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Charlotte A. Mundy
University of Alabama

Dorene D. Ross
University of Florida

Melinda M. Leko
University of Wisconsin - Madison

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**Dorothy J. McGinnis
Reading Center and Clinic**

The Professional Development Practices of Two Reading First Coaches

Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D.
University of Alabama

Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D.
University of Florida

Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin – Madison

————————— • Abstract • —————————

To establish job-embedded, ongoing professional development recent policies and initiatives required that districts appoint school-based coaches. The Reading First Initiative, for example, created an immediate need for coaches without a clear definition of coaches' responsibilities. Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to investigate how two Reading First coaches interpreted and enacted their professional development responsibilities. Cross-case analyses identified similarities and differences in coaches' enactments. Findings revealed that while each coach engaged in similar professional development responsibilities (e.g. modeling, observing, and classroom walkthroughs) their approach to these responsibilities differed — collaborative versus expert driven. These differences in approaches indicate that the preparation for coaches should include development of knowledge about how teachers learn and methods and strategies for developing and implementing effective professional development within schools.

Introduction

In recent years professional development has shifted from the one-time workshops that offered little to no follow through and were often disconnected from

teachers' classrooms to professional development that is job-embedded, ongoing, systemic, related to the work and challenges teachers face in classrooms, and carried out by people familiar with the context of teachers' work (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Fullan, 2001; Guskey, 2000; 2002; Little, 1993; Wood & McQuarrie, 1999). This type of job-embedded, ongoing professional development is based on the assumption that "the most powerful learning is that which occurs in response to challenges currently being faced by the learner, which allows for immediate application, experimentation, and adaptation on the job" (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997, p. 52). To establish more job-embedded, ongoing professional development, specifically in the area of reading, recent policies have required that schools and districts appoint school-based reading coaches. An example of such a policy was the Reading First Initiative — the largest federal initiative to implement coaching—which aimed to improve reading outcomes for K-3 students in low performing schools. The expectation was that coaches would offer authentic and individualized learning situations that would provide differentiated job-embedded support for teacher learning (Knight, 2007).

NCLB (2001) and subsequently Reading First directly impacted the professional development that was provided to teachers and sparked interest in the use of reading coaches to provide contextualized professional development. In one of the first reports designed to examine Reading First coaches, Deussen and colleagues (2007) surveyed and interviewed K-3 teachers and coaches in 203 schools in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. The researchers identified five categories of coaches: data-oriented, student-oriented, managerial, and two types of teacher-oriented – one focused on working with individual teachers and the other focused on working with groups of teachers. Once identified, coaches' educational background, prior experiences, school size, and state of employment in relation to coach category were explored. After investigating these possible relationships, Deussen and her colleagues found that the only statistically significant relationship was between how coaches performed their role (coach category) and the state in which coaches worked. The responsibility of states to organize, plan, and deliver professional development and technical assistance to reading coaches within Reading First schools was a possible reason for the relationship between coach category and state of employment. Thus, this finding revealed the responsibility and opportunity of states to influence how coaches work within their schools and districts.

In the state of Florida, where this study took place, the *Just Read, Florida!* office developed a model that described the reading coach's role, responsibilities, and minimum requisite qualifications. According to this model, coaches were

responsible for providing initial and ongoing professional development to teachers in the five areas of reading (as defined by the National Reading Panel (2000) – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), as well as administering and analyzing instructional assessments. Florida's model outlined minimum qualifications for reading coaches including: bachelor's degree, advanced coursework or professional development in reading, and a state endorsement or certification in K-12 reading. Coaches who were not endorsed or certified in reading had to work toward that goal by completing a minimum of 60 reading in-service hours or 6 semester hours of college coursework in reading per year for 3 years. The expectation was that coaches with these credentials would possess expert knowledge in reading; however, this potential expertise does not necessarily translate into expert knowledge in teacher education or professional development even though providing professional development to teachers was a prominent responsibility of Reading First coaches.

