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School-Based Coaching: An Interpretive Study Of One Model Of Professional Development

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SCHOOL-BASED COACHING: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF ONE MODEL OF

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MICHELE WELLS DE BELLIS

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DEDICATION

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will

carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus!

Philippians 1: 5-6

I share this accomplishment with my partner in life, with whom I share my love and service to our Lord - my husband Ben. His encouragement helped to sustain me throughout this journey. For us, this isn't an ending it is instead an opportunity to travel new roads together. Thank you.

SCHOOL-BASED COACHING: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF ONE MODEL OF

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

MICHELE WELLS DE BELLIS, B.S., M.Ed.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Educational Leadership and Foundations

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

May 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

A trend developing over the last decade in professional development has been to provide teachers with support and guidance through engaging and interactive experiences (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2004). The assumption is that teachers who are provided with hands-on professional development experiences will make connections and add meaning to new content or pedagogy being taught and increase the likelihood of transfer of those practices to the classroom. Another current approach to professional development, known as school-based, delivers support to teachers in the eye of the storm, at the school site and in the classroom (Barkley, 2005). Proponents of school-based professional development claim that the model seeks to address issues of practice with teachers in the context of classroom instruction (Coburn, 2003). Thus, teacher practice is closely examined by the practitioner, staff developer, or researcher in the context, where it occurs. Accordingly, advocates of school-based professional development believe that careful examination of teaching affords teachers the opportunity to assess their knowledge base and socially construct meaning in authentic and safe environments (Wilson and Berne, 1999). This is significant because it presumes that trust in the environment and in collegial relationships has been established; according to Costa and Garmston (2002), learning requires trust. Yet, while school-based professional development models have received much attention from practitioners, little empirical research has been conducted that examines its construction and implementation.

This study examines one model of professional development. One school-based model of professional development growing in popularity is coaching. Coaching, according to its proponents, is a reciprocal relationship where teachers and coaches work together to impact student learning. Increased knowledge and a strong commitment to the learning process of self

and others is a benefit to this professional development model. This interpretive examines the

model as it is practiced and enacted by those directly involved in it: coaches.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

viii

CHAPTER ONE: FRAMING THE STUDY

Introduction

Which comes first, the student or the teacher? In professional development are decisions made for and to benefit the teacher or the student? According to the Council of Chief State School Officers- a consortium of more than 30 states- (Darling-Hammond and Prince, 2007), the primary goal of teaching is student learning; furthermore, they suggest that student needs are a determining factor in addressing issues of teacher quality and professional development. The caliber of a teacher matters. Teacher quality might be conceived as a package of several personal traits, dispositions, skills and understandings a teacher brings to the classroom. As we consider this package it might be more useful, in the attempt to examine professional development, to consider several essential criteria related to teacher quality and effectiveness including: strong verbal intelligence, the ability to observe, organize and think diagnostically; strong content knowledge- up to the level being taught; knowledge of how to teach others and the use of hands on techniques; an understanding of how to assess learning and development and make adjustments to support differences and identified needs; and adaptive expertise which allows a teacher to make judgments and decisions within a particular context (Knapp, 2003; Loucks-Horsley,1995; Elmore, 2002; Darling-Hammond and Prince, 2007). It is the criteria along with the clear determination of student needs that allows for a journey and transformation of teacher quality and student learning to occur simultaneously. The criteria and determination is only a beginning. Teaching is not a fixed act but one that evolves from complex social and institutional interactions (Pacheco, 2008). Professional development provided for teachers, meeting their

needs, through the lens of student needs creates a learner-centered focused professional development.

Approaches to Professional Development

A trend developing over the last decade in professional development has been to provide teachers with support and guidance through engaging and interactive experiences (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2004). The assumption is that teachers who are provided with hands-on professional development experiences will make connections and add meaning to new content or pedagogy being taught and increase the likelihood of transfer of those practices to the classroom. Another current approach to professional development, known as school-based, delivers support to teachers in the eye of the storm, at the school site and in the classroom (Barkley, 2005). Proponents of school-based professional development claim that the model seeks to address issues of practice with teachers in the context of classroom instruction (Coburn, 2003). Thus, teacher practice is closely examined by the practitioner, staff developer, or researcher in the context, where it occurs. Accordingly, advocates of school-based professional development believe that careful examination of teaching affords teachers the opportunity to assess their knowledge base and socially construct meaning in authentic and safe environments (Wilson and Berne, 1999). This is significant because it presumes that trust in the environment and in collegial relationships has been established; according to Costa and Garmston (2002), learning requires trust. Yet, while school-based professional development models have received much attention from practitioners, little empirical research has been conducted that examines its construction and implementation.

School-based Professional Development

   One school-based model of professional development growing in popularity is coaching. Peer coaching, as it is often referred to, formally emerged on the landscape of professional development in the early 1980's through a series of studies by Beverly Showers and Bruce Joyce (1996). Within the educational community there are many names used to describe the various forms of coaching. Professional literature describes these forms as technical coaching, cognitive coaching, collegial coaching, peer coaching, and mentoring. Found in the forms mentioned above is the common charge to stimulate and support improvements in teaching and learning (Robb, 2000; Killion, 2002; Joyce and Showers, 2002; Walpole and McKenna, 2004). Peer coaching, as with the forms mentioned above, is a form of professional development whereby a school colleague or master teacher provides organized support to a teacher(s) with the belief that improvement in their knowledge and teaching strategies will be evident (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Walpole and McKenna, 2004). Coaches often provide organized support to teachers, in an effort to build their knowledge and practice, through sharing, classroom observation, feedback, data analysis and lesson planning. A small body of research examines the impact of coaches on student achievement (Elmore, 1996), but very little empirical research exists that describes what a school-based coaching model is when constructed, how coaches are socialized into their role, and how that translates into their practice (Neufeld and Roper, 2002). Without empirical studies to ground professional development, decisions are made based on intuition and anecdotal experiences not from sustained long-term studies. Empirical studies afford systems opportunities to generate hypotheses for professional learning and development based on a systematic collection and analysis of efforts and actions. Paradoxically, while there has been an increasing impetus to engage in this form of professional development, little is known about what these

models look like in practice and the immediate and long term impact they have on those who engage in them. Professional development in the complexity of practice remains largely unexamined.

Purpose of Study

This study focuses on a particular school-based professional development model known as school-based coaching. Of concern is how a school-based model of professional development is enacted in practice by portraying school-based coaching as it is enacted by coaches. I seek to capture the complexities of the model, for the coaches who deliver it, through the use of interpretive methods. I documented how the model was implemented and with what results to the coaches who experience the model more directly. Because I sought to gain greater clarity through the narrative description process to accurately depict what school-based coaching is in actual practice Mitchell, (1981), suggests that narrative gives structure to the world and offers a mode of making sense of reality.

School-based coaches are charged with improving teacher quality and practice (Joyce and Showers, 1996). They are often master teachers with content expertise. School-based coaches often find themselves developing school and classroom based professional development. Coaches are often seen as the liaison between the teachers and administrators. Survey and self-report data emphasize the importance of professional development that is job embedded (relevant to the roles and responsibilities of the practitioner), results and standard driven, and linked directly to what occurs in classrooms (Sparks, NSDC website retrieved 3/8/07). Yet, because coaching is not a linear process, and instead is comprised of a cycles of study, planning, implementation and reflection (Costa and Garmston, 2002), this study documents and analyzes a

school-based coaching model as it is enacted in everyday practice. To do this, I observed and documented the experiences of coaches "on the job" to learn more about what it means to be a coach and the complexities of practice. In addition, I carried out a series of interviews with school-based coaches, as well as teachers, principals and district leaders intimately involved in the work with coaches to gain a deeper understanding of their world, but also the ways in which they learn and conceptualize the school-based model and their role in it.

Qualitative Nature of the Study

Qualitative research about school-based coaching is critical given the growing trend of hiring school-based coaches to bring about change (Knight, 2008, Kise, 2006, Corcoran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). A better understanding of what it means to be a coach and how coaching is translated into practice are needed, including a description of intended and unintended outcomes for coaches. My study significantly contributes to the knowledge base through the detailed narrative of one school-based coaching model. My study illuminates the nuances and complexities of what it means to be a coach in a way that is often overlooked in the literature or is articulated through the perspective or lens of those who fund or conceptualize the work of coaches. After an extensive search of the scholarly literature, what was found was considerable anecdotal and conceptual literature about coaching as a means of professional development. There are few significant studies that capture what school-based coaching is and the dynamics associated with the enactment of it in practice. A small number of studies can be found that measure the impact of school-based coaching as a model of professional development. This study brings clarity to researchers and practitioners, and extends the knowledge base through description of the dynamics and complexities of the model. In addition, gaining clarity through interviews and observations of those most closely involved in the enactment of the model is

instrumental in understanding not just what the model of school-based coaching is, but how that translates into decisions and actions each day of implementation. I also portrayed and analyzed what the model means to coaches who decide and act on their understanding of the model. This account will provided insight to those in positions which influence policy and implementation of professional development related to school reform. With greater understanding the complexities of one model of school-based coaching, this foundational study can lead to future research that further measures the impact of school-based coaching on both teachers and students.

Tenets of Professional Development

Much of the literature theorizes the approaches and strategies one should assume when leading professional development. Researchers assert that professional development involves (www.nsdc.org, 2008; Knight, 2008; Elmore and Burney, 1998; Corcoran, 1995):

> ➢ teachers working together through sharing of ideas and responsibilities;
>
> ➢ collegial networks that provide access to a professional community whose focus is on improving practice;
>
> ➢ ongoing relationships between external agencies and schools;
>
> ➢ schools whose efforts prioritize practice through observation, experimentation, reflection and coaching;
>
> ➢ ongoing research about practice and finally;
>
> ➢ commitment to professional teaching standards to serve as a guide in professional development.

As Cochran-Smith and Lortie (1999) and Elmore (2002) suggest, these tenets are not adequate to serve as guideposts to educators interested in improving their practice.

Pursuing my inquiry of study, I constructed a case study of professional development within The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, a K-16 school reform organization (The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, 2003). The study documented and analyzes of the complexities of the professional development model: school-based coaching. Because the literature on school-based professional development is scarce, little empirical evidence exists that documents school-based coaching in practice.

Guiding Research Questions

To examine school-based coaching as a model of professional development I explore several questions. First, what is the model of school-based coaching? Next, for those most directly involved in the model, the coaches, what does it mean to be a school-based coach? Finally, considering those who have been most intimately associated and impacted by the enactment of the model; what are possible intended, but also unintended outcomes of a school-based coaching model for coaches? This interpretive study looked closely at these three questions through the eyes, ears and experiences of the coaches who experience it most directly.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

According to Bredeson (2003), Killion (2002), and Guskey (1986, 2000), professional development is intended to alter teacher beliefs and practices with a clear end in mind. The end in mind is often articulated as student achievement. Guskey (2000) posits that with change in beliefs come sustained changes in practice. This perspective of professional development maintains a focus on teachers who are current practitioners in the field of education. Some researchers claim that professional development aims to improve the job-related knowledge, skills and attitudes of school employees. Professional development that is school-embedded, on going, and knowledge driven has the potential to be the vehicle to strengthen teacher practice (Poglinco et al, 2003). It is this aspect, school-based professional development that this study addresses. The review of the literature is extensive and focused so the researcher might build and extend on the existing research and conceptions of professional development for teachers and more specifically school-based coaches.

