Instructional Coaching.

➢ **Identify**: In this step, the coach decides who, based on those that express interest, will be coached. The key to this piece is to be prompt in making a selection and beginning the coaching process. The first conversation is similar to a preconference. A starting point is determined and the focus instructional practice is decided. The "Big Four" (behavior, content, instruction and formative assessment) are used to help the coach and teacher make decisions about where to start.

➢ **Explain**: Now the instructional practice is explained to the teacher. The coach describes what it is, what it looks like and how it has been proven to improve instruction. IC's are not to assume that the instructional practice is familiar or understood by the teacher. The IC must first have a deep knowledge of what it is they are teaching.

These components are directed at getting the teacher enrolled and prepared to work through the final components of coaching. After these first three steps have been taken, the IC can begin to empower the teacher to implement high quality, research-based practices and work toward sustaining those practices. The final components of Instructional Coaching (Knight, 2007) are as follows:

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➢ **Modeling**: During this step, the IC demonstrates what the new strategy or approach should look like and the effect it can have on students in the teacher's classroom.

➢ **Observe**: The coach watches a teacher's lesson and collects data on the specific strategy. It is vital to the process that the IC be objective and remove personal judgment.

➢ **Explore**: At this point, the IC and the teacher explore the data collected. The data is used as a point of reference for dialogue about instruction between two equal professionals.

➢ **Dialogue**: The IC and the teacher use the conversation based on the data to identify next steps.

As a result of going through this process, the IC is clear on what and how support is to be provided to teachers. Note that the above components are not listed in a sequential order. For the most part, all of the components are used when working with teachers. However, Instructional Coaches are well aware of the fact that support provided to teachers must be differentiated. Teachers' strengths and needs vary and are unique to the individual. The IC tailors the coaching process and its sequence for each individual teacher.

Jim Knight's research, which led to the framework and validation of the theoretical foundation for Instructional Coaching (2007), is a result of a partnership between Kansas University for Research on Learning (where Jim Knight works) and the Topeka Kansas School District. The partnership called

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Pathways to Success began in 1999. Research on the partnership has included ethnographic interviews with coaches, teachers and administrators from nine schools over a 7-year period. Pathways to Success placed full-time Instructional Coaches in six middle and three high schools, with a total of 125 teachers as participants. Pathway to Success staff including Instructional Coaches used formative and summative assessments throughout all stages of the project. After a series of one-on-one and small group meetings identifying specific strategies, implementation of strategies and instructional dialogue between the IC and teacher, examples of results after the first two years follow:

- Jardine Middle School's 7th-grade team learned a classroom management strategy that reduced the number of disciplinary referrals from 203 in the first semester to 78 in the same term.

- Chase Middle School used a traditional experimental design to study the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy in general education 7th grade classes. One teacher taught the reading strategy along with his science content in three of his classes, while using his traditional methods of teaching in his remaining three classes. To determine the strategy's effectiveness, each student was given a pre and posttest on the content covered. Students who learned the strategy improved their posttest scores by 60%, compared to students who didn't learn the strategy and only improved by 40%.

- 1302 middle school students who learned a sentence writing strategy in a class where teachers were coached on how to teach the intervention (strategy) with fidelity showed significant improvement in the number of complete sentences in their writing (according to a curriculum-based measurement). Writing went from 73% complete sentences on pretests to 87% on posttests. When compared to classes where the strategy was taught with less fidelity, students showed much less improvement, writing 76% complete sentences on pretests and only 80% on posttests (Knight, 2004). Note classes where the strategy was taught with less fidelity students began with a higher percentage of complete sentences on the pretest.

Summary of Coaching

Research in the area of coaching has proven that coaching has promising potential in closing the research-to-practice gap and promoting a high level of fidelity for research-based practices. Although there are few studies that specifically examine the levels of fidelity, those that have been conducted have concluded that coaching used with teachers in supporting implementation of best practices is effective in increasing levels of fidelity. Coaching allows for professional development to provide support related to teachers' specific needs during implementation of new practice. It also moves beyond abstract theories and principles, which are often times the focus of teacher training, to authentic,

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everyday challenges faced by teachers in their context (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

Isolation, which is all too common in education and can be fatal to professional development, is also addressed in the coaching process. It is difficult–if not impossible–to sustain useful practice in isolation. When educators collaborate; they provide valuable ideas, feedback and encouragement to one another. Perhaps the simplest way to break down professional isolation–but one that rarely occurs in most schools–is for teachers to observe each other's teaching and to provide constructive feedback (National Staff Development Council, 2009), which is built into the coaching process.

Several studies reviewed in Kretlow & Bartholomew's (2010) meta-analysis follow, reinforcing the idea of "coaching".

- Creemers, Jager & Reezigt l. (2002) conducted a study with 12 in-service general educators (control and intervention with coaching) in 5th grade classrooms. The evidence-based practice coached was Direct Instruction in Reading Comprehension. Teachers received 5 in-service days and 3 individual coaching sessions, including observations and feedback. Data was collected on a High Inference observation rating instrument measuring teacher modeling, guided practice and clear presentation of content. Trained teachers showed significantly more characteristics of direct instruction than the control group.

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- Cooke, Kretlow & Wood. Kretlow (2009) conducted a study of three in-service kindergarten teachers at a Title 1 school. All three classrooms were made up of a large population of students who had been labeled "at-risk." The evidence-based practices being coached were chosen to increase active student responses and engagement (i.e., choral response, response cards, model-lead-test-scaffolding). Teachers received one half-day in-service, one preconference with a coach, an observation, and one post conference. The percentage of correctly used strategies (GIU-group instructional units) per 10 minutes of whole-class math lesson was collected. The teachers' percentage of correctly implemented strategies increased from baseline to post in-service phase, and then increased again during the post coaching phase.

- Bradley, Johnson, Lewis, Richter & Stitcher (2006) conducted a study of eight elementary level general educators at a Title 1 school. The training focused on improving opportunities for students to respond to academic instruction. Teachers had two in-service days, one preconference, one observation and one post conference. Collected data measured the percentage of correctly implanted opportunities to respond compared to optimal levels from the literature. Some teachers demonstrated an increase in aspects of increased opportunities to respond, but not all of them did: five out of eight met the criterion goal

for instructional talk, while four out of the eight met the goal for feedback.

Although the number of teachers, and perhaps even students, may not represent a large number, what is significant in these studies is that all showed that coaching interventions led to improvement in teaching accuracy (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). It is also important to note that 13 studies in total were reviewed, but only three are spotlighted above. All 13 studies, in which a total of 110 teachers received coaching, showed that coaching led to improvement. Additional data shows that it takes a great deal of effort to help teachers reach high levels of fidelity (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Nevertheless, Buzhardt, Greenwod, Abbott and Tapia (2007) reported that improvement with fidelity can take years of intensive work with individual teachers but that when this kind of ongoing support (coaching) was provided, fidelity levels doubled. Klinger, Vaughn, Hughes, and Arguelles (1999) found that teachers who received more ongoing support had higher fidelity and higher student achievement in their classrooms. Logically, teachers may be more likely to continue implementing a practice with fidelity if they have proven change in student achievement as a result of their practice (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

Whether a coach is focused on literacy, self-reflection, or implementation of a specific research-based strategy, the common goal of coaching is to promote instructional growth, fidelity and capacity. Schools and districts continue to invest in coaching programs and are banking (literally) on the idea that they will

ultimately make the difference in how students are being taught and in the end,

achieving. Hall and Hord (2006) indicated that teacher change is not an event but

rather a process by which individuals gradually move to become skilled in the

implementation of new strategies (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

Acknowledged in all of the research studied is that more research is required in

this area; even so, we can feel confident in that the theory and practice of

coaching is a valuable aspect in preparing and supporting teachers to move

beyond a one-shot training and towards long-term fidelity of classroom

application.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

My research focused on professional development and coaching cycles
that participants were involved in. The objective was to learn how coaching, as
part of comprehensive and systematic professional development, could impact
changes in self-reported teacher knowledge, skills and classroom practice. The
research demonstrated how coaching impacts teachers' classroom application of
research-based strategies specific to English Language Learners. This study also
examined the correlation between coaching and its additive value to professional
development.

This chapter describes the study's research design as well as the specific
methods and procedures that were used in the study. The design includes the
development of an interview questionnaire consisting of open-ended and
descriptive questions. This chapter will also provide a description of how the
interviews were completed, who participated in the study, and how the data was
analyzed.

The following questions regarding classroom practice and implementation set
the focus for this study:

- How can coaching support implementation of professional development
  goals over traditional development activities, as reported by the teacher,
  coach and administrator?

- What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?

- How does the coaching process relate to self-reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?

Research Design

Background and purpose

This study was one component of the research being completed for the ITELL Professional Academy (Academy), which seeks to improve academic achievement for English Language Learners. The Academy was designed and implemented in an effort to address the needs of both teachers and students in English Language Development (ELD) classrooms across the state of Arizona. Partnering with four districts in Phoenix, Arizona, The Office of the Vice President for Educational Partnerships at Arizona State University focused specific attention on the type of professional development being received by teachers, administrators and school coaches to prepare them to address the needs of English Language Learners.

An added focus of the ITELL Professional Academy was identifying and addressing the kinds of support teachers are provided after professional development, including coaching and administrative monitoring, which lead to classroom implementation. Educators participating in the Academy have taken part in 100 hours of face-to-face professional development consisting of topics such as Language and Literacy for ELLs (Castillo & Seidlitz, 2010), Second Language Acquisition, Assessment of Language for ELLs, Content and Language

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Objectives, Standards-Based Lesson Planning, Differentiation for Language

Levels, Structured English Immersion (SEI) Strategies, Grammar Instruction, and

Instructional Coaching.

Participants

For the purposes of my study, I chose 17 of the Academy educators to be a

part of the research: four principals, six coaches, and seven English Language

Development (ELD) classroom teachers. The educators in this study vary in their

number of years of experience and formal education, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

ITELL Teacher, Coach and Principal Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Count	%
Gender		
Male	3	18%
Female	14	82%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	6	35%
White	11	65%
Years of Higher Education		
3-5 years	2	12%
6-10 years	5	29%
11-20 years	7	41%
More than 20 years	3	18%
Years Teaching ELLs		
0 years	1	6%
2-3 years	2	12%
4-5 years	4	23%
6-7 years	3	18%
8-10 years	5	29%
More than 10 years	1	6%
Unknown	1	6%
Endorsements		
SEI Endorsement Only	10	59%
ESL Endorsement	1	6%

Only		
ESL Endorsement +	3	18%
SEI Endorsement		
BLE Endorsement +	2	12%
SEI Endorsement		
Unknown	1	6%

Out of the seventeen participants, 18% of the participants had been in education for more than 20 years, 41% had more than 11 but less than 20 years of experience. The rest of the participants, 41%, had just 3-10 years of experience between them. As far as years working with ELLs the range is much greater. 82% have less than eight years, while only 6% have more than ten and one participant started the study, not having worked with ELLs at all. Finally, regarding endorsements, all but one participant holds an SEI endorsement, for 6 of the participants; the SEI endorsement is secondary, in addition to an ESL endorsement (for 4 participants) and BLE endorsement (for 2 participants).