In a recent study designed to investigate how Reading First coaches spent their time and their rationales for this time distribution, Bean and colleagues (2010) found a majority of coaches' time was focused on establishing whether students were obtaining effective reading instruction. Their findings also indicated that the more time coaches spent working with teachers, the greater the percentage of students who scored at proficiency in reading. This finding corroborates much of what the coaching literature supports - that coaches can have a positive impact on instruction and possibly student achievement, given the right circumstances (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2009). The "right circumstances" can include the following factors: coaches' personality, time available for interactions with teachers, and ability to exercise flexibility within state/federal standards (Poglinco, et al., 2003). In general, to maximize the positive impact of school-based coaching, it is suggested that coaches need a more detailed job description, excellent communication skills, experience as a teacher, ongoing principal support, prior training on coaching and standards based reform, and success in working with adults (Deussen et. al, 2007; Walpole & Blamey, 2008).

In general, coaches need an understanding of how teachers learn to develop and deliver effective professional development. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) provide a helpful framework for conceptualizing the development of teacher knowledge. Included in this framework are three theories of how knowledge develops in teachers — knowledge-*for*-practice, knowledge-*in*-practice, and knowledge-*of*-practice. Knowledge-*for*-practice is based on the idea that knowing more (e.g. subject matter,

theory, pedagogy) leads to more effective practice. It is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to improve their practice can be learned from an outside source, and teaching is viewed as a process of applying recently acquired knowledge to practical situations. The second conception of teacher learning is knowledge-*in*-practice, which is based on the idea that what competent teachers know is demonstrated in their practice, reflections, inquiries, and narratives. It is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to improve their practice comes from enhancing their own understandings of their actions. The third conception of teacher learning is knowledge-*of*-practice. The basis of this conception is that teachers generate knowledge through the reflective integration of theory and practice by "making their classrooms and school sites places for inquiry, connecting their work in schools to larger issues and taking on a critical perspective on the theory and research of others" (p. 273). The knowledge-of-practice conception highlights the relationship between knowledge and practice and the theoretical aspects of both. Although the terminology coined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle might not be used when planning professional development, it is reasonable to conclude that assumptions about how teachers learn will ultimately affect how professional development is provided to teachers.

Recent policies have promoted more situated professional development that utilizes coaches as a way to offer professional development that is connected to teachers' everyday responsibilities. Situated learning is thought to be a powerful context to support teacher learning (Borko, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Joyce and Showers, 1995), and though contextualized professional development is no doubt better than having teachers sit through all-day workshops, until recently little attention has been given to preparing coaches to effectively deliver this type of professional development. The purpose of this study therefore, was to examine how two Reading First coaches, in similar school contexts but with different professional experiences approached their professional development responsibilities. The following questions guided this investigation: (a) how do Reading First coaches enact professional development responsibilities? (b) What are the similarities and differences in how Reading First coaches enact professional development responsibilities?

Methodology

The goal of qualitative research is to understand the world from the perspective of those who live in it (Hatch, 2002). Hence, qualitative methods were well suited for a study of how Reading First coaches enact professional development. Participant selection for this study was purposeful to provide information-rich cases

(Patton, 2002). This study focused on reading coaches who worked full time in Reading First elementary schools within a north central Florida school district. The county literacy director was asked to recommend coaches whom they believed possessed the characteristics and knowledge of skilled reading coaches. Participation was voluntary and all names have been replaced with pseudonyms. A summary of coaches' prior experiences, educational backgrounds, and school contexts is included in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. *Reading coach information*

RC	Educational Background	Years as teacher	Years as RC	Years at school
Janice	B.A in journalism Graduating in summer 2009 with a M.A. in special ed. and a reading endorsement	2*	2	7
Sarah	B.A. in elementary ed. M.A. in elementary ed. reading endorsed	17*	7	12

* Janice was also a reading tutor for 3 years; Sarah was also a teacher on assignment and reading facilitator for 6 years

Note. RC: Reading Coach, B.A.: Bachelor of Arts, M.A.: Master of Arts

Table 2. *School context*

RC	School	County	Free/reduced lunch rate	Minority rate	Total students	Total teachers
Janice	Jefferson Elementary	A	85%	98%	520	45
Sarah	Sanders Elementary	A	74%	71%	540	44