Global society demands workers and citizens who can construct, reshape, and apply knowledge within a variety of settings and with multiple partners in the equation (Elmore, 1996). As society becomes more complex, greater demands are placed on individuals to learn continuously (Fullan, 2000). Therefore, as access to information and the global workforce expands, individuals are asked at rapid pace to regularly analyze, interpret, and problem solve. Long term efforts with an intention to improve student learning is dependent, to a great degree, on the quality of the teacher in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Several researchers perceive that systemic change efforts must be sustained through practices at the school which

support thriving learning communities. This effort is at the heart of professional development. No longer can school administrators or teachers afford to view professional development as episodic, one shot or de-contextualized from the challenges of the classroom and student (Speck and Knipe, 2001). Before delving into the purposes and rational for professional development it is important to understand what it is.

The review of the literature begins with an examination of professional development by defining it and identifying the multiple purposes behind it. In addition, a brief review of approaches and trends in professional development within a historical perspective was presented. The historical review was narrowed to include the key events or movements that seem to influence professional development and in particular school-based professional development. Thus, the review did not address every aspect of professional development, but key points in time. Situated within the historical perspective were major themes or forces influencing professional development approaches of today. Finally, a conceptualization of school-based coaching as a reform based professional development strategy was examined to understand the operating definition from a history of research as well as the various approaches and enactments in practice.

Historical Perspective

1950's-1960

Professional development that has impact on teacher quality and student learning, can be best understood and applied as it is situated in a historical context. It is through understanding the past practices that we can apply those learning's to current approaches. This brief historical perspective of professional development begins in the 1950's and 1960's. Until this time,

teachers were seen as well equipped individuals, who once credentialed, were assumed adequately prepared to teach for life. An over-arching assumption was that teachers would continue to read professional literature or pursue advanced study as they felt appropriate (Speck and Knipe, 2001).

With the launch of Sputnik into space by the Soviets in 1957, a wake-up call was received by America. The space race created urgency for training and continued development of teachers, especially in the area of math and science. Responding to the urgency, *The National Defense Education Act* established provisions for teacher training with an emphasis on curriculum development (Lieberman and Miller, 1990). The curriculum development was designed to be delivered as written and shared in a laboratory type setting. Key ideas, lessons and materials were all included in the university based curricula. According to researchers, the assumption behind the materials was that teachers could attend training, receive the curriculum and deliver it as written (Speck and Knipe, 2001). A culture of isolation resulted as issues related to curriculum and practice arose. Teachers felt their professional judgment, knowledge and autonomy were threatened. When faced with uncertainty they closed their door and relied on their previous experiences. This response is an early depiction of what Knight (2008), Robb (2000) and Lord (1994) might characterize as what is now known as traditional in-service training where outside experts present information that is often disconnected from the teacher's life in the classroom and where teachers leave training overwhelmed and confused. Researchers would argue that the disconnection to the teacher's needs and expectations for learning continued through the next decade.

The overarching focus of this era of professional development emphasized episodic and often disconnected training for teachers. Teachers were "given" training from experts in their field. Sparks and Hirsh (1999) identified this era as the flash and dash of professional development. Teacher workshops and conferences were common practice; districts or external agencies often identified topics of study and then provided training in mass to teachers. According to researchers, teacher's prior knowledge and experience was not seen as a resource in the development of training (Speck and Knipe, 2001). Thus, descriptions of professional development during this era suggested the notion that teacher's prior experiences were rarely solicited or seen as a critical component to be valued in the development process. This lack of acknowledgment by districts and external agencies for the professional knowledge of teachers created a wall of separation and mistrust which translated, according to Sparks and Hirsch (2002) and Lortie (1975), into isolated work environments.

The Rand *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change Study* otherwise known as the *Change Agent Study*, undertaken from 1973-1978, was a pivotal study that examined four federally funded programs all underwritten by the United States Office of Education. The four programs include the Title III and Title VII Elementary and Secondary Education Act; the Vocational Act, and the Right to Read Act. All had different objectives, yet operated with a common purpose (Rand Corporation, 1975). Despite the programmatic difference a common purpose and spread of educational innovations with policy connections was at the heart of the four programs. The study examined a sample of 293 local projects receiving federal funds. Annual federal reports along with an examination and analysis of budgetary and policy provisions were the approaches utilized in the research study. The Change Agent Study marked

an awareness of the local context and practitioner as a significant player in the context of school change. According to findings from Berman and McLaughlin (1975), contributing researchers for the Rand Corporation Study; teachers participated in professional development activities generally because they believed such activities would enable them to be better teachers. Guskey (1986) claims that desire on the teacher's part was not enough to improve teaching. If professional development relied on outside consultants as the primary deliverers, was one-shot in nature, emphasized evaluation of teacher progress or approached the system without awareness of the local context, failure in implementation was often the result. Implications for future professional development influenced by the Rand Study of the 1970's have included four central ideas. Researchers began to conceive the teacher as decision maker, teacher as implementer of concrete applications and noted that training must be extended over time, and finally envisioned the teacher as a participant observer actively engaged in issues of teaching (McLaughlin, 1990).

1980's

The 1983 landmark study, *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, emerged on to the landscape of professional development, soon after the dissemination of the Rand Study. The report relied on five main sources of data: educational papers generated by experts; eight meetings of the full Commission with scholars, teachers, parents and business members testifying; six public hearings; analyses of existing problems in education; descriptions of notable programs and promising approaches; and letters from concerned citizens regarding American education (McLaughlin, 1990). As the report gained momentum in the 1990's its findings began to influence the practice of teaching. The report focused on redesigning schools and operated from three key ideas: schools must prepare for a more diverse group of citizens needing to learn at higher levels; must cope with increasing

12

technologies in a global society; and must develop those capable of working collectively to solve problems. Although the report did not directly offer professional development implications and recommendations it served as a cry for change and an awareness that those working in American education must be equipped to deal with future challenges. This report became the impetus for numerous other studies on the topic of school reform, but it wasn't until the 1990's that many of the recommendations were implemented.

Extending the learning from the *Rand Change Agent Study* of the 1970's, the 1980's continued to be a decade with a focus on teacher training, mostly off site, but now with increased emphasis on the teacher as an instrumental actor in a supportive relationship. A review of three-thousand teachers' surveys, 400 case studies, in addition to actual staff development conducted by researchers Joyce and Showers (2002, 1988) showed that " staff development was gradually evolving from a patchwork of workshops into a system ensuring that education professionals regularly enhance their academic knowledge and professional performance" (Joyce and Showers, 2002, p.1). With this in mind, educators were introduced to the concept of coaching. Joyce and Showers (2002) would argue that professional development that emphasized coaching relied on extended relationships and interactions of colleagues. This began the shift away from the episodic approach to professional development to a place where teachers began to feel valued as contributors to the profession.

Speck and Knipe (2001) suggest that feeling valued as professionals increases the sense of control and ownership by teachers; this new found teacher confidence results in an increase of teacher professional organizations and teacher unions thereby raising interest in the profession. As teachers united as professionals there was also a greater interest in improving the profession. This shift towards teacher as a significant contributor to the ongoing learning of the profession

was consistent with the concept introduced from the Rand Study researchers, Berman and

Mc Laughlin (1975), known as "mutual adaptation". "Mutual adaptation" saw teachers trying

new techniques and strategies and adapting them to their specific needs. Based on their

observations and interviews, Berman and Mc Laughlin (1975) determined that adaptation led to a

greater likelihood of commitment to implementation over time. The focus of the development

was with the professional educator in mind.

The landscape of professional development has continued to evolve over time from the

last half of the 20th century to the turn of the century with an increasing emphasis on the teacher

as a key actor. Researchers would agree that key studies from the Rand Corporation and the

National Commission on Excellence in Education were driving forces into the 21st century by

challenging previous notions of training or in-service for teachers. Joyce and Showers (2002) and

others (Elmore, 2002; Guskey, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1990) understood that ideas about how

teachers learn most effectively had to change. Ideas about learning from the 1960's which

believed transfer of knowledge would automatically occur from workshop to classroom were

challenged; and new paradigms, such as coaching, as a means to fully engage teachers in the

analysis of applications of knowledge to instruction, began to be conceptualized.

Contemporary Perspectives on Professional Development

Examination of professional development through a historical perspective, beginning in

the 1990's, yields a great many insights that have influenced and shaped professional

development today. The progression and adaptation of professional development was influenced

by the school reform agenda of the 1990's. The conceptualization of professional development as

a reform strategy lies in the complexity of the many relationships represented in the context of

teaching and learning. Before moving into a more thorough review of the literature related to coaching as a professional development approach, a brief context situated in school reform must be presented.

Phases of Reform

According to Darling-Hammond (1990) and Fullan (2000) three phases of the reform movement that began in the late 1980's had impact on professional development in the 1990's and continue well into 2000 (Speck and Knipe, 2001). First, an increasing emphasis on accountability and testing mandates; next, increased pressure to improve the quality of teaching and teacher education; and finally, more challenging learning standards alongside restructuring efforts within schools to produce better outcomes. Reformers realized early on that professional development must be interwoven with the organizational and conceptual changes in schools. Reform takes hold in schools when the practitioners find relevance and value in what policy makers are constructing. Thus, local leadership plays a key role in the enactment of and motivation for policy success. It is in the opportunities for continual learning, experimentation, and decision making during implementation that determine whether policies come to life and alter practice or fade away after money and pressure subside (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Under-investment in teacher knowledge has thwarted many reform efforts, especially those that have a learner centered focus. Unfortunately, the teacher is most often viewed as the conduit for instructional policy, but not the critical participant. Consequently, policy makers create controls for teaching instead of developing teacher knowledge (Wilson and Berne, 1999). Beginning in the 1990's and continuing today, professional development worked from the assumption of the teacher as a key player in the construction and enactment of learning to influence student outcomes. Many argue that schools and teachers struggle to make the strides

15

established by policy makers not because of lack of desire to do so, but because they don't know

how. Schools are not organizationally equipped for the effort that must be made for lasting

change to occur. Nelson and Hammerman (1996, p. 16) argue that four strands must be

addressed in organizations and with teachers for change to occur; beliefs about learning,

deepening of knowledge, change in instructional practice, and development of a new

professional culture. There must be meaningful intellectual investment in the practice of

teaching. According to Knight (2008) and Guskey (2000) it is the intersection of the enactment

between organizations and teachers where knowledge and beliefs of the teaching profession are

shaped.

