

**EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR LITERACY COACHES**

by

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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS WORK

We the undersigned certify that this thesis by Matthew Beebe, candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this thesis.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines aspects of professional development that a literacy coach might focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine an answer. The selected studies sort into four categories: high quality professional development for educators, specific types and methods of delivery of professional development, delivery of professional development through technology, and literacy coaching as a form of professional development. Findings from the high quality category indicate high quality professional development appears to be that which matches school district goals, is relevant to the participants, and consists of active participation and collaboration. From the types and delivery methods category, findings are that beneficial delivery methods are those that model for participants the strategies being taught and provide a large amount of time for follow-up support. Specifically for professional development in technology, a hands-on use delivery method appears to be effective, while peer coaching with observations appears to be an effective delivery method for professional development generally. Findings from the delivery of professional development through technology category indicate that online professional development through message boards appears to be a more comfortable way for some professionals to learn; however, other professionals prefer a more focused and moderated forum for their online professional development. Findings from the category of literacy coaching as a form of professional development reveal that literacy coaches seem to be most effective at changing teacher practice when they demonstrate and model how to use a strategy, when they discuss assessments and assessment results with the educators, when they provide feedback after observations, and generally when they have a good rapport with the teachers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

More and more school districts appear to be turning to professional development as a means for indirectly improving student achievement and increasing student learning. In particular, delivery of professional development from coaches and mentors is receiving a great deal of support as a form of professional development that effectively helps teachers to use more research-based instruction and improve teacher practice (McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2013). In the literacy field, literacy coaching is also becoming a widely used form of professional development for classroom teachers (Toll, 2009). Literacy coaching is even required in the federal guidelines for Reading First (USDE, 2002) and has become one of the levels of expertise in *Standards for Reading Professionals* (IRA, 2010). Whether delivered by literacy coaches or teacher mentors, professional development should have as its fundamental purpose, the goal to “help teachers improve their practice so that students learn better” (Whitehouse, Breit, McCloskey, Ketelhut, Dede, 2006, p. 49). Thus, effective professional development is that which positively impacts an educator’s professional practice. However, given the nearly overwhelming number of forms, methods, and types of professional development available, an issue for educators and administrators is which features of professional development and its delivery are the most effective for positively impacting teachers’ literacy instruction and practices? An issue for literacy coaches is how professional development could be administered and what components will it contain that will positively affect teachers’ literacy practices. Therefore the question for this capstone project is, what aspects of professional development might a literacy coach focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers?

Background

The International Reading Association emphasizes three areas of activity for a reading specialist: interventionist, literacy coach, and program leader (IRA, 2010). As a reading specialist candidate, I personally feel familiar with the strategies and overall work flow of an

interventionist. However, I feel less familiar with the role of a coach, with providing professional development to classroom teachers. Understanding and applying adult learning theories to different types of professional development is also a topic of literacy education that I would like to know more about. Therefore, I have decided to increase my knowledge by pursuing this topic of effective professional development. I would like to know what research says about effective literacy coaching methods specifically to improve a teacher's literacy instruction. Then I would like to take the findings from my research and create some effective professional development for classroom teachers.

Terminology

For the purpose of this research study, terms that are frequently used in this study are defined below to provide the reader with a better understanding of the topic.

Professional Development forms and delivery is frequently mentioned in this study. When the term "professional development" is used, it may represent all forms and delivery methods including (but not limited to) mentoring, coaching, small group instruction, and online webinar (Garet, et al., 2001).

Professional Development impact in this study represents the impact of professional development as measured or determined by the resulting change in classroom teacher literacy practice (Whitehouse, et al., 2006). When this change in literacy practice occurs mainly because of professional development, that professional development will be considered "effective".

Literacy Coach or Reading Coach are different names for the same concept. The International Reading Association refers to this professional position as *Reading coaches*, but in this study, as in others that have been read, I will refer to them as *Literacy Coaches*. I use this term based on the idea that these types of coaches will not solely be administering reading instruction.

Theoretical Framework

Adult learning theories and roles of coaches establish a solid theoretical basis for why coaching may be a very effective form of professional development for adults. According to Jarvis, Holford, and Griffin (1998), roles of a coach are similar to roles of a teacher in adult learning theory. Jarvis, Holford, and Griffin created some points that teachers of adults would benefit from knowing. Some of the most relevant points for this study are that teachers of adults (“coaches”): “serve as a resource for the individual, assist learners to assess their needs and competencies and locate resources or secure new information” (p. 58). Whitherspoon and White (1996) also created four points regarding the role of coaches. These types are coaching for “skills, performance, development, and executive’s agenda” (p. 127). In establishing these four points, Whitherspoon and White in addition to Jarvis Holford, and Griffin have found evidence to support the theory that peer coaching for adults is supported by adult learning theory.

The International Reading Association (IRA) noticed in 2004 that there was “considerable variability in the job descriptions” (p. 2) of literacy coaches. As a result, this professional organization released a position statement that clarified the job description of a literacy coach. In 2007, they released a revised position statement on the roles of reading professionals, in which they state that reading and literacy coaches “provide essential leadership for the school’s entire literacy program by helping create and supervise a long-term staff development process that supports both the development and implementation of the literacy program over months and years” (IRA, 2007, p. 7). This point identifies the idea that literacy coaches would likely benefit from learning more about modes of professional development and methods for providing ongoing professional development.

Rationale

Professional development is now a mandated component for teachers in the United States. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) requires that professional certification holders complete 175 hours of professional development every five years (NYSED, 2009). Literacy coaching is becoming a way for classroom teachers to receive a “form of highly targeted professional development” (NCTE, 2006, p. 3). The National Council of Teachers of

English (NCTE) (2006) even calls coaching a “particularly potent vehicle” (p. 3) for professional development. Since literacy coaching appears to be the latest key in effective professional development, it is important that these coaches be properly trained and in turn administer the most effective and relevant training. Literacy coaches can receive a significant contribution from research about effective professional development for this issue.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To find relevant research studies for this question of aspects of professional development that provide a positive impact on professional literacy instruction, all relevant educational data bases have been searched. Key words for searching include “coaching,” “literacy coaching,” “elementary,” “teacher practice,” “professional development,” and “teacher improvement”. To examine the existing research related to the research question for this study, the studies are grouped into four categories. The first category contains studies related to high quality professional development for educators. The second pertains to specific types and methods of professional development that have shown a resulting change in teacher practice and include specific forms of coaching as professional development. The third contains studies about delivery methods of professional development through technology. The final group contains research studies specifically related to literacy coaching. These groups are presented below beginning with broadly applicable research studies and ending with studies that are very specific to the research question.

High Quality Professional Development for Educators

In education, professional development is aimed at the faculty and staff of schools that work with students on a daily basis. The first step to identifying appropriate and effective professional development is understanding what makes high quality professional development. The impact of high quality professional development is a change in teacher practice (Whitehouse et al., 2006). Teachers as the receivers of professional development are adults; therefore adult learning theory is very relevant to the process of providing high quality professional development. Rosemary, Roskos, and Landreth (2007) analyze adult learning theory and identify three overarching components. First, the theory places a large emphasis on “learning with understanding over the rote memorization of facts and reproduction of knowledge” (p. 13). Second is the use of preexisting knowledge that “serves as the basis for new learning” (p. 13), and the third is the idea that learning should be active and motivating while providing time for practice of the new skills. From these three overarching components of adult learning theory, the researchers draw three tenets for effective professional development, especially for educators.

The first tenet is that “professional development expands and deepens knowledge” (p. 8). Second is that “professional development creates favorable conditions for learning” (p. 12). The researchers identify seven favorable conditions for this tenet of adult professional learning:

(1) Ample time devoted to learning and applying. (2) Focus on ‘materials of practice’. (3) Emphasis on critical thinking skills. (4) Problem solving in small groups. (5) Teachers’ needs are aligned with students’ needs. (6) Disciplined thought followed by deliberate action. (7) Engagement in continuous improvement process (Rosemary, Roskos, & Landreth, 2007, p. 14).

The third tenet is that “professional development builds relationships” (p. 15). Applying these tenets to practice indicates that effective professional development for educators should be relationship-building under favorable conditions for knowledge growth.

In addition to tenets of professional development, there are other studies that aim to establish foundations for high quality professional development for educators. Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe (2011) have written an article to provide educators with characteristics of high-quality professional development as well as discuss the allocation of resources to accomplish that professional development. The main contribution of Archibald et al. to the education field and this literature review is the identification five characteristics of high-quality professional development. The first characteristic is “alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities” (p. 3). Alignment will prevent teachers from receiving conflicting messages from multiple sources. The second characteristic is a “focus on core content and modeling [of] teaching strategies for the content” (p. 4). Thus, high quality professional development addresses not only content, but also the teaching of that content to produce a “positive change in teacher practice” (p. 5). The third characteristic is “inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies” (p. 5). According to Archibald et al., the more that teachers are able to practice what they have learned, the greater the change in their instructional practices. Fourth is “provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers” (p. 5). These opportunities frequently take the form of “professional learning communities” (p. 5) where collaboration is encouraged and welcomed. The fifth characteristic of high quality professional development is “inclusion of embedded

follow-up and continuous feedback” (p. 6). This characteristic emphasizes the lengthy time involvement necessary for professional development to reach its high quality level.

While Archibald et al. (2011) have provided general characteristics of high quality professional development, other studies examine specific components of professional development and their impact on participating teachers. A study by Stein, Schwan-Smith, and Silver (1999) is about shifts in professional development that began to create new types of learning opportunities for teachers besides only workshops. The subject area being developed is mathematics and reasoning, but the effects appear to be applicable to the literacy field as well because many of the variables in this study are based around professional development in general and are not subject specific. The sources of data for this study are videotapes of professional development activities, the materials used in those activities, and post-activity interviews with the professional developers and teachers who participated. Although this article is from 1999, its shifts in types of professional development delivery provide a foundation for professional development today. The shift that the researchers explore is a departure from a traditional workshop style professional development session to a more targeted and personalized experienced. One major finding from this study is that repeated sessions focused on teachers’ understanding of “subject matter, pedagogy, and student thinking” (p. 263) led to a more dramatic change in teacher practice than the traditional workshops. The overall “lesson to be gleaned” (p. 263) is that delivery of professional development “matched to the group’s goals and to the context” (p. 263) had a strong correlation with a change in teacher practice. According to the researchers, not only knowing different strategies, but having the ability to determine the most effective strategies for a certain learning context is what will lead to the delivery of high quality professional development.