Data Collection

The primary data sources were interviews and observations conducted with two, female reading coaches during a 6-month time period. Four formal interviews (lasting 45 to 65 minutes) were conducted with each coach. A set of guiding questions focused each interview on different aspects of the role of coaching, as well as the events that took place during observations. The first interview focused on each coach's background knowledge and perception of her role. The second interview focused on events that occurred during the first observation, how each coach spent her time, and the challenges perceived within the coaching role. The third interview focused on events from the second observation, job satisfaction, and professional development provided *by* the coach and *to* the coach. The fourth interview focused on events from the third observation and the relationships among the reading coach and teachers, administrators, district and state personnel.

Each coach was observed three times. Observations were pre scheduled in order to view the key responsibilities that the coaches described in the first interview. In addition, observations helped contextualize the interview responses and assisted in the formation of subsequent interview questions. Each observation lasted approximately seven hours, the average length of an elementary school day. Informal interviews occurred during observations and extensive field notes were taken throughout observations. Data collection occurred concurrently with data analysis, and to ensure trustworthiness and credibility triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analyses, member checking, and reflective journaling were used.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is viewed as a search for patterns. In this study, Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) was used as a way to guide analysis procedures. Within the DRS model, the following four levels of analysis are identified: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and identification of key themes. Prior to data analysis we constructed two files, one for each case. All transcripts, field notes, and artifacts were coded using semantic relationships and placed into the appropriate case file. Once the initial coding was complete we set up two Excel files that served as the domain worksheets for each coach. The codes from each coach's transcripts and field notes were then categorized and placed into the appropriate domain worksheet. An example of a domain is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. *Example of strict inclusion domain*

Included terms	Semantic relationship	Cover term
off-site workshops co-planning walkthroughs modeling data meetings	is a kind of	Professional development

Once each coach's codes were placed into the domain sheets, we had an initial overview of how coaches defined and enacted their roles. We then began taxonomic and componential analysis, which allowed us to look across the cases.

Taxonomic analysis serves as a method to search for ways domains are organized and related to one another (Hatch, 1984). As we looked across the coaches' domains we recognized that certain domains were similar in their organization and structure. For example, professional development activities such as modeling, walkthroughs, and observing teachers were coaching activities that were referenced frequently (both through interview transcripts and observational field notes) throughout each coach's domain worksheets. Once such a similarity was found we would apply a structural question such as, "What are all the types of professional development?" and "Is professional development a stage in something else?" We continued this process throughout our comparison of the coaches' worksheets.

Once the similarities among the cases were found we began the process of looking for contrasts among the coaches' domain worksheets – componential analysis. We took the coaches' domain worksheets and made a list of all the contrasts that could be found within the domain. For example, while both coaches conducted classroom walkthroughs one coach placed a sticky note on the teacher's desk at the end of the walkthrough and the other took notes on a clipboard and exited the classroom often times with no communication with the teacher. Thus, componential analysis allowed us to view the different approaches each coach had to enacting their professional development responsibilities. This step was repeated multiple times as we looked for contrasts among the coaches' worksheets.

Finally, key themes were identified when the following were true: the theme reoccurred in two or more domains, it applied to numerous situations, and had a high degree of generalizability. We identified these key themes by engaging in a systematic comparison of the completed domains both within and across cases. Upon the completion of these steps we found that many of the coaches professional

development responsibilities were centered on the basal series[1] that was recently adopted by their county. Additionally, we found that while the coaches engaged in similar coaching responsibilities (modeling, observing, and teacher walkthroughs) offered through individual, grade level, and school wide professional development, their reasons for doing so and interactions with teachers varied. Detailed descriptions of the coaches' approach to professional development are presented in the cases below.

Janice

Janice was beginning her second year as the Reading First coach at Jefferson Elementary. Prior to becoming the reading coach, she had 2 years of teaching experience and 3 years of experience as a reading tutor. As a relatively new coach, her understanding of the role continued to develop as she attended coaches' meetings and trainings offered by her district and the *Just Read, Florida!* office. Janice's understanding of education in general was also being enhanced through the master's program she was currently completing. The following sections provide examples of Janice's enactment of her professional development responsibilities.