Specific Methods

A qualitative description research method was used in this study. One reason for a qualitative approach is to gain understanding of the meaning people have constructed (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research seeks to understand social phenomena via induction, by emphasizing process, values, context and interpretation in the construction of concepts and meanings (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). The qualitative researcher wants to know what, when, where, and under what circumstances behaviors come to be (Bogdan & Bilkem, 1998). Descriptive data, the data gathered and analyzed in qualitative research, takes the

form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Often the descriptive data contains quotations by informants to illustrate and substantiate the presenting findings. Data can include transcripts, field notes, photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, personal documents and memos. Data collected in this study included audio recordings of interviews, transcripts and field notes. Considering that educators provide information about their beliefs and approaches in many ways beyond just words, a qualitative approach was deemed to be most appropriate for this study.

     This study looked at self-reported behaviors in regards to classroom application and support after professional development consisting of a series of training sessions in an attempt to explore what effects coaching did and can have on teacher knowledge and instruction. The main sources of data collected for this study were participant observations and 17 in-depth interviews. The participants were observed a minimum of six times during two semesters and participated in six coaching cycles. Coaches working with participating teachers took part in the observations and facilitated coaching cycles. Teachers were observed during their English Language Development block. A coaching cycle included a pre-conference (planning conversation, observation, and a post-conference (reflective conversation). The pre-conference was the opportunity for the teacher and coach to meet and discuss what the teacher had planned for her observation and to determine a focus for instructional practice tied to what had been learned previously in trainings attended by the coach, teacher and administrator. The

focus for the observations was to identify the research-based ELL instructional strategies being implemented. During the observation the coach would gather data on teacher implementation of the planned lesson as well as instructional practices aligned to training sessions and student actions. A structured protocol from Castillo & Seidlitz, 2010 (see appendix B) was used to gather data on strategies. The post-conference was led by the coach who gave objective feedback as a result of the data gathered and asked questions to guide the teacher in reflecting on her instruction and student learning. ITELL coaches were supported by outside coaching consultants who provided them support in the facilitation of the complete cycle, pre-conference, post-conference and observation. The post-conference concluded with a plan, focus and date for the next cycle. Coaching cycles began in August and were completed by early May. The overall purpose of the coaching cycles was to discuss and reflect on the observed strategies as well as on the teachers' understanding and implementation of those strategies. An outside consultant coached the coach as she went through each phase of the coaching cycle. The goal of the consultant was to support coaches in their efforts to guide teachers to reflection about their instruction. They were provided guidance and feedback on how to gather data, identify instructional strategies, formulate feedback and ask objective questions. Providing coaches a "coach" ensured that they (coaches) to received specific feedback to their role, as well as a structured process for reflection on coaching practices. Administrators also gathered data doing monthly walkthroughs of

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ITELL classrooms, also focusing on the target ELL strategies. The data they gathered was used as a reference to support and reflect on their responses in their interviews done at the end of the study.

A comprehensive interview was done with each participant at the end of the 2011 semester. The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants and were then coded and categorized in an attempt to identify the relationship between participant responses and the research in the area of professional development and coaching. Coding interviews in research allows us to identify the content of the data that has been collected (Green, Camilli & Elmore, 2006).

Participant interviews were structured using the deductive approach, in which a researcher brings theoretical constructs to the research project (Green, Camilli & Elmore, 2006). Questions were framed using these constructs, and the analysis was done by examining how the interviewee attended to the constructs during the interview process. There has been quite a bit of qualitative research done on the topic of coaching and classroom practice, which provided significant theoretical approaches that were used as a resource to develop the interview questions.

Interview questions included open-ended and core questions that were asked of everyone. Open-ended questions were used in order to get as many details as possible and to allow for the informants to answer from their own frame of reference. The goal of this approach is that informants express their thoughts

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more freely (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). Because there were three types of

educators interviewed (coach, teacher, and principal), it was important to develop

questions specific to each participants context as well as to have a set of core

questions that addressed participants' thoughts about the broader research

questions in the study.

Descriptive questions were also asked in an attempt to have participants

describe their particular setting and experience in a variety of ways, using

language specific to them and their understanding. An important technique when

asking descriptive questions is to expand the length of the questions, because this

tends to expand the length of the responses. Spradley (1979) offers a typology of

descriptive questions. They are *grand tour questions, example questions,*

experience questions, and *native language questions*.

Grand tour questions allow the researcher to collect large samples of data

by asking the participants to talk about many aspects of their experience. In

typical grand tour questions, the participants are asked to describe how things

usually proceed.

Example questions are more specific questions, in that they single out very

specific instances. An example question requires a participant to give an example

of how a single act plays out. Experience questions are those where the

participant is given the opportunity to speak about something that has happened

first-hand. Experience questions tend to elicit very specific information.

Participants were interviewed at their school sites during an agreed upon time based on their work schedules. Interviews lasted about an hour. Questions were provided to all participants ahead of time giving them the opportunity to begin to formulate their responses.

The Researcher's role

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the creator of the research design, the collector of the data, and the author of the final report's analysis and conclusions. My enthusiasm and frustration in working with teachers of English Language Learners led the charge in my study. To carry out this project as the researcher, I had to draw from my previous experiences in the area of coaching and teacher practice. I have taken from the ideas and practices learned in my work with English Language Learners, my collaboration with teachers of ELLs and in the development and delivery of training specific to coaching and supporting teachers of ELLs.

My role as a professional developer, consultant and researcher in the study did have an impact on what participants in the study learned and how they changed or continued certain behaviors in their school and classroom settings.

Ethical considerations

When conducting research with human participants, it is imperative to keep ethical considerations in the forefront throughout the research study. Human subjects are protected by both law and institutional policy. The American

Psychological Association (APA) (2001) has ethical guidelines that must be followed to ensure that participant's rights are not being violated. Those guidelines include informed consent, deception in research, incentives to participate, and the use of data collected. What follows is a description of how those guidelines were addressed.

Informed consent

The APA mandates that participants give their informed consent in order to participate and that this consent be appropriately documented. The informed consent form must be written in jargon-free terms so that it is easy to understand, and it must be signed by the participants. During an initial meeting, participants were given the opportunity to review the informed consent form and to ask the researcher for clarification or answers to any questions they may have had. They were given a copy of the consent form and contact information to take home should they have questions during the course of the study. Consent for interviews was obtained and documented with a signature on a separate interview consent form. In order to participate in classroom observations and coaching cycles, schedules and dates for the researcher were coordinated with the ITELL coaches at each site. Confirmation of the scheduled dates and times can be used as evidence of consent.

Deception in research

The research design for a study should not be misleading unless alternative strategies are not feasible and it is warranted by the study's potential

scientific, educational or applied value. For this study, there was no deception, and therefore, a debriefing session was not required.   The participants were informed of the data collection that would occur through participant observations and interviews.

Incentives

The APA recommends that the incentives for participation be commensurate to what the participants are asked to perform for their participation. Participating educators were interviewed during the school day; therefore, there was not a need to give participants any monetary compensation for their time.

Participants will benefit only to the extent that the information they provide will be used in formative evaluations to adapt the ITELL program to better meet their needs. The students taught by the adult participants may therefore be exposed to better classroom instruction.

Using data

The APA suggests that participants be informed about whether the data collected will allow for a person to be identified and to discuss the future potential uses of the data. For this study, the participants will remain anonymous. After the research study is complete, it will provide information about the interrelationships between components of professional development, coaching, and teacher implementation of best practices focused on English Language Learners. Moreover, my hope is that the results from this study will inform researchers, practitioners, and district decision-makers about an effective

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approach to training and supporting educators on best practices for English

Language Learners enrolled in schools across Arizona and beyond.

Practitioners who participate in this study will be able to view the results

of the data if they so desire. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of this

research with schools and districts, at national conferences, and possibly through

scholarly publications.

Data Analysis

The majority of qualitative researchers take on the responsibility of

analyzing their own data. As a result of their analysis, researchers gain a deeper

understanding of what they have studied and strive to continually refine their

interpretations. Researchers draw on their firsthand experience with settings,

informants or documents to interpret their data (Basit, 2011; Bogdan & Taylor,

1998). As someone who had several roles in the study I was able to closely relate

to what and how participants were experiencing. The purpose of analyzing

qualitative data is to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that

inform the respondents' view of the world in general and of the topic in particular

(Basit, 2011).

What to represent from the data collected and analyzed depends on what

the researcher intends to do with the data. Erickson (1986) provided a clear and

useful review of these functions. According to Erickson, the representation of

qualitative data should enable (a) the reader to experience vicariously the

phenomena under the study; (b) the researcher to illustrate the instances of key

findings and analytical concepts; (c) the researcher to reveal the full range of evidence, both for and against the findings reached; and (d) the reader to appraise the theoretical and personal grounds of the research's perspective (Green, Camilli & Elmore, 2006).

Coding and categorizing the data played a role in analyzing the data collected in this research project. Codes are links between locations in the data and sets of concepts or ideas, and they are, in that sense, heuristic devices that enable the researcher to go beyond the data (Coffey, Hollbrook & Atkinson, 1996). Codes and categories were used to label or identify the data gathered during the interviews with administrators, coaches and teachers. They were also developed based on the theories studied, discussed and outlined in the literature review of this study. The goal of the coding was to focus on meaning within the research and to make the connections between what educators in the study learned and what they applied in their classrooms. Categories that were identified included; effective professional development, strategies for ELLs, coaching characteristics, and coaching models. The data gathered in interviews was used to provide evidence of the assertions being made for each of the research questions and to identify correlations to theoretical constructs.

Interview Questions Answered By Coaches, Teachers, and Principals

In this section, the main questions of the study to be asked of participants along with subquestions for each primary question are outlined. Note that there

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are questions that were asked of all participants and questions that were specific

to the type of educator (coach, principal & teacher).

• **How can coaching support implementation of professional development goals over traditional professional development activities as reported by the teacher, coach and administrator?**
1. How would you characterize the traditional approach to professional development? 2. How did the traditional approach impact meeting goals set by the district/school for professional development? 3. What do you consider to be characteristics of effective professional development? 4. How do those characteristics impact meeting the goals set by the district/school for professional development? 5. What do you believe the function of coaching to be as a part of professional development? 6. What are the benefits of coaching as a component of professional development? 7. How has including coaching as a component of professional development compared to your traditional professional development experiences? 8. Has coaching as a component of professional development made a difference in meeting the goals of ITELL (Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners)? Why? Why not? 9. How would you summarize your experience with professional development in ITELL?

• **What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?**
1. What characteristics/qualities are necessary in building an effective relationship between a coach and teacher? 2. How would you describe the relationship between you and your coach/teacher? 3. What is your role in the coaching process? (teacher/coach) 4. What is your coaches/teachers role in the coaching process?

5. What is your administrator's role in the coaching process?

6. What has been most challenging in your role as a coach/teacher in the coaching process?

7. What has been your greatest success in your role as the coach/ teacher in the coaching process?

8. *What characteristics are necessary in building an effective relationship between a coach and teacher?*

9. *How would you describe the relationship between your coach/s and teacher/s?*

10. *What is your role in the coaching process?*

11. *As a result of what you have observed with the coach and teacher relationship, what have you learned about the coaching process?*

12. *Do you believe it has made a difference in teacher's knowledge of instruction for ELLs? Explain.*

13. *Has there been an observable impact in teacher practice of strategies learned in professional development specific to English Language Learners? Give an example.*

*Note: questions in italics were asked of the administrators.

- **How does the coaching process relate to self reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?**

1. How has the coaching process influenced what you have learned about working with English language learners?

2. How has participating in the coaching process had an effect on your classroom practices tied to ELLs?

3. At what point did the coaching process begin to impact your classroom practice?

4. What strategies specific to the development of language and literacy for ELLs have you been able to implement with consistency?

