

Developing Expertise as Coaches of Teachers

Presented by:

Elaine M. Bukowiecki, Ed.D.

Associate Professor of Literacy Education

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Agenda

- Introduction
- The Literacy Coach Defined
- The Literacy Coach – Preparation
- The Literacy Coach-Practice
- The Literacy Coach- Reflection
- Promises and Challenges of Literacy Coach
- Audience Reflection/Discussion
- Conclusion



The Literacy Coach

The experts tell us a literacy coach:

- Provides Professional Development for Teachers
- Work in Different Contexts/School Situations
- Are Knowledgeable Teachers
- Are Reflective Practitioners



A Literacy Coach

“A literacy coach or reading coach is a reading professional who focuses on providing staff development in reading/language arts to teachers. Literacy coaches or reading coaches model appropriate strategies, observe in classrooms, confer with teachers, and conduct staff development.”

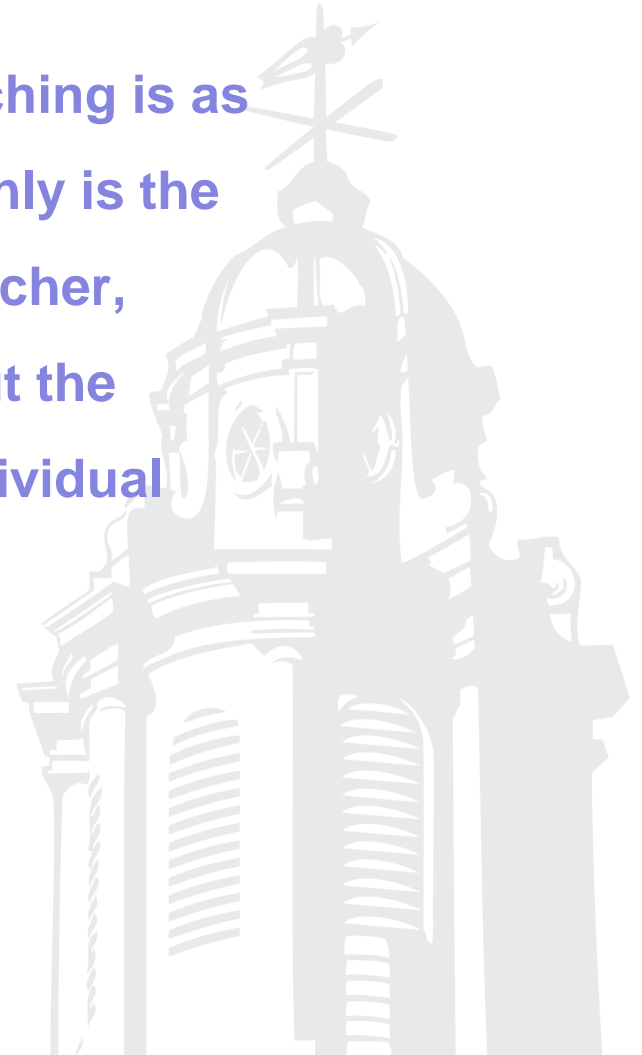
(Cassidy & Cassidy, 2009 as cited by Guth & Pratt-Fartro, 2010, p. 9)



The Literacy Coach as a Reflective Practitioner

“One way to think of the nature of coaching is as multilayered, reflective practice. Not only is the primary practitioner, the classroom teacher, reflective of his or her own practice, but the coach is reflective of that teacher’s individual practice as well.”

(Jay & Strong, 2008, p. 2)



The Literacy Coach

Preparation and Practice



Two Courses Where Graduate Students Prepare to be Literacy Coaches

- **READ 555: Supervision and Administration of Literacy Programs (Master's Degree in Education Program in Reading)**
- **READ 654: Principles and Programs in Professional Development (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Reading)**
- **Both Three-Credit Courses Include a 25-Hour School-Based Experience, Where the Graduate Students Coach One or More Teachers/Paraprofessionals Regarding Best Literacy Practices**

The Cognitive Coaching Model

The Cognitive Coaching Model consists of three separate parts:

- The Pre-Observation Conference
- The Classroom Observation
- The Post-Observation Conference



The Pre-Observation Conference

- The coach and the classroom teacher meet and decide together on the focus of the classroom observation.
- The classroom teacher will give the coach a specific purpose for the observation.
- The coach, with the classroom teacher's feedback, creates an observation form, if appropriate and necessary.