Development of Standards

In the 1990's a strong effort to develop standards for what students should know and be

able to do took hold. Content standards represented a commitment to clear and shared goals for

student learning. Standards are clear indications and signposts of progress, but without the

knowledge and organizational supports for implementation the standards die at the school yard

steps. In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began to

establish performance standards for quality teaching. Some researchers view policies and

standards as drivers to improve schools only when teachers are armed with the knowledge, skills

and supports they need (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Thus,

professional development must respond to the need teachers have in becoming confident and

knowledgeable in the content and pedagogy of their subject. The authors of the *Teaching Gap*

(Stigler and Heibert, 1999) applauded the standards movement, yet countered that standards

alone are not enough. They contend that it is in the rich learning opportunities provided to

students where real progress can be made; therefore teaching must change dramatically. The

mechanism to professionalize and change teaching, what Stigler and Heibert (1999) refer to as a cultural activity, is professional development. They go on to say, "We learn how to teach indirectly, through years of participation in classroom life, and we are largely unaware of some of the most widespread attributes of teaching in our own culture (p.11)." Teaching must become a deliberate and transparent act, to be validated as a profession. Reformers agree that an emerging challenge of the future will be to bring professional learning opportunities as close to the classroom as possible, where teachers can analyze and adjust their craft and practice for maximum impact.

Contributing to the professionalization of teachers and teaching was the establishment of standards for the profession. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards provided guidance and leadership for teachers and systems in the area of professional development. The development of these standards occurred simultaneously as states developed more localized versions (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The development of teaching standards helped to shape the goals of professional development over the next decade. Incorporated into the standards were the attributes of effective teachers, importance of subject matter expertise, as well as attention to the knowledge and skills of how people learn. In 2007, after twenty years of development and implementation of teaching standards, nearly 60,000 experienced teachers have been National Board certified as "accomplished teachers". Stigler and Heibert's (1999) research on the importance of the classroom as a laboratory for teacher learning, along with a standard's framework for the teaching profession, created momentum for change in professional development.

Teachers as Learners

An outgrowth of the emphasis on standards for the teaching profession is Robb's (2000) view of professional development which situates the teacher development in the context of professional study. This means teachers willing to examine their practices and question their approaches through the lens of student learning to become constructivists of their learning. Thus, the notion of study assumes learning is ongoing and continuous. Professional development as study is inquiry in nature, and it allows teachers to raise questions as their learning is applied in the context of the school and classroom. This inquiry approach is about the construction of meaning over time and is dependent upon the teacher as a participant in a collaborative, shared learning experience. Accordingly, advocates of school-based professional development conducted in this way believe that careful examination of teaching affords teachers opportunity to assess and scrutinize their knowledge base and socially construct meaning in authentic and safe environments (Costa and Garmston, 2002; Wilson and Berne, 1999). Yet, while school-based professional development models have received much attention from practitioners of late, little empirical research has been conducted that examines its construction and implementation.

Conversely, there are those who still view professional development as training, where teachers acquire knowledge or skills that others determine as necessary or valuable. Professional development in education generally occurs and is provided early on after teachers have been certified or licensed as practitioners within classrooms (Elmore, 2002). A critical aspect of the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards* (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996) is the application of the standards for experienced teachers with a history in the profession. For many, the examination of standards is viewed as professional development. In practice, professional development varies in form and delivery. Practitioners

and researchers would agree professional development needs are influenced by teaching experiences. The use and validation of the *National Board Teaching Standards* by experienced teachers marks a critical juncture in the evolution of professional development.

Many teachers have shared a similar experience in professional development. They attend a six to eight hour session and are expected to transfer what they learn to practice instantly and long term. Typically, teachers receive instructional support externally from their site and are expected to transfer practice in classrooms upon their return. This view conceptualizes the teacher or practitioner as the receiver of knowledge. This approach often cited as linear and a process-product approach (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). Teachers are seen as receivers of information and approaches, and are thereby expected to automatically transmit the learning into practice. Apple (1988) views this approach as the teacher as a technician with little involvement in the construction of the act of professional development. This approach is often referred to in teacher educational communities as the traditional or workshop approach. The construction of knowledge belongs to the researcher or provider. Authentic classroom experiences and application are generally absent. If good practice is to be the norm within classrooms professional development as described above, cannot be the solitary approach utilized to institute changes in teacher practice (Rand Corporation, 2004).

Authentic Professional Development

Glickman (1986) and Guskey (2000) posit that inquiry based professional development, unlike the traditional method, is aimed at improving teachers' ability to think and this must occur over time, through continuous cycles of inquiry, problem-solving, and development. Coburn (2003) suggests that professional learning is shaped and driven by interactions between teachers, students, and knowledge. Professional development is participant or learner dependent and no

longer requires complete direction and support from an external agency or leader. Elmore (1996) describes the work as self-generative. When teachers own the new concept or learning they are introduced to, they are more likely to add to and transfer learning to all situations. Congruent with the work of Guskey (2000) and Darling-Hammond (1997), is the belief of Coburn (2003) which states when reform ownership and practice exists within a system, a shared vision and understanding is pervasive in classrooms and schools. Professional development then aims to provide opportunities for institutionalization of practices that impact learning.

The broad consensus on professional development, adopted by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), provides a roadmap for policy makers and educators to follow (Elmore, 2002). According to NSDC and others, effective professional development focuses on a well articulated mission or purpose anchored in student learning. Schools must have a shared understanding and implementation of practices that impact student learning (Rand Corporation, 2004). Also, to build a coherent focus throughout a system that prioritizes student learning, professional development must be driven from analysis of student achievement. Analysis of specific content and in specific classroom settings is crucial. According to Elmore (2002) and Coburn (2003), learning does not occur by chance. They suggest teachers interrelate instructional focus and pedagogy to specific content (Coburn, 2003). In planning professional development, tied closely to the classroom, then one must first determine the specific needs of teachers based on how students learn specific content.

Current research considers the impact on teacher practice as it measures the effectiveness of professional development. Experience shows adults as learners need opportunities to link new knowledge to the professional development practices they are engaged in. These experiences solidify learning and make the transfer into classroom practice more likely (Rand, 2004). Elmore

(2002) affirms effective professional development maximizes the opportunity for teachers to work collectively and simultaneously on improving teacher practice and student learning. A collective and collaborative approach to learning includes school leaders as active participants sustaining the focus on improvement of student learning.

Orchestrating Learning Opportunities

With the development of the National Staff Development Council's *Standards for Staff* (Sparks and Hirsh, 2000), a shift in the late 1990's occurred acknowledging the teacher as the instructional leader--one who has the capacity to orchestrate learning experiences for all students. Standards for students are organized around key areas of content, context, and process according to Speck and Knipe (2001). These standards are meant to be a guideline for schools and should influence the development of professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Successful professional development, from the perspectives of Elmore (2002) and Sparks and Hirsh (1997), includes teachers regularly monitoring and adjusting instruction based on the identified needs of students. In practice, teachers adjust and monitor students' learning opportunities and offer regular and targeted feedback. Similarly, researchers would suggest, that monitoring and feedback should occur in authentic ways that support improvement of teacher practice. Professional development closest to the classroom provides the greatest opportunity for teachers and school leaders to make lasting and significant changes in schools as learning organizations (Rand Corporation, 2004; Coburn, 2003). According to Knapp (2003) and Rand Corporation researchers (2004), professional development is learning for the practitioner and occurs in both formal and informal settings. In addition, it prioritizes interactions between the teacher as learner, the content, and facilitator mirroring the classroom interactions with students as learners. Teachers must have a forum to raise questions directly related to classroom practice.

Research indicates professional development designed with adult learning needs in mind respects and honors the experiences and knowledge base teachers bring to the profession (Coburn, 2003). Accordingly, teachers draw heavily from personal classroom experiences and this can serve as a bridge to new learning. For improvement in teaching, a sustained, coherent, and consistent message must be delivered. Knapp (2003) would suggest this laser like focus must be supported from inside the classroom by teachers as well as by school leaders, district leaders, and policy makers. Elmore (2002) and Poglinco et al (2003) further suggest that a mechanism for professional development of teachers in classrooms is the strategic use of personnel in coaching roles who can make a significant impact on the profession of teaching by providing guidance in instructional skills and practices.

<div align="center">School-based Coaching in Practice</div>

This study, of one school based coaching model, is situated in the context of reform in El Paso, Texas. The study focuses on the work of the El Paso Math and Science Partnership (MSP) supported by the National Science Foundation. The primary program goal is to improve the quality of teaching and learning and close the achievement gap in every El Paso county school (The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, 2003). Professional development conducted with teachers, school and district leaders, and area partners is one method used to meet this program goal. High quality professional development, with particular emphasis on school-based coaching, is a cornerstone approach to the reform agenda prioritized by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (EPCAE). In setting the context for my study of EPCAE's model, an examination of the enactment of several models will be reviewed. Each of these models draws on aspects of the current principles from the professional development

literature related to coaching.

Perspectives on Coaching

Coaching is grounded in the belief that individual or small group guided professional development responds to the specific needs of teachers and will therefore have greater impact on practice. Loucks-Horsley (1995) along with Costa and Garmston (2002) believe coaching affords teachers the opportunity to reflect and analyze their practice which directly impacts their growth. Coaching in professional development is often described as several models or approaches. One challenge presented in the literature is the maze of terminology used to describe "coaching". It is commonly agreed by practitioners and researchers that "coaching" is a non-evaluative process. Poglinco et al, (2003) suggest that technical coaching is used to transfer new teaching practices into their regular repertoire. Collegial and peer coaching, often suggests, a collaborative effort to improve instructional practice. Costa and Garmston (2002) would suggest that a cognitive coach increases the capacities of others for sound decision making and self-directedness.

Although the term coaching is described in the literature in various forms, West and Staub (2003), Poglinco et al (2003), and Joyce and Showers (2002) would agree that the coach takes on the leadership role of supporting and assisting teachers with identified instructional needs so that the outcome for the teacher is increased content knowledge and pedagogical strategies implemented in the classroom.

A study of twenty-seven elementary schools using coaches to lead professional development and literacy reform, the Consortium for Policy Research on Education (CPRE) (Poglinco, 2003), determined based on twenty-seven observations and pre/post interviews with coaches and teachers determined a correlation between the coach and the teachers they worked

23

with. Using a structural equation measurement it was determined that the quality of the coach had an impact on the quality of the teacher and his/her implementation in the classroom. The strength of the coach can impact the strength of the teacher practice. According to Knight (2008), Sparks (2002), and Fullan and Hargraves (1996), it is the interaction with a coach, not the specific model, which provides the structure and support for change. Conversely, Costa and Garmston (2002) would suggest that the structure and intention behind a model such as Cognitive Coaching would be significant supports for change. In either perspective, significant for the teacher is the opportunity to raise questions, practice new techniques in supportive environments, and consistently monitor and adjust practice. This validates research by Showers and Joyce (1996), who determined through extensive case studies and interviews that a 90% transfer of new instructional approaches and strategies was possible when teachers were exposed to theory, demonstration, modeling, and coaching. Joyce and Showers (2002) hypothesized and later confirmed that the sustained support of a coach facilitated teachers capacity to retain new strategies, used the strategies and materials given more appropriately than those without the benefit of a coach, and finally teachers who had been coached over time had clear cognition as to the purpose and use of new strategies and approaches. This last finding supports Knight (2008) and Costa and Garmston's model of Cognitive Coaching (2002) and concurs that the coach's capacity to mediate thinking and problem-solving capacities of those who are coached to facilitate lasting changes in perceptions and practice.