5. What do you feel most confident in implementing? Why?

6. How would you rate your level of implementation of the Seven Steps of an Interactive Classroom? (1-5, five being the highest). Explain.

7. Have your English Language Learners benefitted from this process? How?

8. What three words would you use to describe how the coaching process has impacted your work with ELLs?

9. How has the coaching process influenced what you understand to be effective classroom practice for English Language Learners? (question to be asked only of the coach)

10. What strategies specific to the development of language and literacy for ELLs have you observed your teachers implementing consistently in their classrooms?

11. What do you feel your teachers are having the most success with? Why?

12. How would you rate teacher's implementation of the Seven Steps of an Interactive Classroom? (1-5, five being the highest). Explain.

13. Have English Language Learners benefitted from this process? How?

14. What three words would you use to describe how the coaching process has impacted your teachers work with ELLs?

*Note: underlined questions were only asked of teachers.

Chapter 4

Findings and Results

Introduction

The focus of this study was to learn how coaching as an embedded part of the ITELL Academy of Professional Development impacted teacher knowledge, skills and implementation of research-based strategies learned. How coaching can support implementation of professional development goals and finally, the research also identified the relationship between a coach and teacher and reported affects on classroom practice for ELLs. This chapter will outline and discuss the data gathered, an analysis of the results as they relate to the research questions, alignment to what research has to say, and finally, it will conclude with a summary of the study's findings.

General Implications

I felt it important to first reveal implications that surfaced as I transcribed and analyzed the data gathered from participant interviews. These implications, however, were not the focus of the study. The first implication relates to the comparable responses given by the three groups of educators (principals, coaches and teachers) at the same school concerning professional development. Participants reported similar beliefs in their descriptions of what professional development should consist of in order to be considered effective. They described a common understanding with similar language and methodology for teacher learning, instructional practice and support. One principal explained

effective professional development (PD), saying, "You set a goal and understand what pedagogy is tied to that goal. In training itself, it has to be in real time, where teachers, along with myself and the coach, not only learn the pedagogy but practice it with others, and then, of course, on the job" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). He elaborated, stating, "You keep checking if it works with your group of learners, and if it doesn't, adjust so it does." The coach at the same school said, "Effective PD includes clear goal setting with a clear vision of how to keep it in mind and roll it out on the job, and the methodology shared ties to that. In the PD you participate in strategies and methodologies through the lens of the learner...Everyone is held to a level of accountability (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). And finally, a teacher at the school shared, "Training includes collaboration with colleagues focused on the same goal, student achievement. You see what it should look like, try it, and get feedback so that it becomes your own" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011).

At a different school, the principal shared his vision of what professional development should be: "In training you work on research that is effectively tied to your particular group of students and begin to develop a profound knowledge of that by practicing with others and then in real time in order to get feedback and support. The delivery ensures learning all day and beyond" (Participant #1003, June, 9, 2011). His coach stated, "You work with your teachers in the actual training, talk about what the research says, and practice it and dialogue about it. You then come back and follow through in the classroom and support

implementation" (Participant #2003, June, 28, 2011). The teachers at the school had similar views. One explained, "Teachers need to understand and believe that what is shared in training is research-based...The training needs to be engaging and involve everyone in using the strategies and discussing them so they identify how to implement...There then needs to be support and consistency of implementation to ensure understanding" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Her partnering teacher reiterated much of the same, reporting, "Training is interactive, including dialogue on what works and what research has to say...Strategies are modeled and practiced" (Participant #3004, June, 9, 2011).

Historically, educators have struggled with how to collaborate in a harmonious manner toward a common goal or vision. As one of the teachers interviewed put it, "The way we now view effective training and support has become part of the school culture. We will meet and achieve goals more successfully" (Participant #3007, June, 15, 2011). Another teacher stated, "Being able to collaborate with colleagues creates a sense of buy-in and the ability to make decisions on how it helps the school as a whole; it gives you a sense of ownership" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). Another coach summarized her thoughts by saying, "The ultimate goal is student achievement. We've seen that with teachers working through ITELL...By working together, refining skills and getting feedback from one another and a coach, we have seen greater achievement" (Participant # 2002, June, 1, 2011). Through their shared experience of professional development through ITELL, participants indicated an

agreed-upon approach to working with teachers. As a result, they can be more productive in utilizing opportunities for future PD, collaboration, and instructional dialogue that fosters and enhances the importance of their work together. This shared vision will be significant as they move beyond this study to improve classroom practice and to increase academic achievement for ELLs. A culture of commitment to students has been promoted at each of the schools involved in the study.

A second implication noted from the research was how participants recognized the value of building capacity at their schools. They reported learning how to do so and beginning to do so within their own school systems. Principals shared that teachers involved in the study were sharing information about what they were learning as well as opening their classrooms to those interested in learning more. One of the principals shared, "I think the teachers on campus benefitted a lot. You could see that in what they brought back and the dialogue they are having" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). Another shared, "The relationships being developed with teachers and coaches in collaboration is leading to implementation of ideas, instructional growth and ongoing support" (Participant #1002, June, 1, 2011).

Administrators also took part by communicating the message of what was necessary in working with ELLs and providing opportunities for teachers who had not been a part of ITELL to work and collaborate with the teachers and coaches that had. One principal reported that he now feels more confident in setting

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instructional goals specific to ELLs and is able to articulate the pedagogy

necessary in meeting those goals: "I can, as an administrator, have dialogue with

teachers using common language about second language acquisition, the process,

and academic language" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). He deemed that he

has the knowledge, tools and resources to support teachers in implementing and

understanding pedagogy specific to their population of learners. Ensuring

effective instruction is a profoundly important variable for improving student

achievement and educational equity; implementing change requires focus, clarity

and monitoring. It requires a leader who can refocus their energies beyond the

attainment of short-term effectiveness and look toward a greater good (Reeves,

2009).

As for the coach's perspective, one explained, "Training not only

impacted the teachers involved in the study but others as well…It gave me other

strategies to come back and use with my teachers" (Participant #2001, June, 15,

2011). Another reported, "I've been able to get a lot of different strategies to

implement with other teachers to refine their practice to increase student discourse

and to make sure that learning has taken place" (Participant #2004, July, 15,

2011). This implication is noteworthy, since research shows that efforts to

improve student achievement can succeed only by building the capacity of

teachers to improve their instructional practice and the capacity of school systems

to promote teacher learning (National Staff Development Council, 2009). Those

involved in ITELL and this study understood that it was not sufficient or

responsible to afford only a small number of educators the opportunity to grow instructionally. It became clear that if all students on campus were to benefit, all teachers must be afforded similar opportunities. Principals expressed that they will continue to foster a culture of collaboration and will expect that ITELL coaches work with other teachers, using what they have learned about research-based practices and coaching. They will also continue to highlight the outcomes in teacher application and student learning that have occurred in an effort to motivate and support continued interest and involvement.

Specific Research Question Results

The rest of this chapter will focus on the findings according to the three research questions that guided the study. For each question, I state an assertion, offer descriptive evidence that supports the assertion from participant responses, and make connections to the research in the particular area of study.

As previously indicated in the methods chapter, 17 educators were interviewed: four principals, six coaches, and seven teachers. Participants were asked a series of questions specific to professional development activities they had experienced in the past as well as to those they had experienced in the ITELL Academy and how those activities impacted meeting district or school goals set for professional development. They were also asked what their understanding of coaching was and how the coach and teacher relationship influenced their knowledge and instructional practice for ELLs.

One unique feature of the ITELL academy was the expectation of coaching as a component of embedded and ongoing professional development and support for teachers. Teachers, coaches and administrators received approximately 100 hours of face-to-face professional development consisting of topics such as Language and Literacy for ELLs (Castillo & Seidlitz, 2010), Second Language Acquisition, Assessment of Language for ELLs, Standards-Based Lesson Planning, and Differentiation for Language Levels, to name a few.

The first research question, along with its assertion and evidence, follows.

1. **How can coaching support implementation of professional development goals over traditional development activities as reported by the teacher, coach and administrator?**

   Assertion: As reported by participants, the opportunity to be coached systematically, comprehensively and consistently over a period of time following effective professional development

   - increases the level of implementation of learned practices, and

   - increases the chances of professional development goals being met compared to the traditional approach to professional development.

The first question asked of participants had to do with characterizing the traditional approach to professional development. Several types of training were identified in their responses:

- *One-shot training,* provides only knee-deep information and the
  expectation that teachers go back and implement with no follow-up or
  support.

- *Sit and get training,* in which participants go to a room, sit there and get
  information, usually from a slideshow, about what to do with limited
  practice, and are then left to their own devices about how to use the
  information.

- *One- size-fits-all training,* with no differentiation based on grade level,
  content area focus or educator experience. Everyone gets the same
  training, regardless of their context.

- *Theory and no practice training,* describes classes or workshops where
  you go and listen to what research has to say. It's more about what to do,
  not how to do it.

The most common expression used to describe traditional professional
development was "sit and get." Of the 17 educators interviewed, eleven used the
phrase in their descriptions. One principal elaborated on this depiction: "What is
ironic in the traditional approach to working with teachers in training is that what
we've always tried to get them to understand is how to get away from the idea of
sit and get in their own classrooms, yet it is the exact opposite of what we do with
them in the context of their own learning" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011).
He went on to share what he has learned in terms of the research on working with
teachers in the professional development context: "Approximately 3% of those

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traditionally trained go back and implement strategies learned and less do so with the right understanding on how to use them". A different principal expressed her concern, stating, "We are so used to talking to teachers and not providing them the opportunity to walk through how to do things. There is no practice of what is being taught" (Participant #1002, June, 1, 2011).

Another question related to traditional professional development was: *How did the traditional approach impact meeting goals set by the district and or school for professional development?* Participant responses showed agreement that the goals, for the most part, were not met. Due to the traditional approach of training, participants did not feel prepared to meet the stated goals, nor were there clear expectations outlined for how to meet them, and worst of all, no system was put in place to ensure follow-up support or accountability for implementation. As one coach reported, "There are good intentions in the beginning to follow through, but things just went away and no one monitored [them]" (Participant # 2003, June, 28, 2011). A teacher summarized her thoughts by saying, "Traditionally, teachers feel frustrated, overloaded, it's just a new phase that will soon pass" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Another coach thought it essential to make clear in her response that what has also interfered, especially with Arizona policies specific to ELLs, is that, "Most of our PD has been mandated by the state, politically based and unattached from student achievement" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). What was apparent in participant responses is that if goals tied to professional development are going to be met, we must consider the

context of trainings, the content, the approach, and finally, what is going to follow after training.

The questions that followed concentrated on what participants identified as the characteristics of effective professional development as well as on their views on the function of coaching in professional development and the impact on meeting the goals of professional development set by the district or school. Interview data showed that participants felt strongly about what they defined to be effective professional development. Characteristics reported included collaboration, teacher buy-in, meaningful connections to their own context, theory with practice, instructional dialogue, differentiation based on teacher needs, and finally, a component for follow-up and accountability that included coaching. They reported it necessary to understand the research tied to practices being learned while also developing a clear vision of what it looks like in the context of learning. This effective PD should also include the opportunity to implement new practices in real time. One teacher expressed, "Learning is very personal, even for adults, and that those delivering PD should understand different types of learners and be involved and vested in what their training" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011). Another teacher echoed the idea of creating a sense of buy-in for training, saying teachers are always asking, "Why is this important to me?" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). She determined that when you can answer that question, it gives you a sense of ownership. One of the coaches stressed that educators in training must experience what they are learning through the lens of

the learner they are attempting to educate. The focus in training for ITELL teachers was English Language Learners; therefore, in her words; "In effective PD, I expect to participate in strategies and methodologies through the lens of second language learners…That then impacts how I synthesize and take it back to my teachers" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011).