The Classroom Observation Form

- **Specifically connects to the lesson being observed, and the type of information the coach and the classroom teacher need.**
- **The form, itself, should fit the observation purpose.**
- **The coach should show the coaching form to the teacher before the observation.**
- **The coach and the teacher should discuss the form following the observation.**



Classroom Observation – Coaching Log

Coachee:

School:

Date:

Coach:

Lesson Focus/Objective:

- **Coach is to Look for: (notes from pre-observation conference:**
- **Observations (coachee language, student language and engagement, general notes):**
- **Potential Discussion Points for Post-Observation Conference (affirmation, questions, ideas/suggestions)**
- **Questions for Reflection/Next Steps:**

Classroom Observation Form

Name of Teacher being observed:

Name of coach:

Date:

Time:

Class content:

Predetermined objective of observation:

What is the concept being taught?

How was the concept introduced?

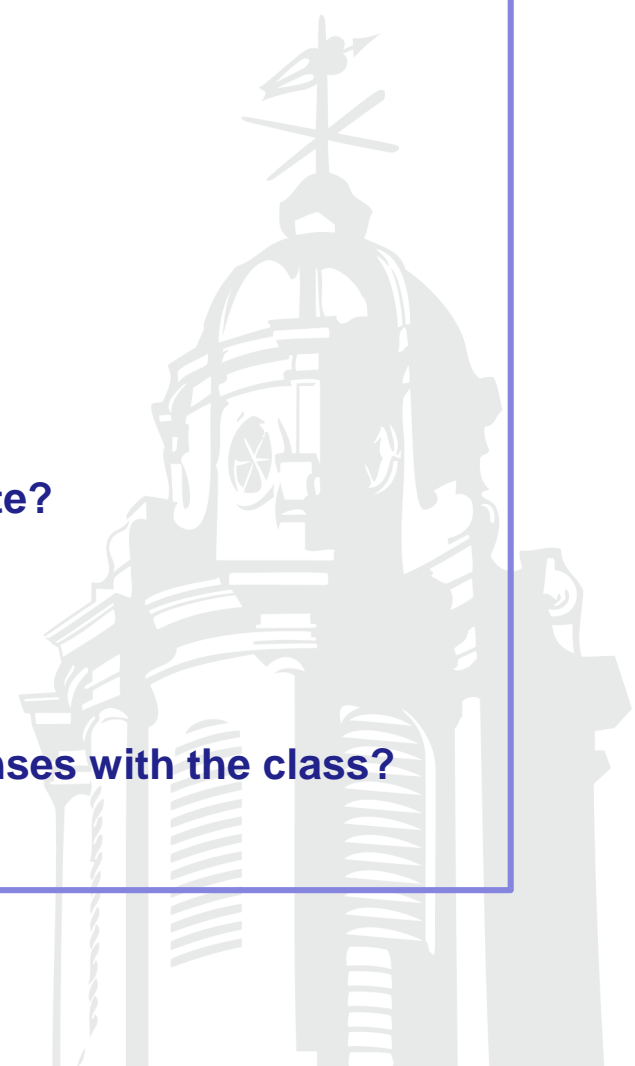
What task(s) were the students asked to complete?

How did the students complete this task?

How did the students complete this task?

How did the students share their ideas or responses with the class?

Other positive notes from the class:



Literature Circle Observation Summary

Day #1: 30 minutes

Student

BD

Day #2: 30 minutes

Time Spent on Task

Day #1: 14 minutes reading; 2 minutes on job

Day #2: 7 minutes on job

AM

Day #1: 2 minutes reading; 4 minutes on job

Day #2: 2 minutes on job

AB

Day #1: 14 minutes reading; did not start job

Day #2: 7 minutes on job

Classroom Observation

- The coach sits in a place in the classroom that the classroom teacher and coach have decided on at the Pre-Observation Conference.
- The coach observes the lesson and takes notes on a form decided on with the classroom teacher at the Pre-Observation Conference.



The Post-Observation Conference

- The coach and the teacher discuss the lesson.
- The coach provides feedback on some of the observations he/she made during the classroom visit.
- This is a time for lesson debriefing, based upon what was observed, and what was discussed and agreed upon in the Pre-Observation Conference.
- The coach and the teacher decide on the next steps in the coaching cycle.
- The coach-teacher relationship does not often end with just one classroom observation.



Practice With the Cognitive Coaching Model

- View videotapes in class regarding Cognitive Coaching
- Practice Cognitive Coaching in university classroom with a course peer
- Become a cognitive coach to an individual or small group of teachers or paraprofessionals in their school or school district



Writing About This Cognitive Coaching Experience

- Each graduate student writes an approximate five-page report chronically this coaching experience.
- This report is a model of the formal report writing a literacy specialist completes in a school/school district.