Coaching in Systems

Since the year 2000 many professional organizations and foundations encourage and even provide funds supporting the use of job embedded or school-based coaches. Research organizations such as Northeast Research in Education Lab, Mid-Continent Research in

Education Lab, in addition to professional organizations such as National Staff Development

Council (NSDC) and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASDC) have

published numerous articles encouraging this professional development approach as a means to

improving student achievement and teacher practice. Few researchers have extensively examined

what school based coaching looks like in practice and as it is enacted over time.

One study, The Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE) Approach to Professional

Development Research Study (Corcoran et al, 2003) determined through a multi-year series of

teacher surveys and interviews that professional development for teachers must engage both the

appropriate pedagogical skill and content knowledge to produce gains in student learning.

Intensive training and on-site support for teachers is a necessary component in the learning

equation. The engagement of Leader Teachers (school coaches) was integral to this study's

theory of action. Leader Teachers were engaged in the work in various ways, including the

traditional workshop model, but more often in classroom-based inquiry with teachers. In the first

two years, 42 leader teachers were interviewed and observed in practice. Based on the analysis of

interview data and observations, researchers concluded the Leader Teachers took their role

seriously and were committed to their work with teachers. The responsibility and enactment of

the Leader Teacher's work can be categorized in two ways: service on request and providing

outreach and training to the school body and teams of teachers (Corcoran et al, 2003).

Similar to the MISE approach, in the mid 1990's New York's Community District 2

embarked on a journey of large-scale systemic instructional reform with staff developers (school

coaches) playing an instrumental role. Large scale reform for New York's Community District 2

assumes the belief that teachers can learn in a continuous ways over time and with a clear focus

on teaching and learning, the 22,000 students will succeed in increasing achievement levels and

performance (Elmore and Burney, 1998). Professional development is a key organizing strategy in the improvement process. Stein and D'Amico (2002) concluded, after a series of 100 interviews with teachers and coaches, observations, and review of artifacts, that engagement in new learning occurred due in part to the authentic, classroom based and social nature of the professional development. A significant part of the 4% (typically only 1%) of the budget devoted to professional development in District 2 is invested in on-site coaches known as staff developers. These staff developers work directly with individual teachers and teams to address specific instructional areas of concern. Neufeld and Roper (2003) and West and Staub (2003) would identify many of the practices enacted in District 2 as strategies employed by critical friends groups or content coaches. This approach to coaching often involves small groups of teachers working closely to examine and analyze practice, particularly utilizing student work. This approach relies heavily on the expertise of the staff developer and their ability to model, observe and informally supervise instructional practice.

Based on twenty years of training and observation, Costa and Garmston (2002) identify this representation of a school-based coach to be considered an area of support known as consulting. By engaging in this role, the school-based coach functions as a person of expertise and knowledge in a given situation. The coach might serve as a trainer or model for an instructional approach. Costa and Garmston (2002) would argue that an emphasis on supervision and expert knowledge creates a dependent relationship on the coach. Instead, they would argue that coaching (the act) differs from consulting in that it takes a non-judgmental stance, using data and reflective questions to support and develop a teachers own cognitive capacity (Costa and Garmston, 2002; Hayes et al, 1999). Researchers West and Staub (2003) found this more direct

form of interaction, identified by Costa and Garmston, particularly useful when enacted with novice teachers.

An overarching belief held in New York's Community District 2 is that when teachers receive continuous oversight and support for what occurs daily in their classrooms they are more likely to teach effectively. This shared belief is evidenced in Boston's Collaborative Coaching and Learning Model (CCL) (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2003), where the principal is essential and held to a standard of high accountability. The principal ensures the composition and content of the teacher learning groups led by the school-based coach who is to follow the integrity of the model of implementation. Neufeld and Roper (2003) would emphasize the role of the principal in supporting a school-based coach cannot be under estimated. Principals can influence the culture of a school to accept and embrace or reject the role of a coach in improving teacher practice.

Derived from the traditional method of the 1960's of providing professional development to large groups of teachers with a general theme affords systems (Corcoran et al, 2003; Apple, 1988) such as New York's Community District 2, MISE, and Boston's CCL the opportunity to reach large numbers of teachers with a message of instructional improvement. New conceptions of teaching or instructional designs are generally introduced in this forum with the hopes of reducing the possibility of mixed or diluted messages being conveyed (Elmore and Burney, 1998; Boston Plan for Excellence, 2003; Corcoran et al, 2003). Some would argue that speaking to large numbers of teachers at once with the message of improvement doesn't necessarily ensure an increased or shared level of understanding.

Defining the Role of a Coach

Stein, Smith, and Silver (1999) in their examination of two schools, unveil challenges and tensions existing for school-based coaches. In their work they begin to define the role of a coach consistent with much of the research from Joyce and Showers (2002) and others, who emphasize the importance of understanding how teachers use and acquire knowledge so they are more apt to understand the circumstances and conditions where teachers will utilize research and evidence to improve their practice. This understanding becomes a launching point for a school-based coach to initiate their work. Based on observations, Stein et al (1999) and Joyce and Showers (2002) would agree that a key strategy for school-based coaches is to employ the understanding of how teachers learn along with the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. This factor influences the professional development approach and model embraced by systems and school-based coaches. The challenge for coaches is to remain grounded in inquiry and not rely primarily on their knowledge as "experts". A stance of inquiry is a value identified in various models, such as peer coaching or lesson study, which seek to be non-judgmental and build on prior knowledge and experience. Poglinco et al (2003) and Costa and Garmston (2002) emphasize the inquiry nature of the examination of practice and sees the role of a coach to raise questions and provide supportive critiques of practice. Safe forums for questions and study are created by the coach for teachers.

In addition, Stein et al (1999), as a result of the case study of two schools, recognizes the importance of focusing on the instructional program or issues in a context larger than the world of an individual teacher. The implication for a school-based coach is the importance of social context as an aspect of their work. Understanding the complexities of individuals and their needs

as part of a larger system is a tension a school-coach constructing professional development must address.

In the examination of the literature it is clear that a comprehensive definition and understanding of school-based coaching and the role of a coach do not exist. Many would suggest that systems transform the role of coach into what they deem important according to their needs. Poglinco et al (2003) and Joyce and Showers (2002) would define coaching as a reciprocal process of examination and analysis of practice whereby changes and modifications of practice occur through the verbal exchanges of coach and teacher. Significant in the literature are the results of Showers and Joyce (1996) extensive interviews and observations that report teachers who received coaching, either one to one or as a member of a group, felt more supported and found it easier to transfer new learning and instructional practice to the classroom. In addition, they found teachers who planned together and pooled their experiences, similar to lesson study, were much more likely to apply their new learning than teachers who worked alone.

Building on the conceptual role of a coach according to Joyce and Showers (1988), is what authors and researchers Costa and Garmston (2002) refer to as Cognitive Coaching. This model of coaching draws from cognitive and constructivist learning theory as well as brain research. It suggests a non-judgmental, developmental, and reflective approach from the coach somewhat similar to what practitioners often name as peer coaching. Primary to their approach is the emphasis on cognitive development. Cognitive Coaching practitioners value posing questions to the coachee (teacher) with increasing self-directed learning as an end in mind. The emphasis as a coach is to support a teacher in being self-managing, monitoring, and modifying. Along with Joyce and Showers (1988) and Poglinco et al (2003), Costa and Garmston (2002) understand the

importance of the active role of the teacher (often referred to as the coachee). For teachers to change overt behaviors an alteration and adjustment of inward cognitive behaviors must occur (Costa and Garmston, 2002). With cognitive behaviors modified changes in instructional practice are more likely to occur.

Coaching as a means of professional development attempts to fill a need and tackle the tough issue of improving teacher practice in ways that value the professional knowledge and judgment of the teacher. Despite the promise, according to researchers, evidence of the impact of coaching is in its infancy. Showers and Joyce (1996) along with Costa and Garmston (2002) agree that the coaching relationship increases the use of new strategies and fosters reflective practice and increased collegiality. This supports the findings of Kohler, Crilley and Shearer (1997), who surveyed a small sample of four teachers and determined coaching encouraged the use of questioning strategies. One small study of twelve teachers by Gutierrez, Crosland, and Berlin (2001) found no change in teacher practices after analysis of videos, survey data and interviews. Although coaching is a promising professional development approach according to many researchers and practitioners, demands for evidence of impact with more comprehensive studies and examinations of the enactment of coaching in schools is needed.

Summary of Emerging Trends in Professional Development

This brief historical review of professional development perspectives from the 1950's to the present highlights the growing and constantly evolving role of knowledge in the professional development of the teacher. In the early years the teacher was believed to be a person who transmitted knowledge to students. Teacher experience and judgment was not regularly valued. As time progressed with the politics of reform and increased emphasis on standards for students'

learning and teaching, teachers as knowledge builders became critical. Operating from the belief

that knowledge could be shaped and modified and that teachers had to be critical thinkers,

professional development became more learner centered. With the focus on learning,

professional development drew in close to the classroom and used the active and relevant

experiences of teachers to shape their new knowledge. Critical to this new professional

development paradigm was the evolution of the school-based coach. Coaches are advocated for

throughout the practitioner literature on professional development. Yet, the role of the coach and

the enactment of their work have not been thoroughly examined. This study examines one model

of school-based coaching and how that model is enacted from the view of those most closely

involved in it.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A relatively small body of empirical research articulates the practice of school-based coaches in their efforts to support instructional improvement and teacher enhancement. Organizations like the Boston's Collaborative Coaching and Learning Model (CCL) (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2003), New York's Community District 2 Model (Elmore and Burney, 1998) and The Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE) Approach to Professional Development Research Study (Corcoran et al, 2003) have invested heavily in the professional development of teachers through the deployment of school and/or district coaches. Researchers agree that school-based coaching contributes to the utilization of new instructional strategies and promotes collegiality (Costa and Garmston, 2002; Joyce and Showers, 1996). Yet, little is known about what is school-based coaching as enacted in practice from the perspective of those directly involved in it- coaches. In fact, the role and practice of school-based coaching remains largely undocumented, and what it means to be a school coach and how coaching is consequential is obscured. Though school-based coaching is implemented across school systems, its practice is based—for the most part—on assumptions and anecdotal accounts regarding how it *should* be enacted and with what its outcomes *ought* to be. Thus, in this study, I document and examine a school-based model of professional development for coaches. In doing this, I seek to document how coaching is actually carried-out in practice. Specifically, I document and analyze one model of professional development, known as school-based coaching. Investigating what school-based coaching is in practice and its possible outcomes and impact on the coaching endeavor and teaching profession is the aim of this study.

Interpretive Research

Because the questions I ask seek to capture the process and context by which a certain version of school-based coaching is enacted, my study is ethnographic in design (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Of concern in this study are the experiences of school-based coaches. To get at what it means to be a coach and at the details of the practice of coaching, I carry out a case study that consists of a series of interviews and observations of professional development sessions. Various sources of evidence supported the development of the case study. A case study is pursued because as Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) explain; such approach brings a phenomenon to life for the reader and assists them in understanding in detail the phenomenon under study. In addition, this case study, unlike survey research, offers an interpretive analysis that examines not just the behavior and outcomes of coaches and coaching, but also what actions mean and their importance to teacher professional development. A focus on the experience of coaching and the process by which coaches coach teachers can best be captured via an interpretive and ethnographic lens. Thus, with such an approach, I attempt to detail and document the practice of coaching by observing and interviewing those who are in the position to experience and know it most directly- the coaches themselves.