Jefferson Elementary adopted a new basal series (Scott Foresman) in the fall of 2008. This adoption led Janice to increase her classroom modeling, walkthroughs, and observations in order to help teachers become familiar with the new series and ensure they received sufficient support and feedback. Janice walked through classrooms daily, and as a result noticed that Ms. Jones, a second year teacher, was struggling to implement reading strategies from the new basal series and explained, "After observing her reading instruction, I wanted to use that as an opportunity to model for her." For an entire week Janice used Ms. Jones' 90-minute reading block to model from the basal reading series. The modeling session began on a Monday with Janice teaching the complete reading block and Ms. Jones observing her instruction. Ms. Jones and Janice met afterwards to discuss Janice's instruction, particularly what elements were effective and what elements Ms. Jones might incorporate when she teaches lessons in the future. For the next 3 days Janice and Ms. Jones divided up the instructional responsibilities and began to co-teach the reading block. By Friday Ms. Jones had taken over the instructional responsibilities for the reading block and Janice became the observer. Janice and Ms. Jones discussed the reading instruction

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[1]The state of Florida is a textbook adoption state and within this particular county it was mandated that all teachers use the basal as their primary tool for reading instruction. Examining the coaches' opinion of the basal series was not the purpose of this study. While the effectiveness of basal series is a worthwhile topic for investigation it is beyond the scope of this paper.

throughout the week – changing and modifying elements to best fit the needs of the students and the teachers' individual teaching styles.

The extended modeling allowed Janice to work collaboratively with Ms. Jones while also increasing her own knowledge of the basal. Janice explained, "It gave me the opportunity to become familiar with the new curriculum to enhance my knowledge and better be able to recognize what elements teachers might struggle with." The extended modeling session also benefited Ms. Jones as Janice described, "her students were all grouped homogenously but they're not really all the same. It is a whole process of trying to get her to really know her students and meet their needs." In addition to modeling, Janice arranged for teachers to observe other teachers who felt more successful with the series. Thus, while Janice viewed her role as a support to teachers, she also understood that support did not always need to come directly from her; rather, she could also empower teachers to support each other.

As reading coach, Janice observed, modeled, and provided feedback, but when asked which coaching responsibility she enjoyed most, Janice quickly replied, "I love being in the classroom modeling!" Her love of modeling was supported in the data. By far, Janice's largest domain was modeling. Our observational field notes frequently documented her modeling in teachers' classrooms, which made it an important topic in subsequent interviews. For example, when asked to describe why she enjoyed modeling she spoke of a second year teacher, Mr. Lopez. On a walkthrough she observed Mr. Lopez's whole group instruction was 5 minutes when it should have been closer to 20 or 25 minutes and stated, "That was what prompted me to find out, because after I went back he said, 'I don't do that part', but then said he's doing it at another time." She explained that after the walkthrough and brief conversation with Mr. Lopez, her next step of support would be,

> To find out the reasonings and why he chose to do it that way and then kind of talking it through as to what might be a better approach, or why it was presented in this way in the curriculum. I found that to be more helpful as opposed to saying you didn't do this and you probably should have done that, so I will start off with the reasoning behind it, and do you think I could possibly come in and we could try to do this that and the other? I try to work with teachers from that perspective.

Janice believed Mr. Lopez struggled because of the new curriculum and explained, "I think he sees phonemic awareness and phonics as the same, not understanding

that they are two separate skills, so that's where I'll go in and model and show him the difference." When asked if she thought it would be beneficial for Mr. Lopez to view another teacher's instruction, she hesitated and then replied, "yes, and I've done that, but I don't know that he – I hate to say it, but that he doesn't know what to look for." However, Janice was reflective and shouldered part of the responsibility stating, "what I can do a better job at is giving him the focus of what to look for such as, "when she gets to this part, that's the part I'm talking about, or notice the difference in the way she does this or that."