The Cognitive Coaching Report

The Cognitive Coaching Report contains the following sections:

- Introduction of the coachee, his/her classroom, and teaching style
- A detailed description of the pre-observation conference, classroom observation, and post-observation conference
- A reflection of the coaching experience



The Literacy Coach

Continuing the Coaching Experience

BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY



Continued Practice as a Literacy Coach

- During the M.Ed. And CAGS students' Practica in reading, the graduate students complete a Mentoring Project, in which they weekly coach two teachers, one at the Elementary School Level and one at the Middle School-Secondary School Level.
- This indeed brings the graduate student out of his/her "comfort zone!"
- Each week, each graduate student will mentor two teachers by:



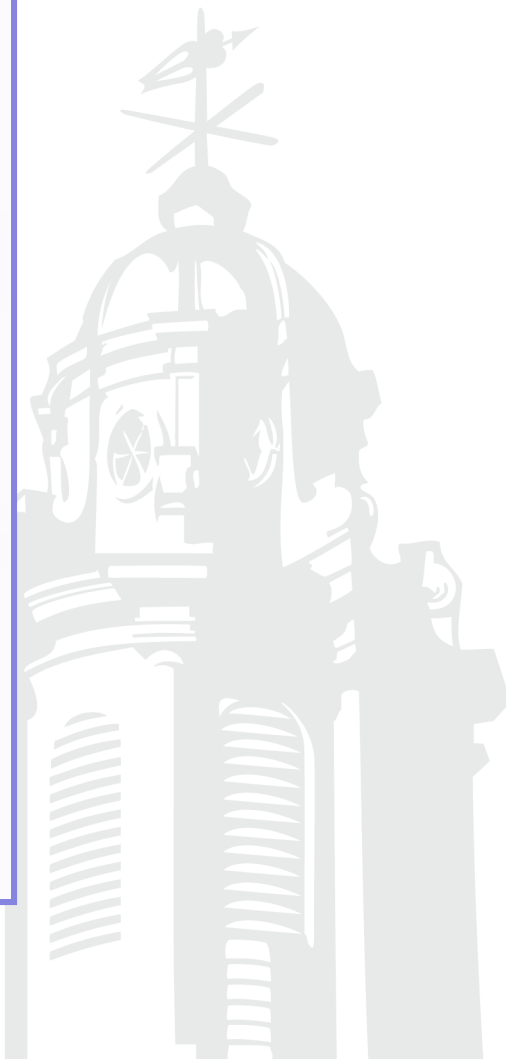
Continued Practice as a Literacy Coach

- Guiding them in creating a group profile of their students, and using this profile information to plan flexible grouping and appropriate instruction.
- Guiding “best” practices in literacy instruction. For middle school and secondary school educators, this means content area literacy
- Writing a weekly “mentor log” and reflection in which each graduate student describes these mentoring interactions for the past week.



A Sample Mentor Log

| Date | Topics Discussed | Next Steps | Resources/ Evidence | Length of Session |
|-------|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 9/8 | What is a group profile? | Create assessments | N/A | 10 minutes (phone) |
| 9/10 | DRA | Administer DRA | N/A | 20 minutes |
| 9/21 | Gave chart to Angela | Put data into chart | Chart | 10 minutes |
| 9/23 | Discussed findings | Create groups | Chart | 30 minutes |
| 10/2 | Discussed chart and DRA | Use chart to group | Chart | 15 minutes (email) |
| 10/3 | DRA, grouping, ELL | Use chart to group | Chart | 15 minutes (email) |
| 10/4 | Offered advice about ELL | Email with any remaining questions, send results | N/A | 10 minutes (email) |
| 10/11 | Parent complaints for grouping; my case student student | Angela to email parent about grouping issue | N/A | 10 minutes (phone) |
| 10/18 | Discussed possible assessment options for elementary students | Give interest inventory | Interest inventory | 30 minutes |
| 10/27 | Discussed QAR | Introduce QAR in classroom | QAR handouts | 30 minutes |
| 11/5 | Followed up on QAR | Continue to use QAR in classroom | QAR handouts | 20 minutes (phone) |
| 11/10 | Followed up about grouping students. | Continue to use grouping information in classroom. | Spreadsheet of student information. | 30 minutes. |
| 11/17 | Parent conferences | Edit conference form | Notes for parent conferences template | 30 minutes |
| 11/23 | Comic Strip for summarizing | Edit comic strip for elementary use | Comic strip template | 30 minutes |