Another study that examines research based professional development and its effect on teacher learning and practice is by Mouza (2009). She believes that there is a need to “investigate the efficacy of professional development programs that are built around quality principles” (p. 1197). Mouza explores the extent that high quality characteristics in professional development will lead to a change in teacher practice. These high quality characteristics of the professional development include instruction about technology content to increase familiarity, instruction about how this knowledge can be applied, and collaboration for teachers to combine their content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The professional development sessions for her study

were all focused on instructing educators about new types of technology. The participants were seven first through fourth grade teachers that participated in different types of professional development. Data were collected from interviews, observations, surveys, artifacts, and e-mail exchanges. The first major finding is that “teachers developed a pedagogical understanding of the ways in which they can use a range of technological tools and strategies to address content standards and student needs” (p. 1211). This could be because of the amount of time that teachers spent learning educational implementation of technology during the professional development sessions. In regards to change in teacher practice, Mouza states that “the process of change was highly dependent on the continual interaction between practices and beliefs” (p. 1228). Change in beliefs resulted in change in practice, and this relationship is reciprocal according to Mouza.

Similarly to Mouza (2009), Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, and Gallagher (2007) explore what characteristics of professional development are of the highest quality to lead to a change in teacher practice. The characteristics include ample time to ensure deep understanding and planning sessions to organize the implementation of the content learned from the professional development. They conducted a study with 454 teachers to address three questions: what types of professional development show an increase in program implementation, what activities are associated with increased teacher knowledge and a change in teacher practice, and how does follow-up after the professional development influence program implementation and teacher knowledge which leads to change in teaching practice. The method of data collection consists of two surveys for the teachers to complete and an “independent measure of program implementation” (p. 936). The first major finding that Penuel et al. find is that when their professional development sessions were focused on aligning the content with standards from the state and district as well as possible ways to integrate the content within teachers’ own curriculum and classrooms, teachers felt more prepared to actually use the content. In relation to the impact of the professional development to the change in teacher practice, the researchers find that professional development that occurs for extra time beyond the 20 hours on average increases the rate of teachers changing their practices. In addition to this, when there is group participation in the professional development, teacher knowledge and teacher practice change increases. Lastly, Penuel et al. identify the finding that the more follow-up support that the teachers receive, the higher the correlation is with change in teacher practice.

The next two studies explore professional development sessions that focus on technology instruction and integration. Each professional development program consists of high quality elements, but the focus is on whether or not technology instruction from professional development can affect teacher literacy practice. Keller, Bonk, and Hew (2005) examine the particular technology professional development program known as TICKIT. This acronym stands for The Teacher Institute for Curriculum Knowledge about the Integration of Technology. TICKIT is a technology integration model that was created and refined from 1998-2003. The research question for their study is “What effect did the TICKIT experience have on the teachers’ self-reported levels of technology integration” (p. 331). Data were collected through use of the pre and post surveys based on a widely used instrument known as “Levels of Technology Implementation” or LoTI (p. 331). From these experiences, the researchers found that technology integration and computer proficiency are two areas with which the participants became particularly more comfortable. More specifically, the professional development sessions led to an increased use of technology and its integration into lessons. This may be because the TICKIT sessions balanced “exploration and application” (p. 334) of technology. The participants were able to choose areas that they could pursue more extensively that may be more relevant to their subjects. Another aspect of the TICKIT program that is high quality is that the learning split into two “dimensions” (p. 337). These dimensions are the social and material dimensions. The social dimension includes time for participants to learn how to incorporate social elements and collaboration in their classrooms. This dimension is taught through a method that purposely incorporates collaboration and discussion throughout the participants. The material dimension works with participants to apply their technology skills to many different circumstances in their classrooms. These dimensions contribute to the high quality characteristics of this study that led to a change in teacher practice.

Another study on the effects of high quality, technology professional development is by Kanaya, Light, and Culp (2005). The researchers examine factors that may influence the outcomes of a technology based professional development program. The researchers focused on intensity of the sessions rather than the duration. Their study aims to find a relationship between the intensity of a professional development program and other characteristics to finding “successful outcomes” (p. 313). The program that was used is Intel Teach to the Future and its goal is to help “teachers who already have some basic technology skills begin to integrate

technology more effectively into their classrooms to enhance student learning” (p. 317). The sessions are split into 10 four hour modules and each sessions is focused on a single research question. The methods to acquire data were surveys given to the participants at the end of the training session and again at the end of the school year. The researchers find that different factors of the professional development program are at work to create the successful outcomes for the teachers, *i.e.* change in teacher practice. The first factor that had a high correlation with change in teacher practice is teachers’ comprehension of “relevance of particular pedagogical topics” (p. 324) to the teachers’ classes. If teachers think that a topic is relevant for their students’ needs, then the data provide evidence that teachers will be more receptive to the topic. “Intensity of the delivery” (p. 317) is another factor of professional development that Kanaya et al. find to be indicative of effective programs. More specifically, more contact hours and longer time periods for the professional development sessions seem to indicate that “longer is better” (p. 325).

Some researchers focus on professional development’s effectiveness at changing teacher practice, but other researchers focus more on change in teacher practice along with teacher perceptions of professional development. Doherty (2011) conducted a study to determine the relationship between how participants in a professional development workshop perceive the workshop and the content, and how many of those skills they actually utilize in the classroom. This topic is building on Doherty’s previous research where he concluded that participants exhibited very high levels of learning outcomes and satisfaction after a workshop, but despite this, very few of the skills were actually used later in their classrooms; in other words, teacher practice appeared not to have been impacted. The study consisted of five professional development workshops, and a certain number of people in each workshop agreed to be in the study. The overall structure of the workshops, according to Doherty, was to “create an authentic learning environment in which participants would acquire knowledge and skills in a way that would reflect real life use” (p. 707). In terms of the post-workshop survey, 77% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop helped them understand how to integrate web-based technology in the classroom. In addition to the 77%, every single participant felt comfortable utilizing at least one type of web-based technology in their classroom. In terms of the follow-up interviews, only two of the seven participants that were interviewed agreed to using the strategies from the workshop. Doherty is at a loss to explain this because he feels that the format and administration of the workshop was based on research and deemed effective.

Doherty explains that “there is an issue with participants translating learning into changed behaviour in their teaching practice” (p. 711). Doherty hypothesizes that the lack of motivation on behalf of the participant could contribute to the low implementation rates from the professional development.

Similarly to examining a change in teacher practice, change in teacher perception can affect the way lessons are taught. Professional development that leads to a change in teacher perception could be considered to be successful according to Timperley and Phillips (2003). The researchers found that in eight low income school districts in Auckland, New Zealand, the teachers had low expectations for their students and this resulted in ineffective instruction for the students. The researchers want to examine the effect of professional development sessions on change in teacher perception. For their study, the research question is “To what extent did the professional development impact on the participants’ expectations of students’ achievement and their own self-efficacy in impacting on that achievement” (p. 631). Ten professional development sessions took place over six months for three hours each. Data collection occurred in the forms of “pre- and post-course questionnaire designed to assess expectations, self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy achievement” (p. 633). The first major finding is that when teachers are able to determine the results of their instruction on student achievement, there is a “substantial shift” (p. 636) in teacher perceptions of student expectations. Being able to learn how to analyze test scores more effectively led to the teachers feeling more empowered about how much they were helping the students. One other finding from the study is that the reflective activities from the professional development about what was being taught in the classroom and what could be improved led to a “greater willingness by teachers to examine their own practice” (p. 637) rather than assume that a cause for the lack of success is students’ home lives or background knowledge.

The next two studies in this section use data from a national survey of 1,027 teachers to determine types of high quality professional development. Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, and Birman (2000) examine how professional development over time affects change in teacher practice. The researchers used three types of data collection and the one tool that was used most heavily is called the Longitudinal Study of Teacher Change (LSTC). The purpose of the LSTC directly correlates with the purpose of Porter et al.’s study because both aim to determine what key features of professional development consistently contribute to a change in teacher practice.

The researchers contacted 437 teachers on average for the three separate testing sessions, and the tests occurred at three different times from 1996 to 1999. When the participants completed the LSTC, they were asked to describe a professional development activity that was especially helpful for them. Porter et al. explain six key features that are integral for improving teacher practice. The features that are labeled as structural features that lead to a change in teacher practice consist of: the activity's organization, the duration, and the extent of collective participation. Other features are: opportunities for active learning, the extent of content focus, and coherence and alignment with familiar goals. One other recommendation is that "Professional development focused on specific, higher-order teaching strategies increases teachers' use of those strategies in the classroom" (p. 5).

Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) conducted the second study to determine more specifically what organizational features and content features of professional development led to the most significant change in teacher practice. The method used for analyzing the data from the study is through a Teacher Activity Survey. This survey asked teachers to provide detailed information about the professional development activity that they participated in as well as their experiences and behavior. The analysis of the different professional development types are based on differences in "structural features" and "core features" (p. 919). Structural features are the way that the professional development is structured or designed, as opposed to core features which have to do with the content of the professional development. In addition to these formats, Garet et al. state that research supports "professional development that is sustained over time" (p. 921). The first result that the researchers found is that reform activities lasted longer and had a modest effect on positive outcomes with classroom practices. Another finding is that "activities that give greater emphasis to content and that are better connected to teachers' other professional development experiences and other reform efforts are more likely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills" (p. 933). Coherence of a professional development session is defined by the researchers as "connected to their other professional development experiences, aligned with standards and assessments, and fosters professional communication" (p. 934). This coherence has a stronger connection with change in teacher practice than only focusing on teacher knowledge. In addition to this, content focused activities that do not increase teacher knowledge or skills have a negative association with change in teacher practice.

Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002) conducted a follow up study to examine different features of professional development and how they may effectively change teacher practice. The researchers chose 207 teachers from 30 different schools that participated in professional development. The researchers created surveys for the participants to complete that covered many aspects of professional development. The first major finding is “teacher participation in professional development that focuses on a particular teaching practice predicts increased teachers' use of that practice in their classroom” (p. 98). In addition to this broad finding, Desimone et al. identify four features of professional development as being effective for changing teacher practice. These features are “reform type, collective participation... active learning, and coherence” (p. 102). Duration of professional development is a feature that the researchers tested but found to have no effect on change in teacher practice. Collective participation means that a large number of teachers in the same department, grade, or school all participate in the same professional development program. The researchers speculate that this is helpful because increased collaboration between professionals in a program or grade level has shown to lead to more effective professional development. The reform type of professional development is also a feature that leads to change in teacher literacy practice according to this study and includes formats of professional development such as small group interactions and authentic lessons. These features consistently provided evidence of a high association with change in teacher practice.

Specific Types and Delivery Methods of Professional Development

New delivery methods for professional development appear to be changing frequently. These methods may vary depending on the specific type of professional development. The following studies all examine a variety of delivery methods. One of these studies is by Chen and Chang (2012). The researchers utilize a new type of approach to professional development that was created by the researchers themselves. This approach is called the “Whole Teacher Approach to Early Childhood Professional Development” (p. 2). This approach has more distinctive characteristics than that of traditional professional development approaches because the Whole Teacher approach contains characteristics that are “multidimensional, domain specific, integrated, and developmental” (p. 9). The multidimensional characteristic is

implemented in professional development through targeting teacher attitudes and skills, and offering multiple ways to teach information. The domain specific characteristic is implemented by basing the objectives for the professional development on specific domains for teachers. Other characteristics that are implemented ensure that the activities in professional development facilitate “authentic, collaborative skills and support teacher growth for all teacher skill levels” (p. 9). The participants total 175 teachers, and 134 completed a “two-day session of introductory computer training” while the other 41 completed a “year-long professional development program in technology based on the Whole Teacher approach” (p. 14). The researchers used a self-evaluation questionnaire to determine teacher competence with technology in relation to specific indicators used in the Whole Teacher approach. Overall, based on the pattern of correlations for participants of the Whole Teacher professional development, there appears to be a greater degree of integration of strategies for participants than the non-participants. In addition to this, the teacher knowledge of those participants appears to be more comprehensive than of those that did not participate in the program. The researchers conclude that this is due to the unique characteristics of the Whole Teacher approach and the focus on attitudes and other complex variables involved in professional development.

Another delivery method is through groups of communities, as explored by Butler, Novak Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, and Beckingham (2004). They examine a framework for professional development called “Communities of Practice” (COP) (p. 437). The research questions are “(a) did teachers actively reflect on their teaching; (b) did teachers gain new conceptual understandings; (c) did teachers shift what they were doing in practice?” (p. 443). To collect data, Butler et al. divided the full study into two parts and used interviews, observations, and document collection. The participants in the first year of their study consisted of ten female teachers from the Vancouver area. The main focus of the professional development sessions was an approach called “strategic content learning” (p. 440). This approach works with teachers to engage students in interactive discussions and reflectively guided learning. The methods for professional development in this study were a combination of workshops, classroom visits, and within-school and cross-school meetings. One finding is that the support that occurred on a “regular basis” (p. 447) led to an increase in motivation for the participants. One other finding is that the continued support from the researchers meant that the “teachers and students were

learning in parallel” (p. 445). When teachers stated that they were learning in parallel, there was a high rate of change in teaching practice.

Similar to Communities of Practice, other studies have been conducted that explore collaborative types of professional development. Burbank and Kauchak (2003) conducted research to determine the effectiveness of a method of professional development delivery known as “collaborative action research” (p. 499). This delivery method of professional development encourages “reflective inquiry within school communities” (p. 500) and is an alternative to traditional professional development approaches. Ten preservice and ten inservice teachers participated in the study; the inservice teachers picked the topic for professional development that was most applicable to the classroom, while the preservice teachers helped create the plans to enact what was learned. Once the topic and strategies/processes were identified by the teams of teachers, all teachers conducted research to determine the best course for enacting the plans. Burbank and Kauchak (2003) collected quantitative data and qualitative data to determine the differences between the teacher groups. One of their findings is that both groups of teachers had positive responses of the collaborative action research project; however, only the more veteran teachers experienced a change in teaching practice. The less experienced teachers found it difficult to conduct effective research on a topic and engage in collaborative discussion all while trying to meet student and classroom demands. The researchers state that timing of the study “was a problem” (p. 512) because inexperienced teachers felt less able to utilize their research. Burbank and Kauchak also find that “conflict and differences of opinion [between teacher groups] are critical to the process of change in practice” (p. 512). The researchers could not find a group of teachers with a “healthy balance” (p. 512) of teachers with moderately differing opinions. If this balance were to be achieved, the researchers think this model for alternative professional development would produce more significant results, *i.e.* change in teacher practice.

The previous studies in this section examine the high quality characteristics of only one program or delivery method, and whether that program leads to a change in teacher practice. The next two studies examine professional development with a follow up component. Sailors and Price (2010) conducted a study to compare the effects of two professional development delivery methods: traditional workshop style professional development with follow up coaching support, instead of only traditional style professional development. The question from their study related to this literature review is “Does an intensive model of coaching lead to an increased use of

intentional comprehension instruction on the part of teachers?” (p. 304). The participants in the study were 44 teachers in grades 2 to 8. All teachers attended the two day workshop during the summer. In addition to this, a “full intervention” (p. 305) group received ongoing support in the Fall from literacy coaches in the classroom. The coaches “provided demonstration lessons in classrooms, co-taught with teachers, provided reflective feedback based on lessons they observed, and facilitated conversations” (p. 308). Sailors and Price collected data on professional development strategy implementation using the Comprehension Instruction Observation Protocol System (CIOPS) (p. 309) which includes observational note-taking and a qualitative coding process. The researchers find that both groups implemented the content of the workshop to different degrees. The full intervention group used the content of the workshop much more frequently and to a greater extent. The researchers suggest that “classroom-based coaching might support teachers in the implementation of cognitive reading strategies across an academic school year” (p. 316). The researchers conclude that the practice of coaching does not solely contribute to the change in teacher practice that was observed in this study.

A study by Kretlow, Cooke, and Wood (2012) also examines the effects of professional development with follow up coaching on three first grade teachers’ classroom practice. The researchers chose three research-based strategies that would be the content of the professional development. These strategies were “model-lead-test... systematic error correction... and unison responding” (p. 348). These strategies involve themes of unison responding and scaffolding, therefore the researchers used a combination of two data collection techniques with the scaffolding and unison response theme to create a measure of data collection called the “group instructional unit” (p. 350). The participants underwent one professional development session, a pre-conference, followed by a coaching and feedback session. Baseline measures of the teachers’ implementation rates of the strategies before coaching were recorded. The researchers find that “coaching effectively promoted increased accuracy with three research-based strategies” (p. 356). Kretlow, Cooke, and Wood also find that the time required to observe a change in teacher practice was shorter than anticipated. The researchers think this may be due to the fact that each lesson from the participants was recorded and provided additional motivation. The researchers also find that the short, one day professional development session may have encouraged a change in teacher practice because it was conducted with a small group, and this group was

“given multiple opportunities to practice new techniques, receive individualized feedback, and ask specific questions” (p. 357).

Coaching is a type of professional development that is more targeted and specific to certain teachers’ needs. The content may be similar to traditional coaching methods, but the delivery is different. Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuisc, and Bergen (2008), conducted a study that focuses on the effects of peer coaching between groups of teachers. There are three different research questions and all of them are in the context of “peer coaching trajectory” (p. 982): “what learning activities do teachers report during participation in a reciprocal peer coaching trajectory? What types of rationale and affective learning outcomes do teachers report during participation in a reciprocal peer coaching trajectory? What patterns of learning activities are reported in relation to the reported learning outcomes?” (pp. 984-985). The teachers discussed different aspects of learning activities and how each of them would think, act, and feel during different lessons. This type of coaching focuses more on turning theory into practice with the intent of producing a resulting change in teacher practice. The researchers said that the goal of the coaching is to “support each other’s professional growth with respect to some issues already present in their day-to-day teaching practice” (p. 983). One finding is that the coached teachers and coaches were impacted by observing other teachers and students using instructional strategies. Observation of others trying to apply a strategy appeared to produce more change for teachers’ own application than “actual training” (p. 996) in a strategy. Another major finding of their study is that during some of the coaching discussion sessions, teachers reported that reflections based on the current conversation “occurred infrequently” (p. 996). The researchers state that a reason this may have occurred is because having periods of time where two people are thinking instead of talking may produce many periods of silence. The researchers suggest coaching models in groups of three so that “at least one partner has time to listen and reflect on what is said” (p. 996).