Setting

Seeking to understand what this model is in practice and what it means to those most directly involved in the act of coaching, I studied a school-based model implemented by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (EPCAE/the El Paso Collaborative) in El Paso County schools. This site provided for what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) refer to as opportunistic research. As a former employee of the El Paso Collaborative the opportunity to

conduct ethnographic research on the school-based coaching model was timely and feasible for

me as the researcher.

The El Paso Collaborative (El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, 2003), is an

organization at the University of Texas at El Paso that has promoted and employed the school-

based coaching model. Known as staff developers and mentors, the school-based coaches

through the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, have been working for nearly ten of

the organizations eighteen years with the focus on improving student achievement and teacher

practice in mathematics and science. School-based coaches function as content-based change

agents for The El Paso Collaborative, but exist under a district sub-contract for their services.

The school-based coaches were provided bi-monthly professional development off site as well as

regular on site support. My study utilized a purposely selected sample of staff developers,

identified as school-based coaches. The sample was selected from my experience over four years

in leading and learning about the school-based coaches through professional development, in

addition to a focus group dialogue at the completion of their work. Hammersley and Atkinson

(1995) along with Krathwohl (2004) encourage purposive sampling which allows the researcher

to select the most robust sample to be engaged in the study. I deliberately chose individuals who

were willing to share perspectives and who were believed to be uninhibited in their responses.

The local model of coaching is organically constructed. In other words, the model is based on the

authentic needs of the educational community it serves. It was not a pre-determined professional

development design that forced a fit with the needs of the educational community. It was

developed based on the local context of schooling in El Paso, Texas as seen through the eyes and

mission of the staff at the El Paso Collaborative. The local model, beginning in 1991, was

influenced by the experiences of its staff, national experts, and other national reform based

organizations and research. The El Paso Collaborative began its history as a reform based and equity driven organization that believes all students should be provided an educational experience where high levels of student learning are achieved and students are prepared for success at the post-secondary level. Recognized as a leader in the education reform, the El Paso Collaborative's founding contributors include the National Science Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust, and the U.S. Department of Education (www.epcae.org 9/18/08). The organization grew out of a concern that students in El Paso were being poorly prepared for post-secondary education and careers, and excuses such as language barriers and socio-economic factors were unacceptable. Professional development was and remains a key strategy in the Collaborative's reform efforts that strategically engage teachers, school and district leadership in the El Paso area K-12 public schools (EPCAE Brochure, 2003). It is with these core beliefs that the construction of the model of school-based coaching began.

To ensure the academic success of all students K-16, the El Paso Collaborative invested substantial time and resources in the use of district and site specialists referred to as mentors or staff developers that in my study I referred to as school-based coaches. The El Paso Collaborative and the school-based coaches who, as a result of their affiliation with the organization, were selected for this study because of the unique opportunity to examine the development and enactment of the model of school based coaching. The case I report here was part of a six year investment in this identified model of professional development that has drawn to a close. El Paso, a county of more than 700,000 people, has 12 county school districts that include three large urban districts with a student population over 150,000 students. This is the population served by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence and location for this study.

35

Site Rational and Access

This model for school-based coaching is situated in El Paso, Texas, a border city, where a critical need for qualified teachers, particularly in mathematics and science exists. A driving force of The El Paso Collaborative is to improve teaching and learning, particularly in the area of math and science, for the entire region, which serves a high percentage of minority and immigrant children. El Paso is one of the poorest counties in the nation (EPCAE Brochure, 2003). The geographic location of El Paso, the far western tip of Texas, creates a sense of isolation from the rest of the State. El Paso is closer to the State of California than to the city of Houston, Texas. The vast majority of teachers from the area are produced by the local University and Community College. The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence was created in 1991 from concern that El Paso's students were being poorly prepared for higher education and careers. The organization was not willing to accept traditional excuses such as language or poverty. From this urgency the Organization was created and has kept its commitment to ensure academic success, to close the achievement gaps, and to ensure students graduate prepared for success in college or university (www.epcae.org, 11/18/08). In 2002, graduation rates in El Paso's three urban districts were highest (77.8%) among major cities in Texas, including Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. Achievement gaps are closing. Gaps between Whites and Hispanics on State achievement tests decreased from 21.2 percentage points in 1994 to 5.7 points in 2002 (www.epcae.org/msp, 11/17/08).

In 2002 over $29 million from the National Science Foundation was awarded to the El Paso Collaborative creating the Math Science Partnership (MSP). This partnership was leverage

for the EPCAE to raise issues and support schools in meeting the challenges of teaching and

learning; ensuring that opportunities to succeed in math and science were available to all El Paso

students. Central to the work of the EPCAE MSP was the use of key professional development

strategies and approaches (www.epcae.org/msp, 11/17/08).

The EPCAE MSP heavily invested in one professional development approach known as

instructional coaching. The goal of the instructional coach training is to transform and build the

capacity of content-based instructional coaches to know and understand math and science

standards, effectively implement high quality curriculum and instruction programs, and ensure

engagement and learning among all students. In addition, instructional coaches are provided the

opportunity to acquire new perspectives on leadership, engage in personal reflection and build

more effective professional networks (citation from announcement of training/EPCAE document

self-report). Employment decisions were guided by a detailed job description created by the El

Paso Collaborative's MSP in conjunction with area school districts. Several key requirements

included: high school certification in mathematics and/or science with teaching experience

preferred in high school; knowledge and experience in conducting professional development;

and strong interpersonal skills (Appendix B). Hiring individuals with knowledge and experience

in the subject matter allowed coaches to draw from their experiences as they met challenges

presented by teachers. It also presented the coach with a sense of credibility. Once hired, coaches

received a week long intensive professional development by MSP directors, providing coaches

with a greater sense of their role and responsibilities along with training on key curriculum tools

and an introduction to the skill set associated with school-based coaching (The EL Paso

Mathematics and Science Program Annual Report 2002-2003, taken from www.epcae.org

11/17/08). According to Jim Knight, Director of the Center for Research on Learning at the

University of Kansas (2008), an instructional coach often referred to as a school-based coach, a

content coach, or in the case of the MSP grant, a staff developer, is an on-site professional

developer who guides teachers to use proven professional strategies and approaches to facilitate

learning. School-based coaches employ a variety of professional development resources to foster

widespread, high quality teaching and learning. The El Paso Collaborative for Academic

Excellence (annual report and self report data) explicitly prioritized several key areas of focus in

the preparation of the school-based coaches:

> Utilization of data analysis for instructional planning;
> Utilization of tools for instructional coaches (lesson design process, classroom
  observation protocol, content-based case studies);
> Reading current research and literature related to school reform and instructional
  coaching;
> Content and Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminar (Costa & Garmston, 2002)
  to explicitly develop the skill level and identity of those in the role of coach;
> Training in facilitation skills and the development of professional learning
  communities.

After the initial training, the school-based coaches were deployed to their assigned high schools.

District directors for the MSP grant were hired to monitor and provide on-site support of their

implementation. The design of the school- based coaching model included a full day weekly

professional development experience designed to enhance the skill set of coaches and problem-

solve issues they were facing. The remaining days of the week, not less than three full days, were

designated for classroom based professional development with teachers (self-report data and

annual report).

The site was selected because of access to the coaches and supplemental documentation

of program development. I was an employee of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic

Excellence for over nine years and during this time played a key role in the development of the

school based coaching model. The model of coaching changed and developed over time and because of the evolutionary nature of the work. In addition to the uniqueness of the study, as an employee in a leadership and program development role, I had access to documents and individuals most closely associated with the school based coaching model, and could pursue guiding research questions: What is the model of school based coaching?; What does it means to be a coach?; and, What are the intended and unintended outcomes of the model? The El Paso Collaborative's eighteen year history of professional development and extensive resources contributed much to the development of the school based coaching model. The extended duration of the model contributes to the complexity and richness of the research. This is not a model constructed and implemented in one year. As indicated earlier, the examination of the literature identified few sites where school based coaching had been studied after extended implementation. In the execution of the research project, I assumed the role of researcher and coordinator of the professional development efforts. This dual role facilitated the establishment of rapport with coaches as I participated in the development of the coaching model for nearly 10 years with particular focus since 2002 on the MSP grant that utilized the school-based coaches. It is this portion of the model that was studied. The dual roles also afforded me with the possibility of accessing extensive documents and information that is often not available to outsiders. This was of benefit even though it also posed certain challenges, specifically in regards to issues of validity. Those will be addressed in a separate section of this chapter.

Sample

My fieldwork consisted of over 50 hours of observations of school-based coaches, participating under the direction of The El Paso Collaborative. In addition, hundreds of hours of classroom observations, professional development seminars, and coaching conversations during

my five year tenure as the MSP K-12 Director, are included in the data for this study. This fieldwork took place in area middle and high schools where the coaches enacted their work. Co-teaching, lesson planning, small group lesson observations and debriefing, as well as departmental meetings and coach trainings were observed to capture the complexities, the enactment, and implementation of the school based coaching model.

Each person participating in the study received a letter of consent. This gave me permission to conduct extended face to face interviews and directly cite when appropriate. On site school and classroom observations were made throughout the duration of the grant and will contribute to the data collection sample as well as on site observations made by the researcher during this study. Observations were captured in journals and labeled by date. External reports and internal progress reports referencing the school based coaching model were summary in nature and contain no names of individuals or schools, helping to maintain the confidentiality of participants. A more extended description of the participants in the study and data collection will be forthcoming in this chapter. All interviews and data collection occurred within the approved parameters of an existing IRB as part of the ongoing research efforts at the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence.

During the years of 2003-2007, twenty-five mathematics and science school-based coaches, known as staff developers, participated in teacher professional development efforts in area middle and high schools. An initial focus group interview took place with nineteen school-based coaches in the summer of 2007 to set the stage for more extensive interviews. During this focus group conversation, the school-based coaches were asked to respond verbally and in writing to the following questions: what is school-based coaching, what is it not, and what three things are important lessons to share with others as a result of your time with teachers? These

responses provided guidance and focus to eleven extended interviews which took take place in late winter and spring of 2008. Purposeful sampling was incorporated for my study. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) purposeful sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select participants who are likely to yield "information-rich" responses. The extended relationships over several years as well as the focus group conversation allowed me to identify those most suited for the study. Those identified openly shared their responses and were willing respondents which afforded a data rich collection process. An open relationship creates a setting for an in depth study and observation of the participants in ways that would assist the researcher in studying participants as members of a culture, in order to determine how their behavior reflects their values, beliefs and actions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Patton, 2001; Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003)

In late winter of 2008, extended interviews began with nine of the original twenty-five school-based coaches and two district leaders intimately involved in the professional development model. Interviewing following ethnographic convention assumes that the perspective of others is meaningful and will contribute to the knowledge building of the study (Patton, 2002). The in-depth interviewing technique (Appendix A) and probes yielded in-depth responses about the school based coaches' perceptions, experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The intention of conducting extended interviews was to capture the perspectives and experiences from those most directly involved in the enactment of the school-based coaching model. The interview was used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher could develop insights on how subjects interpret and conceptualize their life as a school based coach (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006). These interviews, along with the participant observations, allowed me to understand how coaches conceptualize and translate such

41

conceptualizations into practice. It is through the analysis of interviews and supporting documents that the complexity involved in school based coaching is rendered.