While a great deal of Janice's professional development domain sheets focused on one-on-one interactions with teachers, she also delivered grade level and school wide professional development. Grade level professional development was typically directly applicable to teachers' classrooms. For example, the primary teachers wanted more emphasis on phonics while the intermediate teachers wanted a greater emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension. School wide professional development remained the same throughout the school year and focused on one of the five areas of reading. At the time of this study, school wide professional development was focused on a book study involving fluency. Although teachers were generally receptive to individual and grade level professional development, they were more resistant to school wide professional development, which they viewed as "just another meeting that takes away from their time." Janice, however, valued school wide professional development stating,

> I understand their reservations and their wanting to get work done in their own classrooms, but if you look at it (school wide professional development) it does pertain to them, because unfortunately we do have some fourth graders that really never mastered phonemic awareness or those types of things. So working with teachers outside your grade level can give you insight.

Janice repeatedly demonstrated her flexibility in attempting to meet teachers' needs. She was cognizant that her primary role was to support and motivate teachers so they could support their students. Janice's commitment to giving teachers the support they needed to scaffold student learning was a driving force behind her role as reading coach. Her ability to identify teachers that needed extra support and then work with them to strengthen instruction were key parts of her coaching role.

Sarah

Sarah was beginning her sixth year as the Reading First coach at Sanders Elementary. Prior to becoming a coach, she had over 20 years of teaching experience. Sarah believed that within Reading First the coach's job was defined as, "training teachers, providing professional development, and modeling in classrooms" adding, "that is what the majority of our job should be." Like Janice, Sarah provided school wide, grade level, and individual professional development. School wide professional development was utilized for brief tutorials, such as how to access the Performance Monitoring and Reporting Network, and to present information from Reading First trainings.

Sarah reported that school wide professional development was provided on an "as needed" basis because it was more beneficial to meet with teachers by grade level. She stated, "I'd almost prefer to do it by grade level and then you can make it specific to their needs." For example, a new phonemic awareness intervention was being implemented in kindergarten. Sarah provided the initial training and explained the next step was to "let them try the program for a week or two and then I'll bring them back together and I will go over things they didn't know to ask before using the program." Sarah explained that she met with the teachers during their 45-minute team meeting to get a better understanding of how they were implementing the new intervention and let them know that "I will be coming around to each class to check and see how the program is being implemented." Sarah clearly wanted the kindergarten teachers to focus on grade level expectations and implementing the program with fidelity, though this was not specific to just this kindergarten program. Repeatedly, when looking through her domain sheets, we saw similar language (e.g. implementing to fidelity and making sure they're doing the program right) used whenever she referred to her professional development responsibilities.

The need for teachers to focus on grade level expectations and implement programs to fidelity led Sarah to provide a lot of one-on-one professional development, which included in-class follow up from school wide and grade level professional development. She also conducted observations, walkthroughs, modeling, and provided feedback, all of which increased in frequency due to the school's adoption of a new basal series. Sarah increased walkthroughs and observations "to see if teachers were breaking up into small groups, how small group instruction was taking place – if it was taking place." Sarah's observations of teachers' instruction often turned into modeling sessions. She explained that she often asked teachers to give her a small group to run because

> It helps me when I sit there and try to do some of those activities
> with the kids so I can see what level the kids are actually on. Like
> take for instance that first grade class we worked with, you know a
> certain number of those kids are probably going to be red (indicat-
> ing below grade level) and typically we wouldn't have kids in red so
> much the second time we do DIBELS, but I could see where we
> could and that makes me realize that we need to get that interven-
> tion up and running, because there were a lot of students like that.

Sarah felt it was part of her professional development responsibility to ensure stu-
dents were placed in appropriate reading groups and that teachers were imple-
menting the basal series with fidelity. When teachers struggled to implement "best
practices" she found it rewarding to support them stating,

> I like when you get somebody that's not doing well and they listen
> to everything you say. To see somebody turn around and sometimes
> it takes 2 or 3 years, but to see somebody that you worked with over
> the years and realize wow they are really doing a great job.