Teacher perceptions of coaching and the impact of the more favorable coaching experiences on teacher practices is the focus in a study by Vanderburg and Stephens (2009). They conducted a study that examined classroom teacher perceptions of the most effective coaching experiences they have had. The researchers analyzed interviews with 35 teachers that participated in coaching in response to the South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI). The major findings are common trends that the researchers have synthesized from reviewing all 35 of the

interviews. According to the analysis of the 35 interviews, the three most effective actions of the literacy coaches are that the coaches “created ways for them [the teachers] to collaborate, provided them with on-going support, and taught them about research-based teaching practices” (p. 3). This collaboration and on-going support was reported to have contributed to a rate of change in teacher literacy practice. The literacy coaches that worked with the teachers also encouraged them to try new strategies. Some of the teachers indicated that they would try research-based strategies that were recommended by the coaches. Even though the teachers read the research articles, “actually coming out and trying the strategies and actually doing the strategies with the students” (p. 2) is what the literacy coaches helped to facilitate. The teachers also stated that they use authentic assessment more and are more easily able to modify instruction based on the students’ assessment data as a result. The coaches’ introduction of authentic assessments for the teachers and how those assessment results may be used is considered a significant area of support for the classroom teachers. The researchers conclude their study by determining that coaches or people who work with coaches could benefit from making “explicit what goals we expect coaches to have for the teachers with whom they work and then closely tie[ing] our professional development/research to those goals” (p. 4).

Topics for professional development vary greatly and can range from teaching topics to specific instruction on technology or materials. Duran, Brunvand, Ellsworth, and Şendağ (2012) conducted a study that examined the effectiveness of professional development to teach school staff about using wikis in the classroom. The participants for this study were 207 teachers and administrators from the same district. The researchers explain that wikis are “editable, collaborative websites that can have multiple authors” (p. 314). This program follows the Components of Effective Professional Development for Technology Use as its conceptual framework. The components of this framework include a connection to student learning, hands-on technology use, a variety of learning experiences, curriculum-specific applications, and active participation of teachers. The participants received an initial two hour sessions that addressed creating and using a wiki as well as a wide range of how wikis can be used in K-12 classrooms. Participants then created their own wikis for their classrooms. At a second professional development session, they explained what kind of wiki they created and how they used it in their classroom. The researchers used a pretest and posttest wiki survey to gauge teacher knowledge and use of wikis. The data shows that teachers felt more comfortable using wikis after the

professional development, but “there is still room for further development” (p. 327) in this area. The data also shows that 57% of teachers continued to use their wikis after the professional development ended. Findings also indicate that one-third of the teachers did not continue to use their wikis. Some teachers explained that the reason for this is because they felt two sessions was not enough time for them to feel confident enough to continue to use their wikis.

Another form of professional development involves not just a teacher community of practice, but includes teachers and students collaborating together. Xu (2002) examines a form of professional development that involves using teaching portfolios to encourage professional learning. For the purposes of Xu’s study, a teaching portfolio is defined as a “structured collection of evidence of a teacher’s work, across diverse contexts and framed by deliberation and reflective writing” (p. 22). Using portfolios as the main “vehicle” (p. 22) for professional development, this study has two research questions: “what was the impact of the portfolio project on professional learning? [And] what were the conditions that supported professional learning through teaching portfolios in the context of a school setting?” (p. 22). Teachers kept professional portfolios containing their philosophy, reflections on their learning, and students’ work. The teachers were interviewed twice as were a principal and a staff developer. Each teacher interview consisted of open-ended questions to determine the quality of their views and experiences. One major finding from this study is that the use of portfolios as professional development “deepened teachers’ understanding about how to teach in content areas” (p. 24). Another finding is that the portfolio gave teachers “momentum” (p. 25) to pursue new strategies and change their practice. Teachers shared their portfolios with one another, which allowed for collaboration and professional learning to occur between groups of teachers. The researchers explain that this study “enriches our understanding about the importance of providing a vehicle to promote professional learning in the school setting” (p. 27).

Professional Development Delivery Through Technology

Professional development is becoming increasingly inclusive of technology. This section contains studies that have been conducted using technology or the internet which allows for professional development and coaching to occur without being face to face. The following studies concern a certain type of technological delivery, and the researchers aim to determine if

these technology-based methods can retain high quality characteristics similar to face to face professional development. Online discussion boards is the chosen method of delivery in a study by Chen, Chen, and Tsai (2009). There is a particular focus on a strategy known as “online synchronous discussion” (p. 1157) to determine if this type of delivery can provide a change in teacher practice. This strategy involves teachers being connected to the internet and engaging in focused discussion about an educational topic in order to foster decision making, idea exchange, and community building. The researchers analyzed transcripts of discussions that took place among teachers at 61 public schools that were enrolled in an online professional development course; researchers also conducted ten follow up interviews about the teachers’ perceptions of the discussions. The transcripts from the discussions were coded and analyzed. One major finding is that 52.1% of the messages “were not related to the discussion topics” (p. 1163). A moderator was always present during the discussions to provide a focus for the discourse; however, many of the discussions were “conversational” or “off-topic” (p. 1163). The researchers also find that there was a very low number of cognitive and metacognitive messages. Teachers had a difficult time engaging in conversation about theory into practice and critical analysis of techniques. Most of the messages were about sharing strategies for classrooms. The researchers conclude that “the nature of online learning calls on learners to be self-monitored and to be responsible for their learning” (p. 1164). Chen, Chen, and Tsai find that online synchronous discussion as a main source of professional development is a “challenge” (p. 1164).

Another study about online professional development is by Prestridge (2010) and has a focus on a type of learning community built through an online “technology forum communication tool in a Blackboard environment” (p. 253). This environment is through an online technology course management system known as Blackboard, and the focus is on collegial dialogue using this tool. The participants were 16 teachers that participated in asynchronous forum discussions with the goal that these discussions would “enable teachers to talk critically about their pedagogy, which could lead to change in their teaching practice towards embedding ICT” (p. 253). The discussion leader would open the discussions with a main question and an activity provided by the researcher. Prestridge finds that critical discussion about pedagogy and teaching aspects only occurred for a “small number of postings” (p. 257). Prestridge also finds that there is a high probability of teachers disengaging from the discussion because of the nature of online communication. In addition to this, misunderstandings easily

occurred and silenced participation. Prestridge finds evidence that a “more traditional face to face environment serves specific purposes that can enhance discussion online” (p. 257).

The third study pertaining to online professional development is by Masters, Magidin De Kramer, O’Dwyer, Dash, and Russell (2012). Their study has a focus of online professional development for English Language Arts teachers and whether professional development delivered through online technology can provide a change in teacher practice. The participants were of all different experience levels, and took part in online workshops that were sustained over seven weeks and required about 4-6 hours to contribute fully. The teachers participated in three different online sessions throughout these seven weeks; topics included vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. In each session, research-based practices were used and taught to the teachers to help encourage a change in practice. The researchers used multilevel regression models to analyze quantitative data to determine if there was a noticeable change in teacher practice because of the online professional development. The researchers find that writing practices of teachers had the highest correlation with change in teacher practice, while reading comprehension and vocabulary practice yielded “no significant results” (p. 39). The researchers state that their online model “comprised some of the essential characteristics of effective, high quality professional development at a lower cost in terms of time and money” (p. 42). Despite this, the researchers cannot explain why some of the workshops produced a higher rate of change in teacher practice than others, especially considering the wide range of teacher abilities.

Another study about online professional development was conducted in the context of rural teachers and non-rural teachers. Gaumer Erickson, Noonan, and McCall (2012) conducted their study with rural teachers to determine if professional development delivered through the internet would be more beneficial because of the typical challenges facing educators in rural areas versus more populated areas. Their study aims to answer the questions of how rural educators’ teaching practice changed compared to improvements of non-rural educators. The 86 special education teachers underwent a program known as the “Transition Seminar Series” (p. 23) which consisted of five, four-week online seminars. These seminars totaled around 100 hours and included opportunities for collaboration, usage of media, and for reflection and evaluation. The researchers collected qualitative data from observations and surveys and coded parts of these data to provide quantitative data. Gaumer Erickson, Noonan, and McCall find that the rural participants were able to increase their comfort level with the professional development content

to a “statistically equivalent level of competency compared to those from non-rural communities” (p. 27). This increase in comfort level led to a change in teacher practice, and the researchers state that the “online professional development provided both the mechanisms and collaborative community for identifying needs and effective practices for implementing such practices at the school level” (p. 30).

A study by Smithenry, Prouty, and Capobianco (2013) is about professional development delivered through a form of technology known as “video case-based books” (VCBB) (p. 735). This process involves a teacher watching a video of an educator implementing a certain strategy and reading an accompanying commentary from the featured educator. The researchers used this delivery method to determine if a fourth grade teacher would be able to change her teaching practice based on receiving professional development through a VCBB. The researchers collected data to measure this finding by requiring that the teacher create several journal entries about her thoughts of her implementation, the response of the students, and her comparison of her implementation to an expert teacher’s implementation. The researchers also used video recordings of the teacher as she taught using the new strategy. Smithenry, Prouty, and Capobianco find that the teacher was able to effectively implement the required three types of lesson instruction as well as assessments over the course of the year. According to the guidelines of the VCBB, she was able to accomplish what was asked of her in the professional development. However, one difficulty that the teacher encountered was that she felt difficulty creating lessons similar to the one in the video because every VCBB is not made specifically for a certain teacher and some strategies or contexts are not relevant to some teachers or grade levels. The teacher found the commentary from the featured educator that was included with the VCBB to be a helpful addition because it allowed the participating teacher to compare her practices with someone else’s. The researchers claim that despite difficulties, the participating teacher was able to “make significant changes (across several timescales) to her teaching practice” (p. 748).

Coaching can also take place through different delivery methods. The mainstream form of coaching involves the teacher or teachers and the coach being face to face. Rock, Gregg, Thead, Acker, Gable, and Zigmound (2009) conducted a study to determine if coaching using online wireless technology would help bring about a change in teacher practice without the teacher and coach being in close proximity with each other. Their study occurred with 15

teachers that agreed to participate and receive live coaching support through “bug-in-ear” (BIE) (p. 65) technology. The researchers collected data from written reflections from the participants to produce qualitative data and from video recordings of the teachers and coaches that were coded to produce quantitative data. The teacher and coach participants all completed a course about how to use the BIE technology; this course lasted four to six weeks depending on the participants’ comfort level with technology. After this course, the teachers would sign up for four observation sessions with the coaches. Rock et al. find that the BIE technology in an online format had a positive impact on teacher practice. They state that “the positive impact on teacher behavior was seen in statistically significant increases in participants’ use of high-access instructional practices” (p. 75), which means that the BIE led to a successful change in teacher practice. Receiving immediate feedback during the teaching sessions led to a high correlation of newly integrated practices. Another finding is that the effective results are comparable to other studies about face to face coaching, but use of the BIE is a more “cost-effective approach to direct teacher observation” (p. 75).