When asked if what they characterized to be effective professional development impacted meeting the goals set by the district or school for professional development, all interviewees said yes, indicating that the chances for doing so were actually greater. One of the teachers stated, "The goals would be met at a much higher rate with more consistency" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). Another teacher said, "Effective professional development gives you the understanding, tools, resources and strategies to be more effective" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Participants made clear that the type and quality of professional development does make a difference in classroom application and helps them to meet school and district goals. One coach stated, "You're more likely to reach goals [when] you have engagement with colleagues and understanding" (Participant # 2003, June, 28, 2011). Another coach reported, "With effective professional development through ITELL, I had a coach to coach me so that I could refine my coaching skills to better support teachers in refining theirs" (Participant # 2002, June, 1, 2011). A teacher indicated, "There are only a few classes, trainings, in where I could say I actually remember and can do what I was taught based on the district goals; ITELL was

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one" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011). A principal summarized his thoughts by saying, "Your goal is always your end means; if it is aligned to what you are doing effective PD will then lead us

to most likely meeting our goals and less likely to saying this didn't work and start[ing] something new" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011).

Finally, questions in the interviews focused on the functions and benefits of coaching within professional development. The function of coaching was regarded as the critical element in providing teachers the support they need to implement instructional strategies and methods. It was defined as the missing component in the progression from training to implementation. One of the coaches stated, "Coaching is an integral part of professional development that's often times overlooked or seen as an extra part that teachers don't want to take part in" (Participant # 2004, July, 15, 2011). Another coach seemed to agree, saying, "The function of coaching is critical to PD. That's where we are falling short in implementation. That's why are students aren't being impacted by the research base strategies being learned" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). Every response referenced the notion that the function of coaching is to be of vital support for teachers. It was evident that during the study, what had become logical to participants was that coaching could and did benefit teachers in their understanding and delivery of instruction specific to ELLs. One principal stated, "Coaches help teachers deliver what needs to be delivered based on profound knowledge developed in PD" (Participant #1003, June, 9, 2011). The response

from a teacher that stood out among the rest was, "Coaches are like 'coaches'. They should be helping you get better; they are your biggest cheerleader, helping you identify what you're doing that works and what doesn't" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011).   As we move into the second research question, the role of coaching will be discussed in greater detail.

The reports by educators in this study regarding professional development and the function of coaching corroborate what research has been asserting. The U.S. Department of Education (2002, p.26) stated, "Professional development must clearly align with instructional programs, have its research base and include adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned. Professional development must be an ongoing, continuous activity, and not consist of 'one-shot' workshops or lectures." And finally, research tells us that the context of professional development ensures there will be expectations, as well as support and opportunity for actual implementation, of what teachers have been taught (National Staff Development Council, 2009).

The second research question, along with its assertion and evidence, follows.

2. **What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?**

   Assertion: As reported by participants, the relationship between coach and teacher

   - is founded on trust, respect and equality with a common goal: student achievement;

- can and does lead to instructional growth and a better

    understanding of educating English Language Learners.

Participants were asked what characteristics or qualities are necessary in

building an effective relationship between a coach and teacher. The need for

open-mindedness and respect was expressed first by the teachers. They reported

the need to be open to the coaching process and to be willing to take risks

necessary to ensure the process actually occurs. One teacher said, "Being open-

minded about yourself and the coach is necessary; it is not about judgment, it's

about helping" (Participant # 3002, June, 1, 2011). Another teacher reaffirmed

the idea of being open-minded, saying, "To try something new, you have to be

comfortable with the idea that it might not work and in front of another set of

eyes" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). Finally, a coach put it in these words:

"You have to be open-minded and reflective and you have to have a personal

connection, so you don't feel like it's a stranger coming into your room"

(Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011). Teachers also reported the need to feel equal,

sharing that the coach and teacher are both professionals and should be treated as

such. One teacher said, "You have to feel as if you are on the same playing field,

we are both professionals" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Another teacher

indicated, "Equality ensures I'm not intimidated or afraid of being honest so I can

ask questions and feel comfortable with the good and bad occurring in my

classroom" (Participant #3004, June, 9, 2011). Yet another stated, "I'm an equal

partner; I set up the classroom and the environment for us to talk about what is

going to happen and what needs to be improved" (Participant # 3002, June, 1, 2011). She concluded with, "I am an equal partner; the coach is someone who is there for you to work through things together".

Several coaches responded similarly and did not see themselves as superior, nor did they want to be viewed that way. It was understood that they were not to be evaluators. Coaches wanted teachers to be comfortable working with them. One coach declared, "We both trust one another and understand that we are equal and working for the same purpose. It's not evaluative; it is about students" (Participant #2004, July, 15, 2011). Another coach reported, "We are both equal and both learning in order to use a common language for student learning" (Coach #2001, June, 15, 2011). A different coach specified, "The goal is to improve practice, be reflective, ultimately for student achievement through safety and trust, not evaluat[ion]" (Participant # 2002, June, 1, 2011). And finally, another coach shared, "Everything is between the coach and teacher partnership. The coach is there to help them grow as well as grow themselves; you [the coach] are not an administrator" (Participant # 2003, June, 28, 2011). There was mutual understanding that confidentiality was key to success. In the past, coaches were viewed as the go-to person for the principal to check in on teachers and classroom practice. After participation in the ITELL project, they were considered the go-to person by teachers to get ideas and resources, to collaborate with, to get support, and to share in instructional dialogue. The struggle for these coaches has now become getting other teachers on their campus

to view them in the same way. All six coaches used the words "respect" and "trust" in their responses regarding the characteristics needed to build an effective relationship with teachers. One coach made clear, however, that establishing a relationship founded on respect and trust takes time. Time is a factor that must continue to be addressed and that at times became a challenge hard to overcome during the study. Coaches also shared that what led to the trust they developed in one another began with the opportunity to participate in training and professional development focused on a common goal.

Something interesting, as well as quite rewarding, is that principals also reported an understanding of the need for trust and respect. They explained and compared their new thinking to their past role in hindering the development of that trust and respect. They acknowledged that they had contributed to the perception of the coach as more of an "evaluator" because of the expectations and responsibilities they had set and given coaches. One principal conveyed, "The teacher needs to trust the coach; she's not there to evaluate–she's there to help them get better. Unfortunately, they had often been seen as an evaluator" (Participant #1004, June, 15, 2011). Another described it by saying, "The coach cannot be the mandator; its more, how can I help you, and they must respect one another" (Participant # 1002, June, 1, 2001). An additional characteristic viewed as significant by many of the principals was the need for coaches to have an awareness of adult learners' unique needs. Principals recognized that it was necessary for coaches to identify, respect, and be able to work with teachers who

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have different viewpoints, values and beliefs. Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) would agree; adults bring considerable life experiences to the learning process, and reflection through coaching as a part of professional development supports this principal of adult learning. One principal was very direct in saying, "We put well educated people in these positions who know how to deliver instruction naturally and effectively but do not know how to articulate it to someone else" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011).

A fundamental focus in working with coaches, teachers and administrators was to develop an understanding of individual roles and responsibilities within the coaching process. When asked what their role in the coaching process was after the study, participant responses were evidence that they had discovered what coaching should be and how the process is intended to work and be successful. Principals articulated the need to be supportive and fully committed to the idea of coaching. They were able to make clear the goals for coaching, to provide and protect time for coaching, and most importantly, to be respectful of the coaching process. One principal reported that his role was one of providing permission: "I gave permission to coaches to do their job and make decisions appropriate to the teacher. Along with that, the teacher knew that whatever decisions were being made were okay" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). The principal made clear that he was not to undermine the work between the two, although he still had to monitor their work together by paying attention to the end goal and whether or not they were heading toward it. The four principals involved communicated the

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same position of having to monitor the coach-teacher process. One explained that

for him, monitoring was being aware of implementation in the classroom and that

coaches were staying focused on results. Because coaches had, in the past, been

seen as compliance monitors, one of the principals figured her responsibilities

were to be, as she put it, "More administrative compliance on me, less on the

coach; they should coach" (Participant # 1002, June, 1, 2001).

Coaches regarded their role to be that of a mediator, someone who ensured

teachers could be and were reflective about their practice. One of the coaches

explained that the post observation meeting in the coaching cycle ensured

reflection, stating, "Using specific questions and being objective with specific

observations got them [teachers] to think about their lessons… I helped them

understand their instruction and be critical of it" (Participant #2005, June, 15,

2011).   Another coach shared, "I help teachers refine their skills and practice by

providing a time for them to self-reflect and also look forward" (Participant

#2004, July, 15, 2011). One more coach reported, "My role is helping teachers

reflect on lessons in the coaching process" (Coach #2002, June, 1, 2011).

Another concluded, "I became the facilitator for reflection" (Participant #2006,

July, 15, 2011). ITELL coaches acknowledged and developed the skill set to

facilitate the opportunity for reflection and understood its implication for their

work with teachers. They were aware of their responsibilities in gathering the

appropriate data in observations, disaggregating that data in the form of objective

feedback and questions, and then, finally, presenting this information to the

teacher in a way that promoted self-reflection. Along with this, coaches identified the challenge in getting teachers to be reflective of what was most significant in their instruction and how that might need to change. They understood that the process of reflection occurred at different stages and different times for their teachers. One coach battled with the fact that one of her teachers was struggling with factors beyond help from a coach. The time she spent with her focused more on daily survival, rather, than instructional changes. In the end, however, both reported that some, although minimal changes had occurred. The teacher described her experience as differentiated: "I was getting my needs met, every teachers needs are different" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011).

One coach made clear that she first had to understand the goals for the district and school before she could determine where the greatest need was for her teachers in meeting those goals. Once they were identified, coaching allowed her to support teachers in meeting those goals. Another coach described how she had to ensure in observations that she gathered data that would allow her to pinpoint specific feedback for teachers. She stated, "I was always asking myself, how do I set up questions in order to help them reflect?" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). Another coach labeled her role as that of "data gatherer," with the objective being to use data to get teachers to reflect on their lessons. She made it a priority to follow the coaching cycle with fidelity, which in turn ensured observations that pinpointed specific feedback and an opportunity for the formulation of good questions that led teachers to extended and elaborated

responses. What's more, coaches understood that the practice of reflection occurred for them, as well. Through reflection, they learned how to refine their skills as coaches and classroom teachers. Noteworthy is the fact that coaches themselves were also being coached by outside consultants who were experts in the field of ELL. Coaches had been identified as the experts at their school sites, however not all displayed an in-depth level of knowledge when it came to working with ELLs. The PD and support provided to them impacted their ability to work with teachers.

The implication of this awareness of coaching is that it draws a parallel to what research theorizes as being necessary in the role of a coach. Cognitive coaching, in particular, has one single purpose, and that is to use the coaching process as a means to get teachers to improve instructional effectiveness through reflection (Batt, 2009). Other experts in the area of coaching would agree. Dildy (2001) explains that as the mediator, the coach is one who figuratively stands between a person and their thinking and that coaching is to "convey" a valued colleague from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be. Knight (2007) has recognized reflection as one of the seven principles in the area of coaching. He describes reflection as an opportunity to provide teachers enough information so they can make their own decisions. Knight elaborates on this idea, explaining that coaches encourage teachers to consider ideas before adopting them and recognize that reflective thinkers must be free to choose or reject ideas.