Participants were selected for the interview process because of their extensive involvement and history with EPCAE. Those who know the work most intimately were selected. By conducting interviews with those most willing to share their extensive history and experiences, the researcher gained greater clarity and understanding of the model of school-based coaching, how it is enacted and resulting outcomes. Nineteen former school based coaches, representing over seventy-five percent of the originally employed school-based coaches, were contacted by phone, email, and face to face meetings requesting their participation in the study. The nineteen contacted were those for whom I had access and contact information. Not all of those contacted were necessarily the best participants for my study. In the selection process I considered those who might be most forthcoming and honest based on previous interactions. My intention was, as much as possible, to select individuals who would not filter their responses based on what they thought I desired to hear. Eight agreed to the interviews and observations and were selected for participation.

The Duality of Roles for the Researcher

In addition to the sample of school-based coaches and others described above, I contributed to the data collection process, layering a perspective to the developing documentation of the complexities of school based coaching as it is enacted in practice. This etic perspective, an outsider's perspective, to the study will influence the terminology and descriptions of the culture of school-based coaches in El Paso, Texas (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003). My perspective is drawn from nearly ten years as a staff member at the El Paso

42

Collaborative for Academic Excellence who was charged with the responsibility to design professional development for the school based coaches. In addition, the researcher's extensive and formal training in Cognitive Coaching (Costa and Garmston, 2002) adds to the understanding and enactment of the EPCAE model. The national model and experience in Cognitive Coaching provided a formal structure to build upon and a means to show the value of developing self-directedness and leadership that served as an anchor in the development of the El Paso Collaborative professional development plan for school based coaches. A unique aspect to this study was for the researcher to remain open to the subtleties that emerged during the interviews and participant observations. This was important to prevent what Johnson and Christensen (2007) call "researcher bias". The researcher must be reflexive, which means that "the researcher actively engages in critical self-reflection about his potential biases and predispositions" (p. 207). According to Erickson (2004) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), reflexivity provides the basis for new insights into the process of inquiry. Constructions of meaning are influenced by our experiences and our conversations. By including self systematically in the research, new accounts and understandings of actors and culture being studied can be gained. Reflexivity in research affords a genuine more authentic rendition of the model and coaches studied.

During the participant observations and interviews the scripting of detailed field notes were recorded; in addition, transcribed interviews helped to ensure fidelity to the process of data collection and allowed for the richest perspectives and insights to surface. Hammersley and Atkinson (1997) along with Krathwohl (2004) stress the importance of the researcher being willing to suspend judgment and analysis in the collection of the data so that authentic experiences are freely collected. To strengthen the validity of the study, I utilized a standardized

interview format and questions to ensure consistency in the interviews and decrease the possibility of researcher bias. The researcher remained open to the opportunity to probe for clarity and specificity during the interview process. All interviews and data collection occurred within the approved parameters of an existing IRB as part of the ongoing research efforts at the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence.

Another method that prevented researcher bias was the collection of multiple data sources. Access to two years of teacher surveys (over 200 per year), teacher, principal, and coach interviews will help to deepen the researcher's analysis. Additional supporting artifacts such as an electronic, self reporting log, completed daily by the coach, and professional development agendas are analyzed to compliment the fieldwork.

The in-depth interviews, observations, survey and artifacts review, along with the self-report observations and experiences from the researcher's history of the program and enactment of the model will weave a story of what it means to be a school-based coach in practice, as well as illustrate possible intended and unintended outcomes of the study.

Data Collection Strategies

To study, school-based coaching, I observed the various contexts in which coaches carry out their work. But most directly, because of my status as an employee of the El Paso Collaborative, experiences and perspectives were captured through extended interviews which occurred in the winter and spring of 2008. Extended observation is necessary to capture the multi-dimensional contexts and skill set necessary for a school-based coach to provide support and assistance to teachers. Thus, I observed the daily enactment of the coaches as they worked for four years with teachers in classrooms, facilitated content- based department meetings, and

constructed and led professional development for teachers within one school as well as district wide. These observations, in conjunction with extensive interviews, were used to understand the nuances of school based coaching. The participant observations and probing interviews provided the opportunity to study the phenomenon of school-based coaching through coaches in their natural context, making their own meaning and describing the enactment in their own words, a critical quality of naturalistic inquiry (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003). Analyses of conversations, written documents, observations and other artifacts showing investment in the model provided an understanding of the model of school-based coaching.

Data Analysis

This descriptive case study was written to support the reader in imagining the dynamics experienced by school-based coaches and their navigation through a variety of professional development opportunities in which they became a direct line of learning for teachers. Shulman (1992) describes a case study as a vehicle for inquiry and debate. Case studies, according to Shulman (1992) and others, allow readers and researchers to "think like a coach". Yin (2002) would agree that empirical inquiry is a value in a case study method of research. The case study method afforded the researcher the opportunity to study school-based coaching in a real life context. Case study, as a research strategy, is an all encompassing approach (Yin, 2002). Naturalistic inquiry, generated from personal and direct experiences, affords the researcher opportunity to thread experiences in ways that are accessible and add to understanding and conceptual development (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). Data was analyzed to develop evidence utilized to enrich the understanding of school based coaching as a model of professional development as it is enacted in practice.

The strategy and the purpose of thick description in a case study, according to Harry Wolcott (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003, p. 439), are to bring order to the descriptive data and uncover relationships related to the literature. Themes and patterns begin to emerge in the analyses of the observations and supporting data such as surveys, written artifacts, and interviews. According to Geertz (1973) thick description allows the reader to sort and link ideas for significance. Thick description is a compilation of threads of behaviors, gestures, language and moments of interaction. The significance is not in the solitary gesture or behavior, but the threads woven together from which meaning and greater understanding occurs. The perspectives and experiences of the school based coaches offered a view and insight into their world. Also important will be the voice of the researcher, as a participant, in the conceptualization and implementation of the model. Geertz (1973) writes of the importance of the moments of interaction and significance that occurs over time. The researcher's voice will enhance, not attempt to justify or legitimize other participant responses, the behaviors and meaning uncovered in the analysis of interview and observational data. The constructivist perspective of the researcher as a participant provided an authentic voice that Greene (1997) would argue provided a unique perspective to the meaning being crafted. This balcony view enhanced and did not distract from the analysis of the dissertation.

These analyses or triangulation of multiple sources of data afforded me, as the researcher the opportunity to draw conclusions and make inferences about implementation and conceptualization of the model of school-based coaching. Triangulation can enhance the validity of the findings. Triangulation will also be a key strategy utilized to address the dual roles in the study. The process of triangulation results in surfacing inconsistencies and contradictions that researchers must be aware of in the development of a line of inquiry or study. According to

46

Krathwohl (2004), the process of triangulation takes the comparisons of various sources of data and raises covert meanings which might be different than expressed meaning.

This interpretive study and analysis provided the reader with an opportunity to make sense of a reform based strategy for leadership and school improvement through the eyes and ears of the school based coaches as they experienced conceptualized and implemented one model of professional development. It was through the use of an interpretative approach that the story of the school based coaches emerged.

Stages of Analysis

The analysis of data involved several stages. The first stage involved familiarizing with the data collected on the field and transcribed during interviews with instructional coaches. Each transcription was organized by question. Not every question was asked of each person but the interview protocol assured that there was a level of consistency to each interview. Questions were not asked for three main reasons. First, if the interviewee began to deviate and explore a certain aspect of their work as an instructional coach then as the researcher I generally allowed this to occur which honored their viewpoint. Second, if the instructional coach raised an interesting point or as the researcher I ascertained that a probe was necessary, then a deviation from the interview questions was made. Finally, time was always a consideration. Each interview exceeded the time originally allotted. The researcher, I valued the time given for the interview and felt compelled to be sensitive to the needs of my interviewee. This meant that sometimes we met again or that we did not complete all of the interview questions.

During this initial analysis I began to track concepts most frequently stated (Charmaz, 2006). These became marker concepts indicating words of emphasis. It was through this list that

I began to see patterns emerge in the content and possible themes related to the enactment of work as an instructional coach. The coding of marker concepts assisted me in staying focused on the concepts and subsequent meaning made by the instructional coaches. As a researcher, it was important to me to remain open to the developing story and not get side tracked by specific questions. Certainly, there is an opportunity for this process in the analysis but in this first layer it was important to remain focused on the words and potential conceptual story of the instructional coaches. While simultaneously writing down the concepts most frequently utilized, I also began to maintain a list of notable statements. These are statements from instructional coaches that caused me to pause in my analysis, ponder or question. This was another point of data analysis that served to develop the story of the instructional coaches.

The next step in the process of analysis was to examine closely the responses of the instructional coaches by each question asked in the interview. I labeled sheets of paper with the three questions under consideration in this study. What is the model of school-based coaching and what is it not? What does it mean to be a coach? What are some of the intended and unintended consequences of school-based coaching? I assigned a marker color to each question in the study and as the transcriptions were reread once again, I began to highlight phrases, the words, concepts, and sentences that appeared to correspond to the appropriate research question. I reread the transcriptions each time with a focus on one of the three questions. Throughout this process many times that the data would be highlighted with more than one color. After highlighting the transcriptions I began to capture the corresponding data chunks by question on large sheets of paper. This assisted me in sorting the data and highlighting themes or patterns of the greatest significance. The next stage was to begin to identify concept labels for each question to further organize the data.

The next step in the data analysis process related to the transcriptions was to maintain a log of questions or thoughts that emerged for me as the researcher and participant of the work. Maintaining these thoughts, sentences, and questions afforded me space as the participant to capture connections and make inferences about the voices of the instructional coaches and their conceptualization of their work.

A final stage in the analysis was the triangulation of data through the use of additional resources. Using annual reports from the El Paso Collaborative, extended time in classrooms, and journal/staff notes all provided insights and were utilized to strengthen or refute findings. The data analysis process described provides credibility to the findings and a means to tell the story of instructional coaches in one city through the enactment of one model.