Studies Specifically Related to Literacy Coaching as Professional Development

One of the most specialized forms of coaching is literacy coaching. This involves a trained individual that specializes in the literacy field and works to provide professional development to school faculty. The first two studies in this section were conducted with the aim of identifying a relationship between literacy coaching and change in teacher practice.

In a study by Piper and L’Allier (2011), they examine the process and strategies of literacy coaches and the effects that these had on teachers and students in contact affected by them. The data were collected through a survey called the “Structured Literacy Coaching Log” (p. 88). Based on the findings, Piper and L’Allier determine that literacy coaches spent about one-third of their time working directly with teachers. This time spent working “directly” (p. 94) with teachers is shown to increase teacher comfort with subjects. There were four specific literacy coaching activities that had strong correlations with increases in changes in teacher practice. These are “conferencing, administering assessments, modeling lessons, and observing teachers” (p. 100). The emphasis of these four activities is the focus on individual teachers’ skills, curriculum, or assessment. In particular, conferencing and administering and discussing

assessments had the highest correlation with change in teacher practice. The researchers state that this is because these activities “met the specific needs and goals of that particular teacher” (p. 100). The activities with the added element of extended periods of time to accomplish all of the requirements lead to “significant” (p. 100) change in teacher practice.

A study with a similar focus is by Stephens, Gallant, Hao, Leigh, Keith, Brink, Johnson, Seaman, Young, Morgan, DeFord, Donnelly, and Hamel (2011), who examined the relationship between change in teacher practice from professional development administered by literacy coaches. The literacy coaches are the key variable because “literacy coaches, not university faculty, conduct all site-based work” (p. 217). The researchers want to “better understand the impact of literacy coaches on teachers’ knowledge base and practices” (p. 217). The coaches’ main roles were facilitating study groups with eight to ten classroom teachers and a principal, and providing in classroom coaching support. The South Carolina Reading Profile (SCRP) is a “large-scale survey instrument” (p. 222) that measures the classroom teachers’ perceived consistency in instruction with the South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI). There were 1,005 teachers that participated in the SCRCP that took it four times total from Fall 2001 to Spring 2003. According to the SCRCP, the practices of the classroom teachers began as a 2.61 (moderately consistent) and after the three years, the score rose to 3.83 (highly consistent). An overall finding from the study is that the professional development sessions from the literacy coaches led to classroom teachers’ literacy practices becoming more consistent with state standards. According to the researchers, one reason for this is the extensive training the coaches received before implementing their program. Coaches received specific training from the South Carolina Department of Education and the amount of time that the coaches received this training could be doubled to accommodate the needs of the coaches.

Literacy coaching and its components can have different effects on teachers depending on what types of components are included. Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, and DiPrima Bickel (2010) conducted a study that examined the effects of literacy coaching on participating teachers. The first research question focuses on how teachers’ experiences of literacy coaching are affected by a school’s participation in content-focused coaching (CFC). More specifically, this question focuses on “participation in coaching, perception of the usefulness of coaching, and the content emphasized in the coaching activities” (p. 39). The second question is about how the participants’ reading comprehension instruction will change based on the CFC program. The

participants were randomly selected from “Thirty two elementary schools serving the lowest-achieving students in the district [who] were randomly assigned treatment and comparison conditions” (p. 41). Their study took place over a three year period. There were two cohort groups: cohort 1 is the group that started at the school from the beginning of the study, while cohort 2 is the group of teachers that were hired to replace teachers that moved or quit from cohort 1. The researchers administered Likert style surveys to all of the participants to determine their participation in coaching, the content of the coaching activities, and the types of reading comprehension instruction. Teachers in CFC programs found the coaching to be very helpful and “useful for improving their instructional practice” (p. 53). The components of coaching that the teachers and coaches found most useful were “planning and reflecting on instruction, providing help during lesson enactment, understanding the theory underlying effective reading comprehension instruction, and differentiating instruction” (p. 53).

Similar to research on professional development, some research on literacy coaching is aimed at specific literacy coaching components. A study by McCollum, Hemmeter, and Hsieh (2011) examines the influence of coaching specific literacy skills with classroom teachers and the amount of change in teacher practice resulting from this. The research question is whether literacy coaching will “result in changes in teachers’ use of targeted literacy teaching skills” (p. 30). Coaching occurred twice a week for a total of 15 times for each teacher in the coaching group. The focus of these sessions was on direct literacy skills for clusters A, B, and C that were broken up into broad categories such as vocabulary, phonological awareness, and print concepts. Coaches used a checklist to record the observed behaviors of the teachers after they had received coaching, and the coaches evaluated the teachers using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO). According to the data, all of the teachers in both groups used more explicit literacy skills that focused on cluster A, the cluster of vocabulary, information comprehension, and narrative structure. While both groups increased their usage of literacy skills for this cluster, the coaching group had a more effective use of literacy strategies for clusters B and C and “achieved the 80% criterion for most clusters” (p. 34). The researchers say this may be because coaches would “clearly align measures of the instructional process with the definition of the process being used” (p. 34). Two more strategies that were used frequently with the classroom teachers are representing data in a visual way as well as giving feedback that incorporates specific examples for the teachers.

Literacy skills for pre-K and kindergarten teachers are in the category of emergent literacy, which is the area of focus in a study by Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, and Ostrosky (2009). They examine the effects of coaching on preschool teachers. The research question is, “to what extent does regular, in-class coaching impact teachers’ use of targeted emergent literacy teaching strategies?” (p. 231). The participants were five full-time early childhood teachers. The three main clusters that were coached are “oral language, alphabetic code, print knowledge” (p. 232). Observation checklists were used to measure a teacher’s use of skills. The coaching intervention followed a sequence for each cluster. The first part of the intervention introduced the topic and strategies that support it, followed by applications and implementations for this strategy. After that, the teacher practiced the strategies and knowledge of the cluster by teaching a lesson to the students with the coach observing. After the lesson was taught, the teacher and the coach would meet and have a discussion about how the lesson went and what may be improved. The results show that the use of research-based literacy instruction strategies by all five of the teachers increased by at least 35%. All three clusters ranged in the increase percentage for each teacher, but the data show that clusters them did increase and this increase was maintained even after the coaching sessions were over. The coaching sessions focused on teacher interactions with students and the strategies that could be used with this. This focus mixed with the repeated observations and strategy implementation techniques combined to give an increase in strategy use with the teachers.

The next two studies in this section focus on the actions of the literacy coaches and how this specifically may lead to a change in teacher practice. Lynch and Ferguson (2010) conducted research about roles and perspectives of 13 literacy coaches and how they overcome barriers to provide effective, practice changing instruction. Another part of the research question is to identify aspects of literacy coaching that inhibit effective professional development for teachers. Data were collected through a “35 to 45 minute semi-structured interview” (p. 207) with each of the coaches. The first set of findings are the three broad categories for what literacy coaches spend most of their time doing. These categories are: “(a) designing lessons or modeling lessons or strategies, (b) observing teachers present lessons or having teachers watch them model lessons, and (c) debriefing or designing lessons after teachers watched them present strategies for application” (p. 209). The findings for barriers to effective coaching professional development are: “(a) limited principal involvement, (b) resistant teachers, (c) too many schools to service, (d)

role uncertainty, and (e) limited resource material” (p. 209). In terms of how literacy coaches overcome barriers to provide effective coaching, the first finding is that working on personal communication with classroom teachers can affect how the teachers view the relationship with the coach. In addition to this, fostering a positive relationship with the classroom teachers has also shown to reduce resistance from teachers for adopting new practices. Lynch and Ferguson also find that coaches providing feedback to classroom teachers “breaks down collegial attitudes and forces coaches into evaluative roles” (pp. 216-217).

Continuing the focus on literacy coaches’ actions, a study conducted by Scott, Cortina, and Carlisle (2012) studied literacy coaches and how their time is spent in relation to the success they achieve with classroom teachers. The research questions of focus are: “What was the structure and substance of coach/teacher interactions as reported on coach logs? How did teachers view the support provided by their coach? What conditions facilitated successful coach–teacher interactions?” (p. 70). The participants were 105 literacy coaches from the Michigan area. The method of data collection was a coach questionnaire, a coach log, and a “Teachers’ Quest” (p. 72). The Teachers’ Quest was a survey that classroom teachers were asked to complete. The results show that literacy coaches have a varied role in their schools. According to the data, the coaches spend 22% of their time planning, 16% of their time coaching and observing other teachers directly, and 15% of their time administering and grading assessments. In meetings with classroom teachers, the literacy coaches spent 40% of their time discussing, administering, and grading assessments, which is the most discussed topic. The classroom teachers were generally appreciative of the support from the coaches. One coach states that “teachers value feedback I provide about their literature teaching” (p. 80). The classroom teachers stated that they appreciated receiving feedback on use of instructional strategies and were shown how to use the strategies more effectively with proper feedback. The teachers also stated that they “preferred to interact with the literacy coach in a group, rather than one-on-one settings” (p. 80). The data show that when small group interaction occurred, teachers were more comfortable using and being open to new practices.