The most awe-inspiring part in listening to teachers' responses was the collective awareness and appreciation of their role in the coaching process and how they directly impacted whether or not the process could be successful. Teachers reported that they needed, first and foremost, to be open to the process, to be prepared to be a part of it, to follow through, and finally, to be reflective. They were clear in their understanding that if they were to truly be reflective, they had to be committed to meeting the responsibilities associated with the teacher-coach relationship. One of the teachers acknowledged that she had to be a learner, be willing to learn something new, be respectful and responsible, and finally, be willing to take risks. A different teacher expressed this idea by saying, "I have to be open-minded, be the teacher experimenting, trying out new strategies and being reflective" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Yet another teacher expressed that she also needed to be reflective–critical and positive in regards to what worked, what didn't and what should happen next time. She concluded by saying, "If you can do that, the only thing that can happen is that you improve" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011).

Coaches emphasized that it was their responsibility to establish and facilitate an opportunity for real communication. However, one teacher stated that it was her job to set up an environment to talk about what was going to happen and what needed to happen to improve, stating, "I am the classroom" (Participant #3002, June, 1, 2011). Echoing this idea, one more teacher expressed, "I am prepared to explain what to expect I will be doing in my own lessons so that

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the coach and I can have an explicit discussion of what will be observed"

(Participant #3003, June, 1, 2011). Both the coach and teacher had explicit and

unmistakable roles in the coaching process; those roles had been defined,

implemented, and in the end, successful, although at varying degrees in meeting

the responsibilities they entailed.

Of course, the role of the principal cannot be ignored; the administrative

role was also understood and served a great function in the coaching process.

One principal articulated, "It is my job to be aware of the impact of

implementation in the classroom…To ensure that coaches are staying focused on

the results and that they are able to work with teachers with different needs"

(Participant #1003, June, 9, 2011). A coach stated, "The principal needed to be

aware of what we were learning and doing to be supportive of the coach and

teachers" (Participant #2003, June, 28, 2011). Finally, another coach said, "The

principal provides the support in ensuring coaches can focus on coaching.

Expectations of coaching are clear and the time needed to coach is protected"

(Coach #2002, June, 1, 2011).

As denoted in the data, the coaching process had its challenges, and more

importantly, its successes. When asked what those were, participants had much to

say and were enthusiastic about doing so. Teachers were eager to disclose what

was happening in their classrooms and how they had transformed their instruction

for the better. Principals acknowledged that their teachers had improved their

instruction specific to ELLs as a result of the coaching process. One principal

explained it by saying, "There is a value in it [coaching]; I don't see how you could not do it—it's a must if you want to get anywhere, especially for us and the students we serve, in order to close the achievement gap." He went on to say, "We have to have teachers that constantly reflect and change their style in order to close the gap. We can't do it without the coaching process" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). He summarized by saying, "The level of knowledge that our teachers now have and carry with them has become a point of pride and who they are". Another principal commented, "ITELL teachers stand out, and students in their classrooms are excited to be learning. Even when the teacher is not there, students know how they need to continue to learn" (Participant #1003, June, 9, 2011). Considered most vital in our work with teachers is student achievement. The same principal described his teacher's success: "Teachers had a 40% increase in reclassification rates, and [in] looking at benchmark assessments, ELLs are achieving, in many cases, better than mainstream students." Summarizing, one more principal affirmed, "I have better teachers, more of their students are exited, and they have had huge gains in their academic growth" (Participant #1002, June, 1, 2011). Principals also reported on each of their teachers' instructional growth individually. They made clear that all teachers had become better at working with ELLs, but that some had grown more than others. In Chapter five, I will further discuss why they believe that to be the case and what it means in working further with these and other educators.

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The successes named by coaches were tied to the relationships they had

developed with teachers and the impact those relationships had on classroom

practice as well as on their own practice as coaches. One coach was proud of the

professionalism cultivated with her teachers and shared that her teachers had built

self efficacy: "My greatest success was to help teachers get there" (Participant

#2005, June, 15, 2011). Another stated, "My greatest success is developing those

relationships that allowed us, the teacher and me, to work together." She

continued: "When their light bulb went off, it was so rewarding and led to mine

going off as well" (Coach #2001, June, 15, 2011). Once more, responses from

participants aligned to what research has to say about coaching. Costa and

Garmston (1994) proved that teachers who participated in Cognitive Coaching

scored higher on the Vincenz Empowerment Scale on both teaching efficacy and

total efficacy. Another coach voiced, "Not only did my teachers develop efficacy

in teaching, I developed efficacy as a coach" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011).

An accomplishment celebrated by all coaches was that they had established

partnerships with teachers, a partnership that focused on classroom practice,

effective teaching, and more importantly, on students. One coach remarked that

she had never before had the opportunity to sit in the same training with the

teachers who were going to be coached. She elaborated: "That is when our

partnership began, and I had completed the coaching cycles, which I had never

done before" (Coach #2002, June, 1, 2011). A different coach involved in the

study had just spent her first year coaching and was pleased to have just made it

through her first year in coaching. She expressed in her words, "Teachers definitely had been impacted by what I did. Things are working, and we—me and the teacher—did it together" (Participant #2004, July, 15, 2011).

Teachers had the most to verbalize about their greatest successes as a result of the relationship with their coach and the coaching process. A collective success was the comfort and confidence they had established in the coaching process. Furthermore, they indicated a sense of accomplishment in having realized there was a reciprocal goal between teacher and coach. They consider that reciprocal goal to be what ensured they stay committed to the process during the study and beyond. A teacher pointedly stated, "I thought I really didn't need coaching, but I like coaching. I learned that I can always learn more…I view myself as a lot better teacher than I did before ITELL. I'm specific and aware of what I'm teaching" (Participant #3003, June, 1, 2011). A different teacher reiterated a similar thought, stating, "Understanding that the goal is to improve, I learned a great deal [by] having a partnership with someone to grow instructionally." She finished her thought by concluding, "I'm more successful with the language levels I'm working with" (Participant #3002, June, 1, 2011). This theme continued to be reported by teachers in their interviews. Another teacher stated, "Coaching allowed me to get so much out of ITELL and completely transformed the way I think about teaching ELLs—what that looks like and the support they need…My greatest success has been my students" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). Yet another teacher described her experience

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in a similar manner: "I became more confident and comfortable. Coaching allowed me to focus more on my PD and to grow as a teacher" (Participant # 3006, June, 16, 2011). In conclusion, a different teacher declared, "I've been successful with my coaches, being able to take a step back and learn from my coaches in my own classroom" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011).

The research is especially clear regarding the critical need to build a relationship of trust, respect and equity in order to be successful in coaching. L-Allier and Piper (2009) shared that as literacy coaches engage in activities such as making observations and conferencing in an effort to provide feedback, they must establish a relationship of trust and respect that guarantees confidentiality, so that the coach is seen as a partner rather than as an evaluator. Knight (2007) emphasized the principle of equity. He asserts that the partnership between a coach and teacher is a relationship of equals, no one person's view is more important than the other's. In listening to teacher and coach responses to questions specific to the coach-teacher relationship, this theory became internalized by all involved in the study. Teachers especially identified the value in viewing the coach as an equal partner, someone they learned from, but who also learned from them.

No great success can come without a challenge. Participants certainly had challenges to share. Interestingly, in some circumstances, what had been recognized as an accomplishment was often also identified as a challenge. For example, many of the teachers expressed that the act of becoming open-

minded─something they considered to be a triumph─was also a challenge.

Getting used to the objective feedback, although considered highly valuable in the

coaching process, was a difficult adjustment for teachers. One teacher explained,

"It was a challenge getting used to the objective questions and understanding you

don't always have the right answers." She concluded her thought by saying, "It is

difficult looking at yourself differently, truly as a professional, and finally getting

over the idea that anytime someone comes in, it isn't evaluative" (Participant

#3005, June, 15, 2011). Responding with a similar challenge was a different

teacher, who thought, "To be open to feedback from others and not see it as a

judgment, it's just hard, especially from people you respect" (Participant # 3006,

June, 16, 2011). Coaches also struggled with giving feedback in an objective

manner. Having to be objective, meant having to state the facts, what was heard

and observed during a lesson. They were no longer giving their opinion.   One of

the teachers explained the challenge of being thoroughly prepared for the

coaching process: "It's hard to put everything you want to articulate in words"

(Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Teachers also made clear the challenge of

time. One shared that making time for all of the components of coaching was

difficult, though beneficial and worth the effort. The concern they now had was

whether or not that time would continue to be protected beyond the study.

The challenges coaches reported included time, teacher resistance and

buy-in, and the idea that they were not ultimately responsible for teacher learning,

but that they were responsible for facilitating a process intended for teacher

learning. One coach described the challenge of teacher learning by explaining,

"My challenge was personal in that I want to do a good job and get it right, but

I'm not responsible for the teachers learning…I'm responsible for facilitating the

process" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). As far as the challenge of time, one

coach's response was, "Being able to schedule the full cycle hasn't been easy"

(Coach #2002, June, 1, 2011).   This challenge was voiced by all coaches

involved, at the beginning, throughout and at the end of the study. Another

shared, "Time makes it difficult to make sure you can provide the best for

everyone," (Participant #2004, July, 15, 2011).   While another coach, explained,

"It is a challenge, with everything else that is expected of us as coaches. We

know our role, but not everyone else does, so keeping the focus on teachers is

hard" (Participant #2003, June, 28, 2011). Throughout the study, coaches worked

hard at protecting what they called "sacred time" with teachers while also being

flexible. They did their best to keep a clear focus on teachers and their shared

goals for students.

Time was also a challenge identified by principals, not only in the

interviews, but throughout the study. It is a valid concern that cannot be ignored

and will continue to be prevalent if coaching is to be a component of effective

professional development. The solution is not an easy one; it has become more

difficult to provide teachers release time to plan and collaborate with a coach as

well as for districts or schools to fund full-time coaches. However, considering

the advantages, it is worthwhile for schools to make coaching a priority.

A final challenge that was noteworthy and must be discussed is the existence of *resisters* to change. In the beginning of the study, some coaches found themselves attempting to work with teachers who were not convinced that coaching could benefit them. A coach explained, "Teachers don't always see the value of what they are trying to do and the impact for kids" (Participant #2005, June, 15, 2011). Another added, "Resisters are challenging, but those are few" (Participant # 2003, June, 28, 2011). As reported earlier in this chapter, historically there has been a limited understanding of the true goals of coaching, the role of the coach, and ultimately, the impact a coach can have. Further work needs to be done to articulate those goals and implement a process intended to meet those goals.

The third and final research question, along with its assertion and evidence, follows.

3. **How does the coaching process relate to self-reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?**

    Assertion: Teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the context of ELLs increased and improved as reported by coaches and teachers as a result of participating in the coaching process.

    While my study is qualitative in nature, principals, coaches, and teachers were happy to report that students demonstrated an increase in the development of both language and literacy leading to student achievement on different types of assessment. Teachers and coaches were likewise pleased to report on what they

had learned about working with ELLs and how classroom practice was a reflection of that learning. The data recorded to answer the third and final question in this study is what I consider to be most indicative of why it is fundamental and of great urgency that coaching as a component of professional development should continue. It must not only continue in the schools involved in the study but in any school where the opportunity may exist.