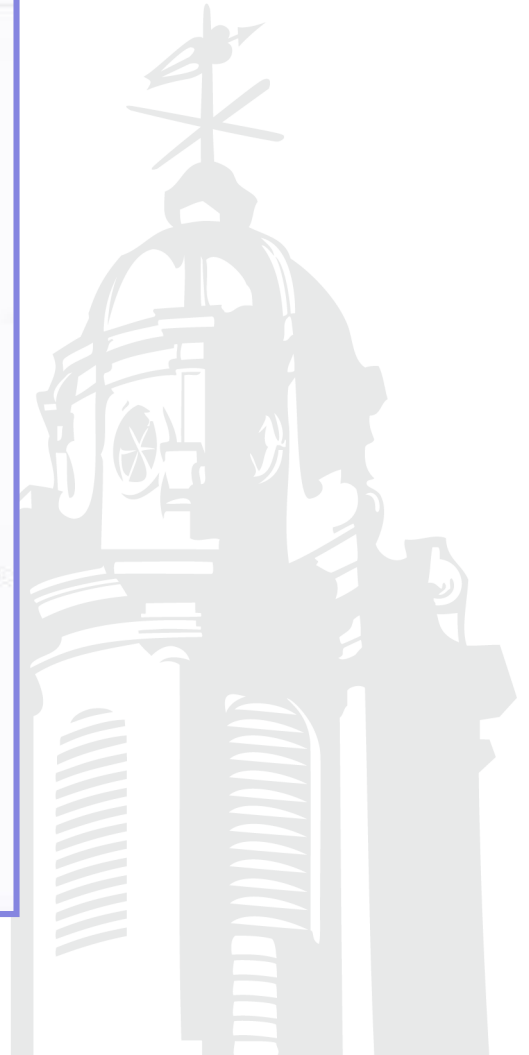


A Sample Reflection on Mentoring and Practicum

October, 2010

During October I compiled a Group Profile using the information I received from Wendy. I emailed for missing information, and made arrangements to pick up information after school. The Stanford scores were totals for comprehension, vocabulary, and scanning. I created groups based on the comprehension scores; a review of the individual questions and student responses is needed in order to plan effective instruction for each category: comprehension, vocabulary, and scanning. The student responses to the "Tell Me About Yourself" Survey indicate that most students identified a favorite book or reading in general, what they like most about school (seeing friends to specific subjects), what they like least about school (the earlier start time to MCAS), and they lead active lives participating in sports and art outside of school. The student responses to the Reading and Writing Attitudinal Survey indicate they are engaged in their reading (they enjoy fiction, especially mysteries) and feel they are good at predicting. Some students indicate they need to read more, read more slowly, or read with more focus to be better readers. The student responses about what they do best when writing focused on handwriting, interesting opening sentences, and writing stories. The students feel they need to work on spelling and writing longer, more interesting sentences. The writing samples were an open response regarding how they felt about their first day of school. The responses indicate that students need practice to consistently use mechanics and the paragraph structure of opening sentence, detail sentences, and a closing sentence. Most students stayed on topic for their response.

At the end of October I read *Jeremy Fink and Walk Two Moons*. I expressed to Wendy my pleasure in reading both these books. She said that she has used them in prior years.



The Literacy Coach

Reflection



The Literacy Coach: Reflection

These Graduate Students:

- Discovered the power of school policies regarding teacher observations and student confidentiality.
- Observed the importance of explicit and relevant literacy instruction for all learners.
- Were provided with the opportunity for self-reflection regarding their own classroom management skills.



The Literacy Coach: Reflection

These Graduate Students:

- Examined the role of a paraprofessional in an exclusive classroom setting.
- Learned about the power of clear communication with a peer.
- Discovered literacy coaching is truly a cyclical process.



Reflections Regarding Literacy Coaching

- “I found this experience enlightening. I learned just as much about myself as I did about [this teacher]. I learned that other people feel a lack of confidence, too, and that I am not the only one who is willing to collaborate and work with others.”
- “I truly loved this assignment and would like to initiate a group of people who coach each other next year in my school.”
- “I look forward to becoming a coach or mentor in the future. I enjoy discussing and bouncing ideas around. This is the only way for the ‘coachee’ but also for the ‘coach’.”



The Promise of Literacy Coaching

- The coach often learns as much about his/her own teaching as he/she learns about the teaching of others in the school.
- The coach can help foster change within a school/school district.
- The coach helps to promote unity and collaboration within a school.
- The coach provides a way to transform student learning.
- The coach establishes an avenue for professional development and teacher growth.
- A coaching experience allows for self-reflection regarding teaching and learning.



Challenges of Literacy Coaching

- **School Change.**
- **A Clear Job Description.**
- **Not an Expert on Every Topic.**
- **School Environment and School Administration.**
- **Trust.**



Participant Self-Reflection

- Think about some of the presentations you have attended these past two days.
- How can you employ these new ideas in your own teaching?



Literacy Coaching

“The benefits of coaching is to reach beyond individual classrooms. In the end, helping teachers feel safe and confident and positive not only affects instruction but also helps coaches feel safe and confident and positive. A coaching relationship provides the opportunity for reciprocity of gifts of knowledge and skill, caring and support, feedback and celebration.”

Burkins, 2007, p. 125



Contact Information

Dr. Elaine M. Bukowiecki

Associate Professor of Literacy Education

**Coordinator of the Graduate Programs in
Reading**

Bridgewater State University

Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02325

ebukowiecki@bridgew.edu