The researchers of the next three studies examine high quality practices of literacy coaches to examine why they have been able to effectively change teacher practice. Sloan-McCombs and Martorell (2012) directed their research toward the quality of literacy coaches and how literacy coaches can ensure that good, high quality coaching occurs. For the purposes of this

literature review, the research question of their study is “To what extent are indicators of coach quality related to teacher and student outcomes?” (p. 2). Specifically, the researchers aim to identify “specific attributes” (p. 2) of high-quality coaches. The participants were 113 principals, 124 literacy coaches, 554 ELA teachers, and 563 social studies teachers. The researchers collected data through surveys to all of the participants and by visiting each case study school three times over the 2006-2007 school year and conducting 64 interviews. According to the interviews and surveys, the teachers and principals “rated their coaches highly on many indicators of quality” (p. 22). Good rapport between the coach and the teachers was beneficial because “teachers who reported higher ratings of their coaches’ knowledge and skills reported more positive perceptions of coaches’ influence” (p. 20). One major finding is that “understanding how to support adult learners” (p. 23) is an attribute that appears to be a “key area for needed expertise” (p. 23). While many of the coaches were knowledgeable about reading practices and theories, support of adult learners was a less common trait among coaches.

Gibson (2006) also conducted research in the area of high quality literacy coaches. She specifically explored the roles and behaviors of an “expert reading coach” (p. 295) and the coach’s interactions with a kindergarten teacher that led to a change in the classroom teacher’s literacy practice. The research questions are: “What was the nature of the coaching session conversations conducted between an expert reading coach and a kindergarten teacher, following observation of guided reading lessons? What was the relationship between coaching session interaction and a teacher’s guided reading instruction?” (p. 299). The method of data collection was observations and interviews of the literacy coach and the kindergarten teacher. One major finding is that the literacy coach encouraged the teacher to “analyze students’ responses to lessons in accurate and useful ways” (p. 306). This practice is associated with teachers paying more attention to students’ needs and utilizing assessment more frequently in lessons. Building on this strategy, the literacy coach encouraged the teacher to monitor his students very closely and wanted him to “describe the strategic behavior he observed his students using during their reading of the new book” (p. 308). This process was shown to work well with this particular classroom teacher. The overall process that the literacy coach follows to help the classroom teacher is as follows: “coach request for description of student behavior, course of action proposed, and expanded and clarified by the coach” (p. 309). In Gibson’s study, this process engages the teacher and allows him to more specifically analyze the students.

Instead of just examining one case of effective literacy coaches, Steckel (2009) examines multiple “successful” (p. 14) literacy coaches that help teachers improve reading and writing instruction and promote a culture of adult learning in schools. The participants were four coaches in urban schools in Massachusetts and New York. The research question is “What did successful coaches do to help teachers improve reading and writing instruction and to promote a culture of adult learning within schools?” (p. 14). The method for data collection in their study was coded interviews and some “additional artifacts” (p. 16). The findings from indicate that teachers’ literacy practices were impacted because of the literacy coaches. Teachers reported that the literacy coaches made them “feel comfortable” (p. 19) with instruction and assessments as well as management strategies in relation to literacy. According to the coaches, one technique that they used to increase teacher interest and motivation was to show the classroom teachers “evidence of improvement in their students’ writing or reading comprehension” (p. 19). By showing the classroom teachers evidence of an effective technique, the strategies that were taught were much more likely to be utilized by teachers. In another quote by the literacy coach, “Intrinsic motivation is the key element for making meaningful change take hold” (p. 19). Another major finding is that the literacy coaches encouraged “reflective thinking and rigorous discourse” (p. 20) between the classroom teachers. Having the teachers collaborate and discuss the professional development from the literacy coaches seems to be an effective strategy for literacy coaches.

There is a trend in research that analyzes the roles of literacy coaches and how these roles affect classroom teachers’ practices and the classroom teachers’ views of the literacy coach. Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, and Zigmond (2010) researched this topic using 20 Reading First literacy coaches in Pennsylvania. For data collection in their study, the researchers used a “retrospective time diary study design” (p. 92). This occurred five times over a 2–3-week period through video-taped interviews with all of the coaches. One finding is that 16 out of the 20 literacy coaches held grade-level meetings regularly with the classroom teachers. This practice was effective for teachers and literacy coaches because it helped inform the coach of the situation happening in the grades. Therefore, grade-level meetings indirectly help coaches to change the literacy practice of classroom teachers. Another main finding from the article is that literacy coaches spend a great deal of time conferring in one-on-one meetings with classroom teachers. In these one-on-one meetings, the most important components that were discussed are

how to differentiate instruction and how to use assessment results to drive instruction. Both of these are strategies for implementation in the classroom. Findings show that implementation strategies are most helpful to classroom teachers when delivered face to face by a literacy coach.

Coburn and Woulfin (2012) examine an area of research that is not very common. They conducted a study that examines the way that literacy coaches influence teachers so the teachers will change their literacy practices. This research question is examined in the context of the Reading First program being enacted in Massachusetts schools. The participants of their study were seven first and second grade teachers, two coaches, and two school administrators. The first mode of data collection was an interview and an observation for each of the seven classroom teachers. Because Reading First is a new program being enacted in the schools in their study, the researchers also examined the “mechanisms” (p. 10) that teachers received to help accustom them to Reading First. The researchers analyzed the messages and actions of the literacy coaches and determined what was most effective at changing the teachers’ literacy practices. The literacy coaches “provided classroom demonstrations and, less frequently, co-taught to model new instructional approaches. The coaches also provided one-on-one assistance with instructional planning, organizing the reading block” (p. 17). A major finding is that literacy coaches were able to change teachers’ literacy practices more effectively than receiving policy messages or professional development for large groups of people. The literacy coaches were able to help teachers accommodate 52% of Reading First emails and instructions as opposed to only 15% without help from a literacy coach. However, the researchers also state that the literacy coaches achieved their change in teacher practice because “they also pressured and persuaded teachers to make change” (p. 23). The researchers find that literacy coaches “push or coax” (p. 19) teachers to accommodate new changes in practice that the coaches think are most beneficial to the classroom and the children. The coaches used three “political ways” (p. 19) to encourage teachers to change their practice. These are called “pressuring, persuading, and buffering” (p. 19).

While literacy coaching is a more targeted form of professional development, Carlisle and Berebitsky (2011) conducted research to see if other forms of professional development can achieve desired results just as effectively as coaching. Their research question is: what are “the effects of professional development with and without a literacy coach on teachers’ attitudes toward professional development, instructional practices, and the progress of their students in

reading?” (p. 775). Two years of the study occurred and there were differing numbers of teachers for each year. Therefore, the participants were a “maximum of 54 and a minimum of 43 teachers” (p. 781). Both groups of teachers attended nine seminars using a research based program about reading and reading instruction. The professional development with coaching (PD coach) group received additional support through the literacy coach’s assistance over time. This included leading the professional development seminars and classroom observations as well as one-on-one meetings. Surveys were conducted with the classroom teachers to determine their attitudes and beliefs as well as other components mentioned in the research question. One survey item whose responses showed the different feelings between the two groups is the “professional development led me to make changes in my teaching” (p. 786) statement. The PD coached teachers responded with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement. Conversely, 70% of the PD no coach teachers agreed or strongly agreed. No specific reason is stated for this difference, and other than this one item, there were not any other significant differences in responses about attitudes and beliefs of professional development. In terms of reading instruction, one difference between the two groups is that the PD coach group spent less time planning phonics lessons but these lessons had a more consistent progression than the PD no coach group. Survey components like “time devoted to phonics and reading instruction” and “types of lessons used” (p. 795) are more consistent for teachers that were coached.

There is one study that not only examines how literacy coaches interact with teachers, but examines this in the context of webcam coaching. In other words, the literacy coaches deliver their coaching sessions to the teachers through webcam, during the teachers’ one-on-one sessions with the students. This study by Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, and Amendum (2013) aims to determine if literacy coaches can encourage a change in teaching practice with professional development delivered through webcam sessions. The 75 teacher participants in underwent a three day summer workshop to learn a new diagnostic for incorporating reading instruction. During the school year, the teachers spent 15 minutes a day in one-on-one sessions with struggling readers until that student made progress, and then the teacher would select another student to work with. Twice a week, these sessions would be recorded with the teacher, student, and literacy coach all being able to see and interact with each other via webcam. The webcam coaching sessions were compared to the results of teachers that also conducted reading interventions for 15 minutes a day but had no coaching support. Vernon-Feagans et al. find that

the webcam coaching sessions “significantly help[ed] struggling readers progress more quickly” (p. 1184) than those in the control group. The main role of the literacy coaches was to provide live feedback for the teachers during these sessions. This feedback was “likely critical in helping the teacher implement the intervention more quickly” (p. 1184). The final major finding is that “this method of coaching classroom teachers appeared to be just as effective in helping struggling readers as employing one-on-one tutors” (p. 1185) but was administered by classroom teachers and not a specialist. This is significant because it shows that literacy coaches were able to support classroom teachers enough so that the teachers could implement an effective intervention as a result of the professional development webcam sessions.

Summary of the Review

This literature review examines the topic of effective professional development and how literacy coaches may use what research has shown about effective professional development to create their own effective literacy practices. The categories resulting from an initial review of the data are high quality professional development for educators, specific types and methods of delivery of professional development, delivery of professional development through technology, and literacy coaching as a form of professional development. A total of 41 studies were found that address this research question. These studies serve as the data for this research study and are analyzed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research question for this thesis is what aspects of professional development might a literacy coach focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers. In order to answer this question for this thesis, a research synthesis has been conducted. The categories of the literature review and the findings of the studies comprise the data for this research and will be synthesized and presented in this chapter. The findings from each category will then be synthesized together to create new knowledge for the literacy field. This new knowledge will be disseminated in a professional development presentation that will utilize many of the applicable, high quality components to present the findings.

Data Collection

Research studies for this thesis were found mainly from three leading education databases. These three databases are ERIC, Education Source, and ScienceDirect. The majority of the articles were obtained from ERIC and interlibrary loan services when needed. The technology articles were mostly obtained from ScienceDirect, and the recently published articles were mainly obtained from Education Source. Some key words for database searches include *professional development, elementary, professional learning, effective, high quality, change practice, collaboration, technology, literacy coaching, reading coaching, and effects*. The organization of articles in this thesis begins with broad, over-arching professional development studies. This continues into the area of specific delivery methods of professional development. As this section was being reviewed, a great deal of the studies were found to heavily incorporate technology into the study. Because of this, I created the other, more specific section about professional development delivery through technology. I concluded the review with the section that is most specific to the research question and contains articles about literacy coaching as a form of professional development. In all, a total of 41 studies have been found that relate to this research question.