Interview questions asked teachers and coaches to articulate how the coaching process had influenced their knowledge of ELLs and the instruction of ELLs. It is important to be reminded that the study included teachers and coaches with a wide range of experience, degrees and endorsements. All had experience working with ELLs, and many understood some of what theory tells us is required in working with students who speak English as a Second Language and who could demonstrate application of practice tied to theory. Nevertheless, teachers and coaches indicated that they had gained a greater understanding of their student populations and concluded they had finally made the link between theory and practice so that, as a result of participating in the coaching process, they had grown to be better teachers and coaches. The distinction in this study was the approach to systematic, comprehensive and sustainable professional development and training with follow-up support using the coaching process with teachers of ELLs.

Teachers indicated that both their knowledge and instruction had been enhanced. When explaining how, teachers identified specific strategies for

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developing language, such as how to scaffold student writing and how to identify

language levels to then meet the needs of students at each of the levels. One

teacher talked about how she now thinks about language needs and domains and

is able to expose her students to language in a sound and structured way. She

went on to give details about how she learned to get students to participate in the

learning process, be in charge of their learning, and understand the power in using

language. She elaborated, sharing that she now not only thinks about the different

strategies she's learned for incorporating all four language domains, but she also

thinks about and understands the purpose behind doing so. She summarized her

new learning stating: "Because learning was so meaningful for me it all came

together. I feel like it all became part of my practice. I feel really good about

partnering, looking at kids individually, their language proficiency, strengths and

needs, looking at the language goal and partnering them for the purpose of

supporting those goals" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). As far as the

coaching, she says, "Participating in the coaching process has ensured

implementation and follow–through. How else can I realize if what I'm learning

can or cannot work with my students?" Another teacher explained that for her,

the coaching process set up a framework for her learning. It ensured that she

worked on what was necessary for ELLs, including appropriate strategies based

on student language levels and literacy needs. In discussing the impact on her

classroom practice, she explained: "I now differentiate text making it accessible

for students. I've improved content and language objectives, and have a better

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understanding. She went on to share: "I was more focused on implementation of appropriate practice for ELLs with fidelity" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011). In conjunction with learning about theory and practice, one teacher explained that she had learned the need to be intentional and specific, understanding that language development did not happen by accident. She also articulated how the coaching process had an effect on her classroom practice: "What I have learned in PD for ELLs is actually happening in my classroom" (Participant #3003, June, 1, 2011). She had become more aware and explicit about what she was teaching, learning how to dissect her content and language objectives and to then align activities to those objectives. One more teacher discussed strategies and also the focus on implementation. For her, it was the act of being held accountable in the coaching process that guaranteed that what she was learning about effective instruction for ELLs was implemented in her classroom. She described specific strategies, such as sentence stems, student's use of complete sentences, and building confidence in the use of language through structured interactions. As a result of these practices, she acknowledged, "My students are more open to using all four language domains" (Participant #3004, June, 9, 2011).

As a part of the interview process, teachers were asked to name strategies they had been able to implement specific to the development of language and literacy for ELLs. Strategies they shared included:

- structuring conversations in academic contexts;
- utilizing total response signals;

- randomizing and rotating student responses;

- posting, orally sharing, and reviewing content and language objectives;

- scaffolding instruction, procedures and language;

- hanging and using the "I Don't Know" poster;

- grouping students based on language levels as well as on literacy needs and strengths;

- explicit vocabulary development focused on Brick and Mortar words;

- formal and informal assessment; and

- differentiation of text

With coaches being an obvious component of the coaching process, it was of great relevance to obtain their perspective on what they observed and on what they considered the impact to be on teachers in regards to understanding ELLs and important related practices. I wanted to also determine the impact on coaches and their own learning. Impressively, their responses echoed much of what teachers had reported. Coaches shared that teachers had learned to effectively provide increased opportunities for structured and meaningful conversations. This was considered considerable, given that one of the struggles coaches were continuously requested to address was the limited amount of student language in the classroom. The opportunities teachers were now providing for the practice of language were planned and aligned to objectives centered on both state content and ELP standards. A coach stated, "The language objectives aligned to English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards and to the use of academic language in my

teachers' classrooms" (Participant #2002, June, 1, 2011). Another coach said, "Teachers have increased opportunities to use language in a more structured way—it's planned for" (Participant #2005, June, 15, 2011). Another remarked, "There is a balance of language use between teacher and students with structured conversations" (Participant #2001, June, 15, 2011). She went on to share, "There are lots of academic conversations tied to content and academic tasks."

Coaches used the term "academic" often in their explanations when talking about activities, tasks and language used in the classroom. One coach said, "I now see how teachers and students can use the academic language across the curriculum" (Participant #2002, June, 1, 2011). Coaches also expressed that teachers had not only implemented what they learned in PD but had actually internalized their learning. One coach reported, "The variety of ways that my teachers engage students happens without even thinking; it has been internalized" (Participant # 2003, June, 28, 2011). Another expressed, "My teacher has internalized the steps, especially the link between content and language objectives and their measureable features." (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). Taking into consideration that coaches are not only working with ITELL teachers but also with others at their schools, it was important that they also enrich their understanding of ELLs. Coaches insisted they had learned many new approaches and ideas they could discuss with teachers, model in classrooms, and use in trainings as part of their ongoing work. For example, one coach reported that she had learned how to make sure that all four language domains were a priority and

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practiced in the classroom. A like-minded coach shared that for her, "It is

important to use cooperative learning strategies that ensure discourse and the use

of academic language with kids and their teachers" (Participant #2001, June, 15,

2011). And finally, another coach stated, "It has totally changed how I would

approach coaching teachers on effective practice for ELLs…ELLs have to be

considered in all planning and activities to ensure they are practicing all four

domains of language" (Participant # 2003, June, 15, 2011).

Although the final research question was specific to the coach and teacher,

principals were also asked their thoughts about what had been learned and how

instruction for ELLs had been affected. Principals reported that teachers had

gained needed knowledge, skills and strategies to work with ELLs. They also

observed teachers facilitating classrooms where the practice of academic language

was a constant focus. They claimed that their teachers used more academic

language in their instruction and ensured students did so as well, in a multitude of

ways. According to one principal, "Frontloading the language is something

we've had great success with; teachers have increased student discourse and given

students the language to be able to articulate" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011).

Another principal stated, "There is more use of academic language in multiple

ways, with students using structures to use the language. It is not the traditional

setting of students sitting in rows" (Participant #1004, June, 15, 2011). Finally,

one of the Principals concluded, "There is more speaking in complete

sentences–using sentence stems and structures for conversation…More student

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talk" (Participant #1002, June, 1, 2011). Principals were pleased that teachers realized the purpose and process of the academic language activities and tasks they were expecting students to participate in.

I concluded the interviews by asking the teachers if English Language Learners had benefitted from the process and also asking what words would they use to describe how the coaching process had impacted their work with ELLs. All seven teachers first confirmed that students had been impacted. They used words like "definitely," "absolutely," and "without a doubt" to express that ELLs had benefitted. One teacher shared the proof of this growth: "Almost all my students passed the (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) AZELLA and were reclassified as proficient [English speakers]…My students have internalized how to speak formally and how to learn effectively" (Participant #3001, June, 9, 2011). Her partnering teacher in the project shared that not only had students improved on state assessments, but they had shown growth on district and classroom assessments as well. Most important for her was that students' confidence had increased: "They know they're leveled in classrooms, but they consider themselves to be in the smart classroom" (Participant #3004, June, 9, 2011).

Another teacher spoke specifically about one of her students who was not at all a risk-taker; the teacher described the student as very quiet and shy. The teacher knew, however, that the student had a lot going on inside her head and had a lot she wanted to say. For students like this one, she saw the most benefit:

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"They learned how and what language they needed to share and get across what they knew" (Participant #3002, June, 1, 2011). She also reported that the content had become more accessible and observed the most gains in reading for her ELLs. Another teacher confirmed that her students had profited by sharing some specific indicators: "They speak in a formal way…They are thinking about the stems they have for conversation and the tools they can use for reading and writing" (Participant #3005, June, 15, 2011). She specified that her students had become more proficient in all four domains of academic English and that "they talk like professional students." One more teacher celebrated, saying it was gratifying "to hear my students talk to me and other teachers working with them and have them tell me they not only know the language, they know how to use it in appropriate context" (Participant #3006, June, 16, 2011).

Words teachers used to summarize and describe the coaching process and their work with ELLs, were:

- *thoughtful*−in reference to their planning

- *differentiation*−for all language levels

- *accessibility*−for everyone

- *reflective*−most difficult, but where you get the most growth and is the most powerful

- *focused*−on what I needed to learn

- *meaningful*−not just something they have to do, but part of their practice

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One fourth grade teacher used the word *knowledgeable*, explaining that this word represented both her and her students. She made it known that her students were ready to go to fifth grade and that she felt better this year than she had in all of her 9 years of teaching: "I've always worried in the past at the end of the year and have even felt some shame. Not this year." (Participant #3002, June, 1, 2011).

Coaches had similar things to say about the benefits for ELLs. They noted increases in student confidence and shared that students had smiles on their faces when learning. Students demonstrated a sense of empowerment and were vested in their learning. Coaches also mentioned the AZELLA and how students had shown significant increases in their language development. Others made clear not only the increase in their English language proficiency but also in ELLs' use of academic language. One coach elaborated, "Students at my school have improved in writing and increased oral language production along with their articulation" (Participant #2006, July, 15, 2011). Another coach explained, "They use more academic language across the board…They refer to the vocabulary and resources in their classrooms" (Coach #2002, June, 1, 2011). As far as the AZELLA, one of the coaches mentioned, "Looking at their AZELLA scores, they have increased their language development. Teachers have created a structured engaged academic environment" (Participant #2005, June, 15, 2011).

One of the participating schools had a high refugee population. The coach at this particular school shared that in the ITELL classrooms, she observed students talking whom, in the 2 years that she's observed them, she hadn't seen

talk before, and she saw that they were excited about doing so. She went on to say, "For a refugee student, this is especially exciting…Their culture is very different, and it's not just a language barrier issue" (Participant #2001, June, 15, 2011). Words coaches used to summarize the coaching process and its impact were:

- *effective*–because kids are using language, and their scores have improved

- *confident*–kids now stand tall; they help each other and are kinder and more understanding with one another in the learning process

- *equality* –they felt supported

- *change*–because there has been a lot in the classrooms

- *understanding*–about how to teach ELLs

- *self-efficacy*–for teachers and students

Principals' thoughts and feelings complemented what both the teachers and coaches had to say. All four of the principals also agreed that ELLs had benefitted from the ITELL training and coaching process. As evidence, they named reclassification rates, the use of language, and students showing confidence and being able to write more across the curriculum. One principal talked about the reclassification of students, sharing, "Most of the students in both classrooms with ITELL teachers have been mainstreamed" (Participant #1003, June, 1003, 2011). The same principal also shared, "I remember observing the classrooms involved in this study in the past and that some of the students

couldn't or wouldn't speak in English. Now they not only speak in English but do so with complete sentences, accurate pronunciation and comprehension of what they are speaking about." He concluded by saying, "It was a phenomena…These teachers are now the example for what should be happening for ELLs". Yet another stated, "Reclassification rates this year are higher." He went on to explain, "It not only became apparent on AZELLA scores, but we could see it in our walkthroughs" (Participant #1001, June, 16, 2011). He elaborated, conveying that his teachers were now practitioners, not just teachers, and that they were critical of their work with students. He closed by saying, "We now focus on what we can do. Our kids want to succeed; we just needed to teach them."