In describing in-class professional development and the teacher selection pro-
cess she explained, "This year we have three new people teaching kindergarten so
I'm trying to work with them." However, Sarah felt new teachers needed varying
levels of support stating, "For some, I just pop my head in and kind of see that they
are doing fine. . . or I help them with their intervention materials and make sure
they are doing the programs right." Others required more time. Miss Smith was a
new teacher who needed additional support. After observing Miss Smith's 90-min-
ute reading block, Sarah outlined steps for providing support. These steps included
the following: using a light-speed microphone, shortening whole group instruction,
using larger letter cards, placing items at students' eye level, better use of the board,
using age appropriate centers, and organizing materials before instruction. Realizing
these comments might be overwhelming she explained,

> I wouldn't want to hit her with everything at once so I'm choosing two things.
> Like I went in today and she's using a light speed so that's fixed, I'm going
> to shorten whole group and create better centers and center management. I

think if I start with those areas it'll help. I'm starting with big areas and fine-tuning it down.

When providing in-class support Sarah tended to take on the role of expert, and in the case of Miss Smith this meant telling her how to make instruction more effective and fixing her errors.

Sarah told us that she defined her role as a support to teachers. She relied on her "expert" knowledge (developed through past experiences and trainings) to provide her teachers with support. She believed that by drawing on her own expertise as well as the expertise of the Reading First program developers she could help teachers strengthen classroom instruction.

Discussion

Both Janice and Sarah viewed professional development as a way to support teachers in fostering effective classroom instruction. While they shared similar understandings of why they provided professional development, they differed in how it was provided. Sarah's professional development focused on showing and telling teachers what to do. The key assumption behind her practice was that showing and telling would increase teachers' knowledge and this knowledge would improve teachers' instruction. In contrast, Janice and her teachers made joint decisions about how to make classroom instruction more effective. The assumption behind Janice's practice was that teachers learn when they examine their own practice and participate in the decision making process. The differences in how Janice and Sarah enacted professional development were indicative of their different perspectives on how teachers acquire knowledge.

Although neither coach's professional development approach fit perfectly within Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) conceptions of teacher learning, there were enough similarities to draw comparisons. The professional development approach adopted by Sarah was generally consistent with the conception of knowledge-*for*-practice. That is, she took on the role of expert. Sarah viewed a Reading First coach as a leader in the school. She felt that her knowledge of the Reading First guidelines (e.g. DIBELS assessment, formation of reading groups, and fidelity to the reading series) made her an expert in how reading instruction should take place in the classroom. Furthermore, Sarah believed that if she explicitly told teachers how to improve their instruction, then instruction would improve. For example, when Sarah was providing Miss Smith with additional support she made a list of the things that

needed improvement. She then selected the items she deemed most important, and in Miss Smith's case stated, "I am going to start with like really big areas and then gradually fine tune it down." Sarah demonstrated a similar approach when working with teachers to implement the new kindergarten intervention – walking through classrooms to make sure the new program was being implemented with fidelity, but not assisting them in modifying it to fit the needs of their students or their individual teaching styles. Implicit in her approach to professional development was the view that she was the expert who decided what teachers needed to know and identified the elements of instruction that need improvement. This expert-driven approach focused Sarah's attention on what her teachers were teaching, not what they were learning.

Because Sarah was the more experienced teacher and coach this finding was surprising to us. We assumed, albeit incorrectly, that Sarah's years of experience and knowledge of reading would lead her to approach professional development in a more collegial and collaborative fashion. Instead it seemed that her years spent sitting through traditional professional development translated into her delivering professional development in a similar expert driven manner. Although Sarah's professional development was contextualized, (i.e. she was on site) it did not meet the expectations of providing teachers with authentic learning situations (Deussen et. al., 2007; Knight, 2007), as her teachers rarely chose the topics for professional development or worked with Sarah to problem solve instructional challenges.

In contrast to Sarah, Janice's approach to professional development generally represented a conception of knowledge-*in*-practice, as she worked collaboratively with her teachers. Her approach to professional development was collaborative, working with teachers and providing opportunities for them to reflect on their actions within the classroom. In her work with teachers she frequently asked them to explain the reasoning behind their instructional decisions, attempting to better understand their practice and to help them clarify their own thinking. Janice did not believe she could rely on telling or showing teachers what to do, rather, she believed her role was to work with teachers, help them understand their instructional decisions, and then make a joint plan to develop effective classroom instruction. For example, when working with Mr. Lopez, she first wanted to understand why he was leaving out certain components of his reading instruction. She then worked with him and together they altered the reading instruction in a way that aligned with both of their beliefs and goals. Thus, Janice believed that through strengthening teachers' understanding of their practice, she would also strengthen their instruction.