Data Analysis

This research study has examined studies covering a variety of types of effective professional development, different delivery methods of professional development, and literacy coaching as a form of professional development. The results from this review find evidence that certain components of professional development are consistently present and lead to a change in teacher practice. Because effectiveness can be measured by impact and change in teacher practice (Whitehouse, Breit, McCloskey, Ketelhut, Dede, 2006), analysis of the data produces new knowledge for educators and administrators that could help them evaluate professional development.

The first section of the literature review collects data on effective professional development characteristics. The first finding produced by analysis is that effective professional development is that which matches the goals of the participants and their school districts (Rosemary, Roskos, & Landreth, 2007; Archibald, Cogshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007; Keller, Bonk, & Hew, 2005; Kanaya, Light, & Culp, 2005; Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, & Birman, 2000; Stein, Schwan-Smith, & Silver, 1999). Effectiveness also results from active participation either through engaging in discussions or practicing and applying what has been learned (Rosemary, Roskos, & Landreth, 2007; Mouza, 2009; Penuel et al., 2007; Timperley & Phillips, 2003; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002). Along with discussion, collaboration has also been found to have a high correlation with change in teacher practice (Penuel et al., 2007; Keller, Bonk, & Hew, 2005; Porter et al., 2000; Desimone et al., 2002). Another characteristic of effective professional development has been found to be that professional development which also models ways the professional knowledge can be used helps teachers feel more comfortable utilizing that knowledge in their own professional practices (Archibald et al., 2011; Doherty, 2011; Stein, Schwan-Smith, & Silver, 1999). Still another characteristic of effective professional development is that the professional development occurs over an extended period of time and includes follow-up support (Rosemary et al., 2007; Archibald et al., 2011, Penuel et al., 2007; Garet et al., 2001; Kanaya, Light, & Culp, 2005). One other finding from this section is that most of the studies in this section were conducted using qualitative methods, with the most common form of data collection being through participant interviews. This finding indicates that the

identified characteristics of “effective” professional development emerged from teacher perceptions.

The second section of the literature review contains studies on delivery methods of professional development. Two of the nine studies support the traditional in-person workshops delivery of professional development with the addition of follow-up coaching as an effective method for changing teacher practice (Sailors & Price, 2010; Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2012). The less traditional delivery method of collaboration between colleagues in the form of reflection and discussion consistently produces a positive change in teacher practice (Novak Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Chen & Chang, 2012). Other face to face interaction is peer coaching, which can include observation (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2009; Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuisc, & Bergen, 2008). Another delivery method is found to be skill development through “hands-on” use of technology during professional development (Duran, Brunvand, Ellsworth, & Şendağ, 2012; Xu, 2002). However, analysis indicates that a pairing of delivery methods, specifically adding coaching to another delivery method, produces more significant impact and learning for teachers than does the use of only one delivery method (Sailors & Price, 2010; Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2012; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2009; Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuisc, & Bergen, 2008).

Similarly to section two, the third section of the literature review contains studies on delivery methods of professional development, but exclusively using some form of technology to deliver. Some studies find that participants became more comfortable participating in online professional development than in person (Masters, Magidin De Kramer, O’Dwyer, Dash, & Russell, 2012; Gaumer Erickson, Noonan, & McCall, 2012). One method of online professional development delivery is through online discussion boards, which research finds can cause participants to get off task into non-relevant discussions or simply become unmotivated and disengaged from the discussions (Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuisc, & Bergen, 2008; Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Prestridge, 2010). Analysis of other studies into non-traditional, technology-based delivery methods (such as through video cassettes, DVDs, portfolios) finds that these alternate methods can be effective forms of professional development when they focus on content and its application to classroom use (Smithenry, Prouty, & Capobianco, 2013; Xu, 2002).

The fourth section of the literature review collects data on the professional development practices of literacy coaches that lead to a change in classroom teacher practice. Analysis

indicates that the practice of literacy coaches to demonstrate or explain specifically how to use a strategy with students results in increased use of the strategy by teachers (Piper & L'Allier, 2011; Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & DiPrima Bickel, 2010; McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011; Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, & Ostrosky, 2009; Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle, 2012; Steckel, 2009). In addition to this demonstrating, discussions about assessments and assessment results application of assessment results to classroom practice appear to increase teachers' comfort with using a strategy and its assessment (Piper & L'Allier, 2011; McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011; Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010). In addition to demonstrating, the literacy coach practice of providing feedback from observations and conferences appears to be helpful in changing teacher practice (Piper & L'Allier, 2011; Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & DiPrima Bickel, 2010; McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011; Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle, 2012; Gibson, 2006; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2013). However, one study did find that feedback was detrimental to teachers' use of strategies because it increased feelings of pressure in the teachers (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010). The fact that literacy coaches are highly trained appears to be a factor in teachers' willingness to accept feedback from coaches (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Stephens, Gallant, Hao, Leigh, Keith, Brink, Johnson, Seaman, Young, Morgan, DeFord, Donnelly, & Hamel, 2011). Another practice of literacy coaches that leads to a change in teacher classroom practice is the developing of a good rapport between coaches and teachers, in spite of some coaches to appear to misuse this rapport and turn it into a means of pressure to persuade and change teachers (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Sloan-McCombs & Martorell, 2012; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012).

Chapter 4: Results and Application

Results of the Review

This is a study that explores what aspects of professional development a literacy coach might focus on in order to provide a positive impact on the professional literacy practice of classroom teachers. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine an answer to this question. The findings from this study provide general information mainly for literacy coaches but also administrators and educators about what makes professional development effective at changing teacher practice. Analysis of the data produces a number of findings for this research synthesis. For the category of characteristics of effective professional development generally, findings show some of these characteristics to be relevant to participants to allow for active participation and collaboration to occur for an extended period of time with follow-up support. For the category of methods of delivery for professional development findings indicate that peer coaching and online professional development are effective for changing teacher practice, and other non-traditional, technology-based delivery methods (such as through video cassettes, DVDs, portfolios) can also be effective forms of professional development delivery when they focus on content and its application to classroom use. Specifically looking at effective literacy coaching practices, findings indicate that effective practices are demonstrating or explaining specifically how to use a strategy with students, engaging in discussions about assessments and assessment results and application of assessment results to classroom practice, providing feedback from observations and conferences, and developing a good rapport with teachers.

Application of Results to a Professional Development Project

The research question for this thesis is, what aspects of professional development might a literacy coach focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers? The results from the review are several findings on what research says are effective characteristics, delivery methods, and strategies for professional development, and these are applicable to literacy coaches and educators. The findings are relevant for educators and administrators because the resulting findings of this synthesis are new knowledge about

effectiveness of professional development. When deciding what professional development a district may utilize, it would be beneficial for educators and administrators to know the findings from this research; however, these results are probably most applicable to literacy coaches. Literacy coaching is quickly becoming a frequently implemented practice to provide schools and teachers with more and relevant professional development (Russo, 2004). Therefore, it is important for literacy coaches to be aware of what research says are effective literacy coaching practices. To that end, the results of this research study on professional development will be presented to literacy coaches for their own professional development.

Design of Professional Development Project

The form of professional development project that is best suited for dissemination of the results of this thesis is a traditional in-person style workshop session. However, despite this format of a traditional workshop, the design of the workshop will incorporate several of the findings from the study. It will take place for about three hours and will instruct and model characteristics of effective, high quality professional development. In other words, the workshop will use the content to instruct the content.

Literacy coaching workshop goals and objectives.

The goal of this professional development workshop is to instruct the participants about what research says are high quality characteristics of effective professional development and specifically how literacy coaches can benefit from this knowledge. The first objective is that participants will understand what research says are high quality characteristics of professional development. The second objective is that participants will understand what methods of delivery support this theme of effective, high quality professional development and which methods may be more convenient, comfortable, or applicable to different groups of teachers. The third objective is that participants will understand what research says are effective practices of literacy coaches and how they can include high-quality characteristics and multiple delivery methods to provide the most appropriate professional development to positively impact classroom teacher practice.

Proposed audience and location.

The proposed audience for this professional development workshop consists of educators that will be team leaders in their schools, administrators that will be deciding what professional development they want their faculty to receive, and literacy coaches that will be working in schools with other teachers and teams. In addition to this, anyone interested in professional development as it pertains to reading coaches is welcome to attend. The location will be in a large open area such as a cafeteria or gymnasium with tables arranged so that small groups will already be created.

Proposed workshop format and activities.

The workshop will begin with participants signing in with their name and email. The participants will then sit down at any table with an open seat. The administrator of the workshop will then introduce the intended learning outcomes for the participants and direct their attention to the agenda (see Appendix A). The first part of the workshop will include a group discussion about what the participants already know about what could be in effective professional development, followed by a summary of the findings on characteristics of high quality, effective professional development. Participants will be asked to talk amongst their small groups and agree on a reason why they think these characteristics are high quality and will lead to a change in teacher practice, which is the goal of professional development. Next, the participants will watch a video about a professional development workshop called F.A.T. city which does an excellent job of being relevant and including collaboration and participation.

The next portion of the workshop will follow a similar pattern to the first. This part of the workshop will focus on delivery types of professional development. Groups will be asked to brainstorm ideas about different types of professional development delivery methods. Groups will then reflect on what types of professional development experiences they have experienced. This type of reflection will contain frequent guided questions by the administrator so that participants may stay on topic. This will be followed with an explanation of the research findings from this study and connections made to participants' prior knowledge.

The participants will then be asked to synthesize all of the results that have been recorded from research into practices for literacy coaches. The participants will share what they have synthesized and the administrator of the workshop will share some other aspects of application of the results. The last component of the workshop will be a two question paper evaluation form that the participants will fill out before leaving.