Issues of Validity and Generalizability

This case offers detailed description and careful attention to context with the aim of portraying and offering an analysis of school based coaching as observed and witnessed (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). The researcher assumed a dual role in this study: first, is the role as a researcher that maintains objectivity and is open to all aspects the data produces; second, is that of a participant. However, as the K-12 Math/Science Partnership Director, I was intimately involved in the program development and execution of professional development. Awareness and attention of the challenges both roles present will be a priority. The consistent interview format with a pre-determined set of open ended questions assisted the researcher in maintaining objectivity with participants. One advantage, supporting the validity during the data collection process is the conclusion of the grant/program initiative which formally funded and provided the mechanism for the work of the school based coaches. Although the El Paso Collaborative

continues to utilize a variation of the original model, at the time interviews were conducted, participants were under no formal obligation to the EPCAE organization or researcher. This allowed participants in the study to feel a sense of ease and freedom to respond to the interview questions authentically and without hesitation. It was truly a time that would avoid employment conflicts and thus provide more openness and honestly in their responses.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter Four the findings will reveal the story and evolution of one school-based coaching model through those who enacted it. From the findings the reader will understand the importance of building professional capacity from the perspective of the coaches but the challenges faced in the enactment. School-based coaches grounded themselves in the importance of professional development and maintained a strong commitment to their personal growth in their tenure as school-based coaches. Coaches saw themselves as important mechanisms for capacity building in others often struggled in the systematic implementation of this. This model for school-based coaching might be described as an experiment where the greatest benefit was to those in the lab receiving the experimental treatment.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

School based coaching models have gained currency as a response to various demands placed on public education that include tighter systems of accountability that demand higher levels of student achievement, the increasing emphasis on subject centered curriculum, and the preparation and retention of excellent teachers that can meet the ever increasing demands of the profession. School-based coaches are expected to provide teachers with additional and critical support to improve the academic outcomes of students in public schools. This subtle but prevalent imperative was reflected in the mission of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence's Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) Initiative and the documents that guided much of the work around the development of a school-based coaching model.

In this chapter, I describe and analyze how the school-based coaching model advanced by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence sought the ultimate goal of improving students' academic achievement in mathematics and science. Thus I focused on the work that coaches engaged in at various participating schools. Of concern was how the model posited coaching, how coaches interpreted their role, and with what intended and unintended results. Cast in this manner, my questions attempted to understand the intricacies of coaching, and the challenges that coaches encounter as their work is shaped by the programmatic aspects and goals of particular coaching model as well as the contextual conditions in which teaching and learning occur.

The Model in Writing

According to the El Paso Collaborative's website (www.epcae.org/msp), America's prosperity depends on a steady stream of mathematicians, scientists and problem solvers. The El Paso Collaborative believes that schools must have teachers who are skilled in these areas, as well as the leadership, practices, standards, and accountability so that teachers can do their jobs well. The El Paso Collaborative model of school-based coaching was constructed with this premise in mind and with input from external consultants, program staff, and influenced by coaches who enacted the model. Directly responsible for the development of the work with the school-based coaches was program staff based at the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence and four district directors, "on loan" for the duration of the project. The district directors worked closely with the El Paso Collaborative staff in structuring and developing the work of coaches in addition to their direct responsibility to supervise the coaches. According to the El Paso Collaborative (Annual Report, 2003; Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2008), the model of coaching included the following goals and priorities for school-based coaches: improve alignment with State curriculum standards; improve the use of student data; improve teacher questioning strategies to monitor learning; improve student engagement; raise the cognitive demand of lessons; and, create professional learning communities.

The coaching model was designed to provide assistance with lesson planning, feedback on practice, materials, and new tools to guide teacher's improvement. During an El Paso Collaborative planning meeting the model was described as revolutionary, emphasizing the potential to empower teachers to deepen their own learning and that of their students. The model was described by others in the meeting as revolutionary because it was seen as synergistic in that the teacher, coach, and students would all play a role in the creating and applying relevant,

52

timely lessons most meaningful for students and their learning. This model was unlike

professional development of the past at the El Paso Collaborative as indicated from notes during

a planning meeting in that it enabled learning to take place in the classroom and with those most

directly affected.

Job Description: Duties and Responsibilities

An initial step in creating the model by the El Paso Collaborative was to construct a

formal job description outlining the knowledge base necessary for those to be hired as a school-

based coach (Appendix B). The job description required a degree in secondary math and/or

science, extensive professional development experience, and three years or more teaching

experience in secondary mathematics or science. Another criterion in the job description was

demonstrated leadership experience and effective interpersonal skills.

Major duties and responsibilities detailed in the job description included providing

content based professional development using selected materials from the El Paso Collaborative.

In the first year, the professional development included the "unpacking" with the intended use,

the curriculum frameworks and modules related to specific areas of content such as Algebra and

Biology. The curriculum frameworks were developed by the El Paso Collaborative staff, K-12

practitioners and university faculty while staff concurrently developed the school-based coaching

model. The focus was on both state and national standards, and requirements for higher

education, and was meant to assist mathematics teachers in ensuring that K-12 courses are

aligned at each grade level and that the content is taught at the appropriate cognitive level. The

expectation was that as teachers use the frameworks to provide challenging courses and

curriculum in mathematics and science, the number of students having to enroll in remedial

courses at post-secondary will be reduced. This in turn validates the mission and intention of the El Paso Collaborative to have a steady stream of mathematicians and scientist in the work force.

Included in the duties and responsibilities was assistance to teachers in the analysis of student achievement data to guide curriculum, instruction and assessment. According to planning notes, El Paso Collaborative staff examined student data and determined modules in Algebra and Biology, known as TEXTEAMS-an extended series of content-based lessons, would be relevant content for use in equipping school-based coaches for their initial classroom implementation. The inquiry-based and student centered nature of the modules aligned with the intention of the model. According to the El Paso Collaborative Implementation Plan this was among the earliest professional development provided to coaches with the intention to arm coaches with a common content based anchor from which to begin their work. In addition to the responsibilities related to content and student achievement, school-based coaches were expected to establish close working relationships with teachers so that during the academic year and summer the coach could enhance teachers' content knowledge, pedagogy.

The job description required coaches to have not less than three years teaching experience in mathematics or science classrooms and be certified by the State maintaining a secondary content certificate. According to the El Paso Collaborative annual report and proposal, school-based coaches developed communities sustaining continuous improvement in their schools by developing and sharing new knowledge about teaching and learning. An expectation for school-based coaches was to raise student performance in mathematics and science by enacting a vision of standards-based and student centered instruction that included inquiry based teaching and assisting teachers in data analysis. To equip coaches for the above mentioned vision, the staff at the El Paso Collaborative organized for action with the school-based coaches

by preparing them with over one hundred hours of professional development in the first year alone, continuing this intensity of professional development in the three remaining years (EPCAE Annual Report, 2003). Structured professional development for coaches was focused on three main topics or Tools:

- pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) through content based learning, lesson study, case studies, and the PCK research based tools on common misconceptions;
- content and Cognitive Coaching SM and instructional strategies to facilitate entrée into classrooms and schools, the Professional Teaching Model (PTM) and Classroom Observation Protocol designed to provide instructional designed for lesson development and reflective practice; and,
- analysis of student achievement data (EPCAE Annual Report, 2003; Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2008).

Professional development received by coaches guided the implementation and transfer of best practices to the teachers with whom they work alongside in the classroom. The professional development was designed to impact the dynamic context of teaching in a time of high accountability for student learning.

Tools for Professional Development

In the absence of any one program or district based curriculum driving the work of coaches, a series of Tools served as anchors in the preparation, design, and roll out of professional development for both coaches and teachers. The Tools were intended to guide coaches' interactions with teachers. Primary Tools were those mentioned above: The Professional Teaching Model (PTM) to guide lesson planning; Classroom Observation Protocol

a rubric which described critical components of instruction and was used for classroom observation, feedback, and reflection through formal coaching conversation; content based case studies written by both external consultants and school-based coaches addressing challenges in content and practice; and Pedagogical Content Knowledge Reviews (PCK) similar to literature reviews focused on the most challenging areas of content and for middle grade students (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2007). The Tools grounded the professional development of the school-based coach and then in turn the coach used the Tools as a point of contact and focus with teachers. According to local El Paso Collaborative documents including annual reports and planning logs, expectation from program staff was that by utilizing the Tools misconceptions of content would be raised and addressed for both teacher and student, content knowledge would increase, skill related to pedagogical content knowledge would be strengthened, and in depth study and reflection on student/classroom data would lead to changes in the classroom practice that would then alter student achievement.

Professional Development for school-based coaches represented a significant part of the establishment of the coaching model. Commonly described in planning documents and by coaches as Monday Meetings, the twenty-five school–based coaches convened regularly for six hour sessions of professional development in the area of middle and high school mathematics and science, leadership development, and high quality instructional practices. In the first year of implementation coaches met once a week and then in the second, third, and fourth year professional development was held bi-monthly. The agendas were constructed and enacted by El Paso Collaborative staff and assisted by local district-based directors. Monday Meetings were grounded in a time of study and conversation, reading critical text on teaching and learning such as *How Students Learn* (2003) and *The Teaching Gap* (Stigler and Heibert, 1999), adult

facilitation skills, and wrestling with problems of practice anchored using the Tools for teachers and coaches.

According to the El Paso Collaborative Annual Report and Implementation Plan, Tools for coaches were introduced in the second and third year of coach implementation in schools. The work of school-based coaches was intensified and deepened as a result of the adoption of area districts local scope and sequence documents and increased levels of accountability by the state. This new intensity created urgency in coaches and staff detailed in El Paso Collaborative staff notes. It was described that coaches had expressed during professional development sessions feeling greater "push back" at the school and classroom level. Teachers were identified as more guarded and less willing to open their classrooms.

Tools were designed in order to facilitate the effectiveness of those in role of the school-based and to assist coaches in organizing for effort in their work with teachers. Action Agendas were constructed to assist staff and coaches in organizing for implementation in classrooms and schools. In the early stages of implementation, August of 2003, school-based coaches were provided an Action Agenda with a bulleted list of initial steps to take in order to begin to organize the three to four days a week spent in their assigned schools. Items such as: collect teacher schedules; collect and analyze student data; meet with department chairs and school staff; and identify one teacher whom a coach might co-teach in a classroom during the first several weeks of school were a part of the original Action Agenda. Co-teaching, as explained by a district director was a means to begin to share instructional strategies and build credibility in the eyes of a teacher. Staff expected school-based coaches to "hit the ground running" (self-report journal notes). Approximately every six to eight weeks El Paso Collaborative staff

continued to construct Action Agendas to guide and monitor the implementation of school-based coaches.

Another Tool introduced to coaches four months after their work began was the Professional Teaching Model (PTM). Adapted from the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas (planning notes), the PTM was a five step cycle was used to guide the planning, delivering and assessing of lessons with coaches and teachers. The PTM was a mechanism and roadmap to provide coaches an opportunity to analyze state standards and concepts to be learned in a lesson while considering the cognitive level of the lessons being developed and delivered. Developed in year two, continuing to year three, was a rubric used in conjunction with the PTM process which continued to be refined and internalized with each cycle of implementation. The locally developed Classroom Observation Protocol focused attention on key aspects of instruction, the cognitive demand of learning tasks, student engagement, and classroom discourse. Annual reports indicate the intention behind the Tool was to provide coaches and schools with a picture of what high quality math/science teaching and learning look liked in classrooms. The protocol was shared in draft form with coaches who then recommended suggestions and modifications over a series of eight revisions. According to agendas from coach professional development the protocol was used with coaches as a tool to analyze teaching and learning video lessons conducted during Monday professional development sessions.

In year three, one Tool provided to school-based coaches was the comprehensive seminar Cognitive Coaching SM. The formal training consisted of eight days of professional development designed to teach participants three maps and a set skills designed to enhance thinking and build the capacity for self-directed behavior. Self-directed behavior, according to

Costa and Garmston (2002) is signaled when teachers plan in advance and establish clear lesson goals, monitor the enactment of teaching making adjustments to improve student learning, and consider implications and adjustments for future teaching and learning opportunities. The three frameworks for conversations are the planning, reflecting and problem-resolving maps.