Although there is no widespread evidence that coaching directly increases student achievement, according to Nuefeld and Roper (2003), there is a promise in the act of coaching, coaching does increase the instructional capacity of schools and teachers, a known prerequisite for student learning. From the data I have gathered, there is indeed promise in the act of coaching. A caveat to this conclusion, however, is that the act of coaching alone may not produce the same results for everyone.

In this study, the reality that all teachers could not be coached the same way or with the same results became apparent. What was also obvious, and must be considered, is that not all coaches can successfully move all teachers forward at the same rate or with the same level of increased understanding about their instructional growth. All participants involved reported positive outcomes, and

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observations by the researcher noted many as well. However, the level of impact, success, or advantage of the process differed amongst participants, per their own acknowledgement and rating of implementation of learned strategies and student impact. Just like students, educators learn at different rates and require us to modify and adjust based on their individual contexts.   Considerations, questions and concerns about the process and points noted above will be elaborated on in Chapter Five.

Chapter Summary

The research is plain about what we should consider and do with teachers in an attempt to prepare and support them in working with students. According to Rogers and Rodgers (2007), the collaborative process of guidance and participation is essential. It is also precise in the need for sustainability if we are to be successful in our work with teachers. Teacher training and learning is often focused on abstract theories and principles. Coaching moves teachers beyond that to authentic everyday challenges faced in their context (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). It was gratifying to hear from principals in this study that they had made plans and had put them into motion to ensure that professional development with an embedded coaching focus would continue, be valued and become a part of the culture at their schools.

It is significant in this study that the type of professional development provided to participants−with coaching as an embedded component of that professional development−made a difference in what teachers learned about ELLs

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and how they planned and delivered instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. In order for this to occur, the process of effective PD had to be identified, understood, implemented, and supported. The value of the approach to the coaching process and the roles of those involved had to be realized as well. As reported by participants, that was the case. Administrators determined that the role of the coach was to work with and support teachers in their instructional efforts. Coaches received the training they needed to play out their role as a coach. And, finally, teachers learned how they were to be involved in coaching, and they made the commitment to do so. With a clear understanding by all involved, coaches and teachers at participating schools were given the flexibility and freedom to participate in a process of coaching that led to self-reflection, critical dialogue and instructional growth. This simple solution filled with complex relationships impacted teachers and students, as reported by principals, coaches and teachers.

Teachers with many years of experience to those with very limited years of experience reported the desire and increased ability to better serve their ELLs. Coaches, considered experts in their field, also gained new insights on how to collaborate with teachers, other coaches and their administrators through their mutual focus on working with teachers of ELLs and in the end student achievement and success.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

At the onset of this study I set out to examine and determine the impact of coaching, as part of the Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners (ITELL) Academy of Professional Development, on changes in self-reported teacher knowledge, skills and classroom practice. The objective of this study was to demonstrate the impact of coaching on teacher learning and classroom application of research-based strategies specific to teaching English Language Learners. My research also investigated the relationship between coach and teacher, with its effect on reported fidelity, and the additive value of classroom practice of learned strategies as compared to the traditional approach to professional development. I designed and implemented a qualitative study including classroom observations, coaching cycles and in-depth interviews of the participants (teachers, coaches and principals). Specifically, my research questions were

1. How can coaching support implementation of professional development goals over traditional development activities, as reported by the teacher, coach and administrator?

2. What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?

3. How does the coaching process relate to self-reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?

In this final chapter, I will summarize my conclusions from this study and discuss my possible contributions to theory and practice related to coaching as an embedded approach to professional development for educators of ELLs. I will also explore the impact of embedded coaching on teachers' understanding and implementation of research-based pedagogy specific to the needs of English Language Learning (ELL) students. Finally, I will outline the limitations of this study and explore the implications for districts and schools in regards to professional development and coaching in their efforts to prepare and support teachers working with English Language Learners (ELLs).

Conclusions

This study found that when coaching was included as an embedded approach to professional development, teachers implemented the research-based strategies they learned in training and increased their knowledge of classroom practices specific to ELLs. Throughout the study, participants−including classroom teachers, coaches and principals−took part in training that included the critical components of effective professional development: (a) theory and practice, (b) demonstration of the strategy or skill being taught, (c) time for guided practice, and (d) prompt feedback about the attempted implementation through coaching. The coaches and teachers were also provided training on what coaching is and how it should be done. They were provided what I have now coined to be "Professional Development Praxis (PDP)" - a type and process for professional development with embedded coaching that is systematic and

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sustainable including both the teacher and coach with the goal being to move educators from theory to actual realization and practice.

This study also deemed that the coach and teacher relationship must be founded on trust, respect and equality. They must understand the roles and responsibilities they both have to foster and collaborate within that relationship focused on one pertinent goal: student achievement. For both coach and teacher, the opportunity to train side-by-side was the beginning of building the foundation for a relationship they would find absolutely necessary in their efforts to work together as they moved through the study.

At the end of this study, participants identified the effective characteristics of the training and embedded coaching (PDP) and how those characteristics impacted their implementation of district/school goals. In their interviews, all participants expressed the opinion that the type of professional development provided decides whether or not a new implementation or approach will truly make a difference in what they need to do with their particular population of students (ELLs). The participants shared that learning about the research and engaging in practice of what it looks like with colleagues and experts helped them better understand how to work with ELLs. They also noted their appreciation for having opportunities for dialogue before, during and after professional development sessions with coaches, other teachers and sometimes even the principal as they went back and practiced their new strategies in their own classrooms. Principals were especially pleased and excited that teachers were not

only beginning to see the benefit of what they were learning but also sharing their knowledge and new skills with other teachers on campus who had not attended the training sessions. Coaches also used what they had learned through the ITELL Academy when working with teachers who had not been a part of ITELL on their campuses.

At the start of my work with participants, the necessity of embedded coaching as a component of professional development was apparent. The struggle and failure with coaching actually becoming a reality was implementation of the process on their campuses. As the process of coaching was carried out through ITELL, the self-defined roles and responsibilities of the study's participants changed dramatically from the beginning of our work together to the end of the study. Coaches reported that going through the ITELL Academy changed the way they coached and supported teachers. Although the title of "coach" had not changed, historically they were considered to be evaluators, compliance coordinators or resource teachers who could provide classroom teachers with help testing students, working with small groups or letting the principal know when someone was in need of assistance. In their interviews, teachers confirmed this historical view of a coach's role; they explained that in their view, a coach was someone who came to their class to monitor what they were doing or, more notably, what they were *not* doing. Along with that perception, teachers felt that coaches were only sent to work with them if they were perceived to be struggling and in need of improving their instruction. As teachers and coaches began to

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receive training about instructional coaching, the goals, process and intent of coaching was recognized, welcomed and explicitly implemented. Teachers and coaches acknowledged the value in their work together and the impact it had on learning and classroom practice for both parties.

Teachers were pleased to report that the hesitation they once felt about working with coaches had diminished. As they worked collaboratively through coaching cycles, coaches and teachers learned from one another, shared insights, and most importantly, reflected on what was occurring in the classroom with their ELLs. Teachers regarded their coaches as important people who were there to support and facilitate their implementation of new strategies, someone who ensured reflection on those strategies in a way that developed praxis (a partnership that enables individuals to have more meaningful experiences to move them from theory to practice) and a sense of teaching efficacy (the belief that teachers can make a difference).

Also significant in this study was the testimony that principals embraced and valued coaching more fully as the study progressed. Principals expressed that they had not always utilized the role of the coach in an advantageous way when it came to working with and supporting teachers. They took responsibility for influencing teachers' negative perception of coaches and coaching at the beginning of the study. They were honest in admitting that the coach, for them, at times, had been someone who aided their efforts to address compliance, necessary documentation of students, accountability, and—worst of all—monitoring

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struggling teachers. At the end of the study, principals shared a new, common

understanding of what the coaches' role should be and how it should play out;

they also saw that the coaching system trained on and implemented as a part of

ITELL did have an impact on teachers in a positive manner. They articulated

their new role in ensuring that teachers and coaches have the freedom, flexibility,

support and time to successfully participate in full coaching cycles. All principals

in the study look forward to continuing the process of coaching that has been

implemented as a result of the study.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

The findings from this study contribute to theory and practice related to

professional development and coaching of teachers who work with ELLs. There

has been quite a bit of research done in the area of professional development and

coaching for teachers. Little work, however, has been done specifically in the

area of professional development and coaching for teachers of ELLs. Even less

research has been done on the relationship between coaching as a component of

professional development and student achievement. However, both the National

Literacy Panel (2006) and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and

Excellence (2007) reports take strong positions on the point of professional

development, concluding that for schools to be successful at helping ELLs

achieve academically, there must be sustained and focused professional

development. Based on their synthesis of studies proven to promote ELLs'

academic achievement, Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) recommend professional

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development supported by routine and systematic coaching as well as teacher collaboration focused on achieving specific academic goals with students. Although there is no widespread evidence that coaching can directly increase student achievement, according to Neufeld and Roper (2003), the act of coaching has the promise of increasing the instructional capacity of schools and teachers, a known prerequisite for learning. Reeves' (2009) work shows that benefits can include greater consistency in instruction, more willingness to share practices and try new ways of teaching, and more success in solving problems of practice. My study supports those benefits by clearly identifying that the *act* of collaborative, embedded coaching did increase the knowledge and implementation of research-based strategies for ELLs. My study makes additional contributions to the theory and practices of professional development and coaching in relation to teachers of ELLs.

First, this study outlined how effective characteristics of professional development make a difference in what participants learn and how they perceive the learning as important for their population of students; these characteristics also affect teachers' motivation to then take their learning back to their schools in order to meet the intended goals of the professional development. Participants at the end of the study explained how the type of professional development they received through ITELL better prepared them to meet the goals set by their district and school. Teachers need at least 50 hours in a given area to improve their skills and student learning in a particular area (National Staff Development

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Council, 2009); as a result of the ITELL Academy, teachers and coaches participated in 84 hours of training. Including the embedded coaching component of the study would increase the number of hours to over 100 hours of professional development.

This study also attests that coaching, when systematic and sustained over a period of time, influences teacher knowledge and practice specific to ELLs. I have shown that when teachers and coaches are provided training focused on research-based practices and theory for instruction and coaching, along with the chance to practice and dialogue about what is being learned, they are given the initial knowledge, processes and opportunities to immediately and effectively begin implementation of the new practices in the classroom. When that training is then followed through with structured coaching cycles, teachers and coaches increase their understanding and skills leading to praxis and the ability to meet the needs of their students. Joyce & Showers (2002) considered training and coaching to be complementary and continuous operations designed to produce actual changes in the classroom behavior of teachers. One is not sufficient without the other, although too often, one is sacrificed for the other. In this study, both effective training and coaching were essential elements, and both were simultaneously facilitated in an effort to change instructional behaviors for improved student success.

This study further confirms the power of the relationship between coach and teacher. Much qualitative research has been done in reference to the teacher-

coach relationship. My study contributes to the existing research in this particular area. Coaches and teachers alike in this study shared how their relationship was built and sustained on trust, respect and a sense of equality. Costa and Garmston (1994) understand the need to facilitate collaboration and mutual learning through trust and respect.   Schmoker (2005) describes teaching as the second most private act between consenting adults. As a result teachers too often work in complete isolation. In the course of the study, the teacher and coach realized and valued that each had something to contribute to the relationship as well as something to gain in terms of experience and knowledge. As Knight (2007) asserts, the teacher-coach partnership is rooted in a deep belief that the coach is no more important than the teacher and that therefore, everything should be done with respect and equity. He goes on to explain reciprocity as a partnership that is founded on the understanding that everyone benefits from the successes, learning and experiences of each member. Both the teacher and coach celebrate and feel rewarded by what each individual contributes. Teachers and coaches reported and celebrated the successes they shared throughout this study. They were also quick to give credit to one another in those successes.