Proposed resources for workshop.

The resources for this workshop include first the tables and chairs that will allow for the participants to sit in small groups. In other words, small tables will be spread out around the room with approximately 10 chairs around each one. The agenda for the workshop will be taped to each table to ensure understanding of the prepared activities. In addition to this, pieces of paper with pencils will be provided on each table for scrap writing during the collaboration as well as the evaluation at the end of the workshop. There will also be a smart board at the front of the room on which to display important visual aids (see Appendix B). The two visual aids that are most important are from Mouza (2006) and Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, and Stiles (1998). These aids provide a visual guide to designing professional development and professional learning activities. They are important because the visual guides are supported by research and provide a visual component of the workshop.

Proposed evaluation of workshop

The evaluation for this workshop will occur in two forms. The first method will be a very short two question survey that the participants will fill out before leaving the workshop. The two questions are, what aspects of this professional development were similar to other professional development sessions you have attended and what area would you like to have learned more about today? These two questions are important because the first question is reflective and there is research-based evidence that reflection and connections during professional development is effective at leading to change in teacher practice. The second question is evaluative about the workshop to ensure that future workshops are as effective as possible. The second form of

evaluation will occur in the form of a follow-up email. Research supports follow-up support and interaction, and this provides another form of input from participants.

Workshop Ties to Professional Standards

Participants for the professional development session will learn about effective, high quality characteristics of professional development. This session will adhere to the *Standards for Reading Professionals—Revised 2010* created by the International Reading Association (IRA). Because this workshop is intended for reading specialists, the elements met for the standards are those for reading specialists and not classroom teachers.

Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership

Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.

Element 6.1

Candidates demonstrate foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture.

The content of the professional development workshop mainly focuses on how professional development can be effective in general and specifically as it pertains to literacy coaches. This topic is firmly associated with Standard 6, which has a focus on professional learning opportunities. Participants in the professional development workshop will learn about the findings from the literature review through methods that are supported by research. These findings are rooted in adult learning theory, and this workshop employs those theories in its design.

Element 6.2

Candidates display positive dispositions related to their own reading and writing and the teaching of reading and writing, and pursue the development of individual professional knowledge and behaviors.

Element 6.3

Candidates participate in, design, facilitate, lead, and evaluate effective and differentiated professional development programs.

Positive dispositions are an important finding in terms of rapport between coaches and participants. In addition to this, the professional development workshop teaches participants how to lead professional development workshops. Participating in this and learning how to lead it is another method to meet Standard six. These findings revolve around social aspects of professional development, as well as organizational and theoretical aspects. It is for these reasons that every element of Standard 6 is met by participants in this workshop.

This professional development workshop also meets standards for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This workshop will help teachers and educators meet their annual required amount of professional development hours. While this workshop is for a targeted audience of literacy coaches, it still has implications for the CCSS on a daily basis. Literacy coaches' day to day interactions with teachers are supposed to help change the classroom teachers' practice in a way that further increases the students' learning. If literacy coaches are able to effectively make these changes with teachers, then learning the content from this workshop and applying the findings to change teacher practice will indirectly help the students meet the rigorous CCSS requirements.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Overview of Study and Findings

This thesis examines aspects of professional development that a literacy coach might focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine an answer. The selected studies sort into four categories: high quality professional development for educators, specific types and methods of delivery of professional development, delivery of professional development through technology, and literacy coaching as a form of professional development. Findings from the high quality category indicate high quality professional appears to be that which matches school district goals, is relevant to the participants, and consists of active participation and collaboration. From the types and delivery methods category, findings are that beneficial delivery methods are those that model for participants the strategies being taught and provide a large amount of time for follow-up support. Specifically for professional development in technology, a hands-on use delivery method appears to be effective, while peer coaching with observations appears to be an effective delivery method for professional development generally. Findings from the delivery of professional development through technology category indicate that online professional development through message boards appears to be a more comfortable way for some professionals to learn; however, other professionals prefer a more focused and moderated forum for their online professional development. Findings from the category of literacy coaching as a form of professional development reveal that literacy coaches seem to be most effective at changing teacher practice when they demonstrate and model how to use a strategy, when they discuss assessments and assessment results with the educators, when they provide feedback after observations, and generally when they have a good rapport the teachers.

Significance of Findings

The findings from this study are significant for the field of education but especially for the literacy field. These findings can be applied to literacy coaches' practices and can give them some insight into what research-based practices exist for administering professional

development. This research synthesis tries to apply research findings about all types of professional development to literacy coaching. It is effective for literacy coaches to know what types of practices have been successful for coaching in the past, but also combining this knowledge with research on other methods of professional development creates findings that are unique to this synthesis. For instance, based on the findings from this study, coaches may be able to effectively coach other teachers through online methods or through large group interactions especially with collaboration and reflections for participants. All of the findings from this study may come together to create a literacy coaching program that may be effective at changing classroom teacher practice according to research.

Limitations of the Findings

During the data collection and analysis, it became evident that literacy coaching is still a relatively new field for research. Because this field is currently developing and gaining popularity, finding a large and comprehensive research base from which to draw data was difficult. As time passes, more research will likely be conducted on the topic and a more comprehensive research base will emerge. Specifically, finding empirical experimental studies about literacy coaching strategies was very difficult. Therefore, many of the articles about literacy coaching focus on strategies that have been successful and not as much about certain strategies being the most successful.

Conclusion: Answer to the Research Question

This study aims to answer the question of what aspects of professional development might a literacy coach focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers. The findings from this study create one answer for this question about how literacy coaches can use research on professional development to make their coaching practices more effective. This synthesis finds that coaching can occur in a variety of settings and through a variety of delivery methods. What appears to be most important about these is that research suggests the professional development administered by literacy coaches would benefit from providing participants with many opportunities for interactive collaboration, individual and

group reflection, and time to practice what is being taught. In addition to this, the goals of the professional development that are relevant and applicable to the participants seem to make the content easier for the participants to use in their classrooms after the professional development has ended. Lastly, literacy coaches may be evaluative and observe classroom teachers while providing feedback, but maintaining a good rapport with the teachers. Therefore the aspects of professional development that a literacy coach might focus on in order to provide a positive impact on professional literacy practice of classroom teachers are using settings and delivery methods that harmonize with the school's goals, allowing for interaction and reflection for participating teachers, and providing follow up and support for teachers with whom the literacy coach has developed a good working rapport.

Recommendations for Future Research

One area of professional development that does not appear to have a strong research base is empirical research into actual practices of literacy coaches. There are a number of correlational studies that identify effective practices for literacy coaches and professional development generally, but not as many that compare one practice with another using a similar participant sample. This type of research would be helpful for the literacy field because comparing practices can help identify different levels of effectiveness of strategies and for various types of classroom teachers, so that using appropriate strategies for certain situations can be identified and used.

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Appendix A

AGENDA

for Professional Development Workshop

9 a.m. Sign in

9:10 Introduce topic of this workshop and intended goals.

9:15 Discuss high quality components of professional development and research findings.

9:45 Watch video about F. A. T. City seminars.

9:55 Brainstorm any methods that may be used for professional development.

10:05 –10:20 a.m. Break

10:20 Discuss delivery methods of effective professional development.

10:50 Synthesize some aspects and how applies.

11:00 Discuss research findings about literacy coaching practices that are effective.

11:30 Complete evaluations

Appendix B

VISUAL AIDS

for Professional Development Workshop

Figure 5. Cyclical Process of Teacher Change

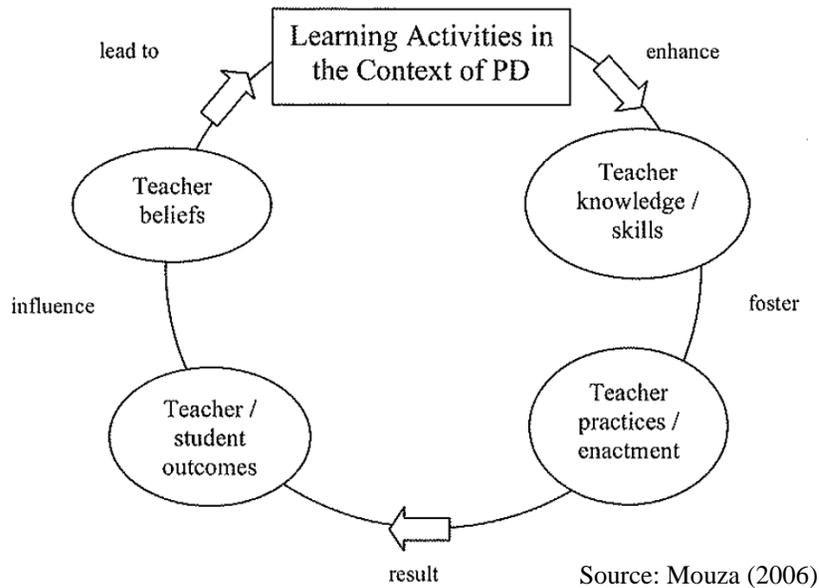
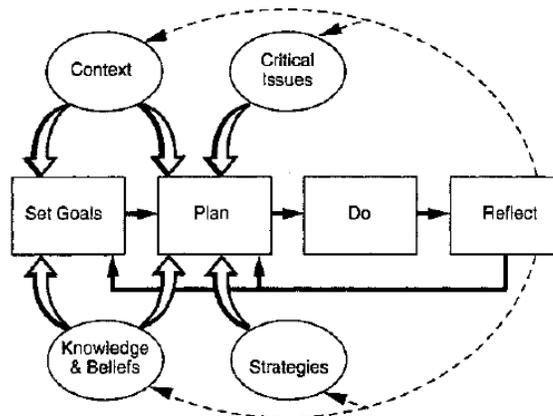


FIGURE 1 *The Professional Development Design Process for Mathematics and Science Education Reform*



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