Initially when the county literacy director recommended Janice as a skilled reading coach – we were concerned about her lack of experience. She was a relatively novice teacher who was now in the position of being a novice coach, how could she possibly support teachers' instruction in a meaningful way when she had such limited time in the classroom? Surprisingly, and perhaps as a result of her lack of experience, she did not take a traditional approach to professional development. Unlike Sarah, she had not experienced 20+ years of traditional professional development. Furthermore, at the time of this study Janice was enrolled in a master's program and perhaps as a student herself she could more easily put herself in the position of her teachers and think about how best to facilitate learning.

Overall, Janice and Sarah both understood their role as providing support to teachers primarily through professional development. Despite this shared understanding of the role, they demonstrated different approaches to professional development, which in turn illustrated different conceptions of how teachers learn. Janice enacted a collaborative approach to professional development, while Sarah's approach was more expert driven. Janice's approach of supporting and collaboratively working with teachers is established in the research a more effective way of working with teachers to get them to change and modify instructional practices (van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2005; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2009).

Although Sarah also spoke of supporting teachers, her strategy of simply telling teachers what to do mirrors professional development practices that are commonly criticized for resulting in shallow implementation and limited sustainability because teachers are viewed as technicians rather than professionals (Butler, Lauscher, Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Gersten, 1995; Joyce & Shower, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000). And though it could be argued that contextualized professional development is better than de-contextualized professional development, when coaches take on the role of expert, it places them in the role of decision maker. This makes it difficult for teachers to take ownership of their learning. In developing requirements for the knowledge and skills needed by reaching coaches, states that require coaches to be reading endorsed might succeed in increasing their reading knowledge, but this does not ensure that they are adequately prepared to work effectively with teachers. As the larger body of professional development literature suggests, reading coaches also need to be better prepared to deliver effective professional development, (Bean, 2007; Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Implications

Providing job-embedded ongoing professional development is a key component of the coaches' role (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Knight, 2007); however, becoming an effective coach requires both knowledge of reading and knowledge of the skills and strategies of coaching (Knight, 2007). The coaches in this study had a desire to support teachers. Their commitment to supporting teachers suggests that an explicit focus on how to create effective inquiry focused professional development in their preparation for the coaching role might have enabled them both to develop more effective approaches to professional development. Interestingly it seemed that years of experience did not equal more effective coaching. This seems to indicate that while time in the classroom is no doubt important, of equal importance is knowledge of how to effectively work with adults and facilitate situated learning. Janice intuitively had a stronger sense of how to support her colleagues through collegial interaction, but neither had gained knowledge of the skills and strategies of effective coaching as part of their professional development for becoming a reading coach.

Sarah and Janice's preparation, or lack thereof, was not atypical for coaches. States, districts, and universities, however, have the opportunity to better prepare coaches for their roles. This preparation should include development of knowledge about how teachers learn, methods and strategies for developing and implementing effective professional development within schools, and the skills and strategies used by effective instructional coaches. In addition, the delivery model for professional development for coaches must model highly effective practices in professional development. Coaches are unlikely to develop new strategies unless they experience professional development that engages them in critical inquiry around their own practice. Neither coach in this study received this type of professional development. In fact, both received professional development grounded in the knowledge-*for*-practice conception that Sarah also used. Professional development largely consisted of presentations of knowledge about reading and strategies for reading instruction with an expectation that the coaches would teach the content to their teachers. This suggests that those providing professional development for coaches also need stronger preparation for their roles.

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About the Authors

Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Literacy Education at the University of Alabama, Department of Curiculum and Instruction.

Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D. is a Professor of Curriculum, Teaching, and Teacher Education Unified Elementary Pro Teach at the University of Florida, School of Teaching and Learning.

Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Psyhcology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Education.