I believe that my work in developing, delivering and facilitating professional development or PDP that included both trainings and embedded coaching cycles engaged educators in theory, real experiences tied to their own context, solving real-life problems using their own knowledge and expertise as well as authentic opportunities to work with and learn from colleagues.

Professional development should also build strong working relationships focused on a common goal. The ITELL Academy did just that. Participants' (teachers', coaches' and, principals') communal commitment to ELL students ensured that they kept a focus on what was most significant in their work together. It is that commitment that I anticipate will continue to keep them focused as they move beyond the study.

Implications

Districts spend a staggering amount of money each year on training teachers, sending them to workshops and conferences, and oftentimes, even financing ongoing coursework. Districts have also made a huge investment in hiring and training coaches to work with and support teachers at both the district and school levels in an effort to improve instruction and close the achievement gap. This study focused on schools who were struggling with a gap in achievement among there ELL population as well as students who are deficient in academic language. These schools had high numbers of ELLs along with huge restrictions regulated by Arizona Revised Statutes 15-756.01 for the 4-hr ELD block and a rigid structure of instruction for developing academic literacy and language in English. Because it is certain that the number of ELLs in these schools will only continue to rise and that policy restrictions will continue to be a reality, it is even more crucial that the monies being spent on professional development and support personnel pay off in a significant and long-term way. According to Reeves (2009), there is no one person to blame for low

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performance; everyone in an organization suffers from a gap between intention and action. I know from experience that it is not enough to only provide training for teachers or to only assign coaches to schools; we must be responsible in ensuring that trainings are highly effective and that coaches understand and execute their role in ways that have been proven to support successful implementation of new and necessary instructional behaviors. This study provided research-based sustainable and systematic professional development in a way that ensured that what teachers learned could be used and implemented within the confines of their restricted classrooms. Through the selection of training components and the structure of embedded coaching cycles, I was able to facilitate a process to prepare and support teachers, coaches and principals to work more skillfully and successfully with their population of ELLs.

The understanding of how adults learn (andragogy) must also be incorporated into sustainable and systematic PD; their learning must be continuous, including theory and practice, and it must contain ongoing dialogue and feedback. They must be expected to think about their students, curriculum and classroom practices critically. Effective PD must also ensure that as teachers work in the context of their own classrooms, they are held accountable in a non-evaluative way and supported through coaching in order to mediate their thinking and facilitate reflection of classroom practice. Improving professional learning for educators is a crucial step in transforming schools and improving academic achievement (National Staff Development Council, 2009). My hope is that those

involved continue to expect and take part in Professional Development Praxis (PDP).

Limitations

Every study has its limitations, and I will highlight those that surfaced in my work. One focus of this study was how the coaching process relates to self-reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context. Given that I not only planned and provided the professional development but also supported coaches as they facilitated the coaching cycles, as the researcher I recognize that my various roles in this study may have influenced participant actions and interview responses. It is possible that those interviewed felt as if they had to provide certain information or details in regards to their learning and classroom practice for my benefit and for the outcomes of the study. Could there have been a need to include an empirically-based assessment of their knowledge and instruction as was done with student gains in academic literacy and language? Teachers and coaches worked relentlessly at implementing what they were learning and ensuring they met their responsibilities in the coaching process; it may have been quite difficult to share that their hard work had not demonstrated certain results. While the data reported in this study is from observations as well as from interviews done not only with teachers and coaches, but also with principals, all whom expressed that coaching made a difference, each of these sources is personally subjective, so that it is difficult to measure the actual extent of the study's effectiveness regarding coach and teacher learning.

A second limitation is the degree to which the teacher-coach relationship influenced teachers and at what point(s) in the study. Research has not clearly identified exactly how much time and support teachers need to make changes in their instructional behaviors that result in improved student achievement. However, Jay and Strong (2008) affirm, "An effective coach has the ability to remind, encourage and inspire individual teachers to hone their skills" (p. 5). It could be assumed that honing ones skills lead to improvement.

A major challenge for participants was making time for the training and coaching process while feeling the urgency of closing the achievement gap for their ELLs and facing the intense pressure of punitive accountability measures. As counterintuitive as it may seem, struggling schools rarely make the commitment to using proven methods of ongoing support for teachers because of the time and resources required to become skilled at working with underachieving students. I trust that the teachers, coaches and principals involved in my study became aware of the importance of the project's required hours of professional development and commitment to a structured coaching process. However, it is unknown whether their awareness and dedication to the process will extend beyond this study.

The breach between research-based strategies and their implementation has been well noted in the research on professional development and discussed all through this study. Based on our interviews, observations and discussions with administrators, action-implementation was their biggest struggle. As noted

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earlier, time is a huge factor contributing to this struggle; however, other factors such as educators' level of expertise and depth of knowledge of ELLs and a system for accountability and support also contributed to this struggle. One well-documented solution is to provide teachers with learning opportunities inclusive of collaboration and specific feedback. Coaching as that collaborative feature in professional development is considered to be the missing yet most advantageous component. At its best, coaching helps educators make informed decisions about instruction that lead teachers to help students gain a deep knowledge of subject matter (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). I expect that all educators involved in this study would agree. The concern and question is whether they agree enough to continue to make it happen for those who were involved in ITELL as well as for other educators at their schools who were not.

A final limitation of my study was that it was qualitative in nature and not quantitative, therefore replicating may be considered, but with an approach to also include someway of collecting quantitative data. What seems to matter most in our current state of education is student accountability and achievement as shown through empirical results. Minimal research has been done to determine whether students, specifically ELLs, show an increase academically as a result of their teachers participating in professional development with an embedded coaching process. Although we can make educated guesses that ELLs would increase in their achievement as their teachers improve their instructional abilities, we cannot prove the direct correlation of how it happens, when it occurs, and to what degree

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the coaching was a factor. Nevertheless, I assert that while this study has not quantitatively proven a direct link between PDP and increased academic achievement, it has, at the very least, contributed to the possibility of such a link while calling for further research that can prove such a correlation.

Final Thoughts

As the challenges faced by educators intensify, it is imperative that we pay even closer attention to what we know is absolutely necessary for educators to comprehend what those challenges are and how to face and address those challenges in the context of their schools and classrooms. I see it as the responsibility of anyone involved in training for educators−from coursework at the university to the facilitation of grade level meetings on school campuses−to promote and provide opportunities leading to true learning and development of skills and pedagogy necessary for teachers and students to be successful. I like to suppose and declare that the answer is quite simple, yet so complex. Research, my experiences, and even reported data in this study, give us the answers to what needs to occur in regards to teacher learning and knowledge. The complexities come from the struggle of true implementation and follow-through of these answers. It is our collective failure to take the difficult steps in doing so that has allowed the achievement gap to exist for so long. We can no longer make excuses for what we are not willing to do in order to best prepare educators for their eminent role of educating students. It is time to justify what we know to be effective in our work with teachers, coaches and principals and to make it happen.

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In conclusion, I want to share with you my favorite quote. Although harsh, it makes a point that we can no longer ignore: "Training without follow-up is **malpractice**" (Hirsch, NSDC Academy, 1997). What we do as educators must be deemed so vital that when we do not do it properly, we are doing both teachers and students an injustice—one that could potentially have generational consequences.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONAIRE

Interview Questions to Be Answered By Coaches, Teachers, and Principals

- **How can coaching support implementation of professional development goals over traditional professional development activities as reported by the teacher, coach and administrator?**

10. How would you characterize the traditional approach to professional development?

11. How did the traditional approach impact meeting goals set by the district/school for professional development?

12. What do you consider to be characteristics of effective professional development?

13. How do those characteristics impact meeting the goals set by the district/school for professional development?

14. What do you believe the function of coaching to be as a part of professional development?

15. What are the benefits of coaching as a component of professional development?

16. How has including coaching as a component of professional development compared to your traditional professional development experiences?

17. Has coaching as a component of professional development made a difference in meeting the goals of ITELL (Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners)? Why? Why not?

18. How would you summarize your experience with professional development in ITELL?

- **What is the relationship between the coach and teacher?**

14. What characteristics/qualities are necessary in building an effective relationship between a coach and teacher?

15. How would you describe the relationship between you and your coach/teacher?

16. What is your role in the coaching process? (teacher/coach)

17. What is your coaches/teachers role in the coaching process?

18. What is your administrator's role in the coaching process?

19. What has been most challenging in your role as a coach/teacher in the coaching process?
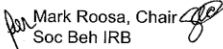
20. What has been your greatest success in your role as the coach/ teacher in the coaching process?

21. *What characteristics are necessary in building an effective relationship between a coach and teacher?*

22. *How would you describe the relationship between your coach/s and teacher/s?*

23. *What is your role in the coaching process?*

24. *As a result of what you have observed with the coach and teacher relationship, what have you learned about the coaching process?*

25. *Do you believe it has made a difference in teacher's knowledge of instruction for ELLs? Explain.*

26. *Has there been an observable impact in teacher practice of strategies learned in professional development specific to English Language Learners? Give an example.*

*Note: bullets in italic in this section are questions that will be asked to the administrators.

- **How does the coaching process relate to self reported coach and teacher knowledge of instruction and practice in the ELL context?**

15. How has the coaching process influenced what you have learned about working with English language learners?

16. How has participating in the coaching process had an effect on your classroom practices tied to ELLs?

17. At what point did the coaching process begin to impact your classroom practice?

18. What strategies specific to the development of language and literacy for ELLs have you been able to implement with consistency?

19. What do you feel most confident in implementing? Why?

20. How would you rate your level of implementation of the Seven Steps of an Interactive Classroom? (1-5, five being the highest). Explain.

21. Have your English Language Learners benefitted from this process? How?

22. What three words would you use to describe how the coaching process has impacted your work with ELLs?

23. How has the coaching process influenced what you understand to be effective classroom practice for English Language Learners? (question to be asked only of the coach)

24. What strategies specific to the development of language and literacy for ELLs have you observed your teachers implementing consistently in their classrooms?

25. What do you feel your teachers are having the most success with? Why?

26. How would you rate teacher's implementation of the Seven Steps of an Interactive Classroom? (1-5, five being the highest). Explain.

27. Have English Language Learners benefitted from this process? How?

28. What three words would you use to describe how the coaching process has impacted your teachers work with ELLs?

*Note: bullets that are underlined in this set of questions will only be asked to teachers.

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To:	Eugene Garcia Office of
From:	per Mark Roosa, Chair Soc Beh IRB
Date:	06/03/2011
Committee Action:	**Amendment to Approved Protocol**
Approval Date:	06/03/2011
Review Type:	Expedited F12
IRB Protocol #:	1009005456
Study Title:	Institute for Teachers of English Language Learners
Expiration Date:	09/02/2011

The amendment to the above-referenced protocol has been APPROVED following Expedited Review by the Institutional Review Board. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval of ongoing research before the expiration noted above. Please allow sufficient time for reapproval. Research activity of any sort may not continue beyond the expiration date without committee approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol on the expiration date. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study termination.

This approval by the Soc Beh IRB does not replace or supersede any departmental or oversight committee review that may be required by institutional policy.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.