Another Tool provided to school-based coaches in years three and four were a series of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) tools and content case studies. The purpose of both tools was to provide coaches with conceptual background on key areas of mathematics and science identified as problematic for students and provides a set of strategies for coaches to use with teachers in addressing the most common misconceptions and problem areas. According to annual reports and planning notes the PCK tools were developed externally by university faculty and math/science experts as short literature reviews on major issues of content that included instructional strategies to address student misconceptions. The PCK tools were designed for coaches to employ in their school-based professional development with teachers providing a stepping stone for conversations around content. The PCK tools were also utilized in the Monday Meeting professional development time with coaches to bolster their knowledge base and increase their awareness of the most common misconceptions they might face in their classroom based work. The PCK tools were developed over two years and remained in draft for during much of the coaches' classroom implementation.

Summary

The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence constructed a model of school-based coaching with the belief that well prepared coaches with strong mathematics and science backgrounds and with deep understanding of pedagogy related to the content would have a positive impact on teacher practice and student learning. Toward this end, they developed a job

description with high expectations for content knowledge and specific responsibilities delineated. In addition, the El Paso Collaborative provided coaches with extensive, regular professional development including the development and rollout of a series of tools for use over the span of the implementation of the coaching model to assist coaches in their classroom based work. The model was described in a general way focusing on the tools developed as resources for the school-based coaches. Annual reports and planning logs show the model was shaped and reformed depending upon the issues faced by coaches in their districts and schools as well as how coaches responded to the regular professional development they received. There was an ebb and flow that existed in the development and implementation of the model.

<center>The Model as Translated</center>

The model as translated by school-based coaches is fraught with complexities because it involves interactions with coaches and teachers who are generally seen as peers. Complexities include interpersonal relationships between coaches and teachers in addition to the levels of actual preparation and perceived preparation on part of the coaches to assist teachers. An example of the complexities of a school-based coaches work is best described by a coach, "I had a folder of what I call my 'top ten', you know, the best lessons-the ones you do every year. I figured this would be a good place to start. I know these inside and out. They're not easy. I thought she (teacher) would see that I brought a lot to her class. It took me a long time to understand that she really didn't care about my lessons. She only cared about how I could help her today. Sometimes I still used them but I couldn't just bring them in. I had to be a little sneaky." This coach went on to describe the importance of understanding it wasn't how much she knew about the math, but how she learned to reach the teachers and then she could use what she knew about the content. The school-based coaches were hired with a solid foundation in

<center>60</center>

mathematics/science content in addition to solid pedagogical skills. The charge for coaches is to transmit, extend, and support increasing the content knowledge, pedagogy, and confidence in teachers to create a thriving learning environment for students. School-based coaches must organize for the collaborative effort they will undertake in classrooms. In part, coaches learn to do this through professional development in addition to their own experiences and enactment. This task is complicated by the increased emphasis on accountability and external assessment on student learning thus, creating a context for implementation that is filled with challenges and uncertainties for school-based coaches. The result of this complexity of implementation is exemplified by the insecurities coaches express, the reliance on provided tools for engagement, and the urgency identified by coaches for the capacity building in teachers. These complexities often result in fragmented implementation of the model.

New Ways for Engagement

The El Paso Collaborative model of school-based coaching was built on the principle that an external agent of change, the coach, becomes a part of the school(s) community by igniting and sharing learning opportunities with teachers. The Tools, Action Agendas, and job description were steps taken by the El Paso Collaborative to provide school-based coaches with a solid footing to enact their work in schools. Paradoxically, the coach is an external agent to the school(s) and in order to effect changes in practice, the coach must be accepted and received as a trusted member of the learning community. One coach stated, "I was just trying to fit in." To do this he described the importance of simply asking a teacher, "What's going on? How's it going with the kids?" The model of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence is one that presupposes a strong knowledge base and skill set of coaches. Although the model was introduced and supported in its implementation with hundreds of hours of professional

development and a series of Tools and artifacts the conceptualization and understanding of the model varies as represented by the coaches interviews and observations.

School-based coaches expressed the value for a high degree of content knowledge but conversely felt that their communication skills and ability to engage the teacher in thoughtful dialogue and inquiry were more significant qualities. In fact, each participant expressed the importance of this during their interviews. One common thread for all school-based coaches was learning how to approach, how to listen, and how to discern the appropriate and most significant way to begin building open and regular dialogue with the teachers whom they are charged with supporting. For coaches, it became a necessity to learn new ways of engaging with teachers because they were no longer viewed as equals in the professional relationship. The coach and teacher had distinct responsibilities and although for both, student achievement was an ultimate outcome, the coach was perceived to be an outsider and often times a person of role or knowledge authority.

In addition to content knowledge and teaching experience, coaches' job description stated that coaches should posses strong organizational skills and experience in developing and conducting professional development. This requirement served as a stretch for many school-based coaches because it pushed them to attempt new practices that called for better communicative, observation, and reflective skills. For instance a coach stated: "I can have the best lesson but if it ultimately doesn't get through to the students (or teachers) then it is about my teaching and not their learning." One coach shared her initial impressions as a coach, "I have it all-just let me go." She believed extensive content knowledge was the most essential quality for a school-based coach. She described her role as wearing different hats. In addition to content knowledge she had to be "pedagogically wise". The professional development coaches received

expanded their repertoire. They learned new strategies to access the content. "With these experiences and knowing how to listen both to students and teachers, I could understand the real need. I had to learn to think differently than I did as a teacher. My content wasn't enough; I had to have a passion to touch people and ways to share it." When asked how that passion was demonstrated and communicated the coach responded, "You've got to learn from other people, do different things, be willing to make a mistake and not hide it. Talk about it. Don't just sit there and cry. Get up and try something new. I had to learn to do this with the teacher."

In each interview, school-based coaches highlighted one intervention and skill set that supported teacher engagement in new ways. Cognitive Coaching SM taught school-based coaches how to open the door for learning. "Cada mente es un mundo," as one school-based coach stated. "Every mind is its own world". "I had to use the skills and tools I learned from Cognitive Coaching to unlock the mind, step into the mind of the teachers I worked with. They (principals) think you know how to do this because you are in the leadership role of a coach…I had to learn to how interact in a way that kept me from getting frustrated but also opened the door for learning with and from my teachers." Coaches described the importance of "putting themselves out there", in other words the school-based coach had to take a risk to be a public learner. Coaches determined if they would model and try a new process or wrestle with the unknown in an equation or uncertainty of new content in a lab the teachers would see them as learners. This perception allowed the teachers to take risks with the coach, to experiment and step out of their comfort zone. As coaches made public their construction of new knowledge, teachers began to let their guard down. One coach emphasized the importance of learning how to ask questions of inquiry so that teachers would question their content-knowledge. This inquiry stance afforded new knowledge to be constructed and modified.

63

When asked what it means to be a good communicator, a phrase used frequently, school-based coaches refer to key practices in Cognitive Coaching. One coach talked about the importance of being a good teacher in order to be a good coach. For her, a good teacher and coach is one who listens to her students/teachers. Listening well means you can ask questions for clarification and justification. "I had to listen to know the need…In my first classroom I thought I had all the answers. I also forgot I was there for the teacher… indirectly the students." This coach and others, emphasized the importance of the first level of engagement with teachers must be to ask what they felt they needed from a coach.

Coaches' conceptions of what it means to be a school-based coach and how they engage with teachers relates to mental models they hold internally. These mental models influence a coach's identity and the methods of engagement in their work and purpose. Mental Models are assumptions we operate from often associated with values, beliefs or principles. Peter Senge (2006) describes mental models as a key leadership principle. According to Senge, these mental models help us to make sense of the world and in turn influence how we take action. Those who display this discipline are able to bring personal assumptions to the surface, question them and engage in "learningful" conversations with others where they both inquire into the mental models of others and expose their own for scrutiny (Senge, 2006). For coaches, much of their emphasis in the beginning of their work was on whom the coaches perceived themselves to be versus what they saw as significant to do in their work.

Orienting and Organizing for Implementation

School-based coaches often used the term evolutionary to describe the model of school-based coaching. One coach described it in this way, "When we started, honestly, I didn't have a clue. I figured you come in deliver (a lesson) and leave. Now I see that over time we are building

to improve…increasing knowledge and understanding and bringing people together. It doesn't just happen overnight." Another coach stated we have to begin to look for patterns to understand what to do. Patterns in ourselves, our teachers, and even students." The model was modified based on school needs, grant requirements, and in some cases the voices of the coaches. As indicated by the program goals, work of the El Paso Collaborative school-based coaches was not confined to or driven by a specific mathematics or science program. A great deal of latitude and reasoning was given and expected of the coaches. The consistent professional development opportunities provided to coaches were the mechanisms to bring the intended model and enacted model by the coaches in closer alignment.

Coaches were expected to draw on their personal knowledge base but assimilate that with new professional development and resources they were being provided. At the end of her work, one coach described the model and lesson design in eight steps.

1. Study the research

2. Study the standards

3. Look at what is expected of students

4. Pull together our tools and resources

5. Come in (the classroom) and design what we expect out of the process

6. Put a plan together, alone or with a teacher

7. Implement it in the classroom; improve the content knowledge by modeling, using our coaching strategies and tools.

8. Analyze what we have done and reflect on it and do it again

When asked how and why she knew to do this she replied, "It's what I did in the classroom. I did it with my kids. It's what we do on the Mondays. We learned to call it PTM or Cognitive Coaching, we saw it in the Tools- the Protocol." What began as nebulous and fuzzy for some coaches became clearer as new resources, their functions, and purposes became a part of a coaches' repertoire and experience base. Each participant in the study spoke of the importance and purposeful nature the Tools provided in their work although not every coach used each Tool to the same degree. For many coaches the Tools became an organizing menu to select from as they deemed appropriate.

An example of a Monday Meeting Agenda is drawn from September 2, 2005. After welcoming the coaches an activity called Mix-Freeze-Pair was conducted, intending to set the stage for learning as well as make connections to previously assigned reading. Coaches then began to work in groups of four. The groups represented both math and science coaches. The task was to compare the principle, Building on Prior Knowledge, from *How Students Learn (2003)* and provide examples related to cognitive demands (levels of thinking). Later in the day coaches were asked to apply their understanding of two Tools mentioned above, the Classroom Observation Protocol and the Professional Teaching Model by generating a classroom based scenario intended to represent their understanding of key aspects of both Tools. An example offered during the session: A teacher might express concern for adequate wait time before receiving student responses (Classroom Observation Protocol). Before the teacher calls on a student, consider who has responded in the past and employ wait time. Pause for 5 seconds. A strategy to employ wait time is taking five steps across the room having no eye contact with students. The teacher then looks up and receives responses. This example provides a glimpse into the professional development provided to school-based coaches.

66

Planning for the use of the Tools and new approaches was an important skill to help coaches share their knowledge and passion. Coaches were exposed to content, process, and pedagogy in their professional development but juggling these and bringing them to the classroom was essential in their work. "I had to learn to schedule and prioritize my time. I had to learn to use the Palm Pilot and calendar. I remember one of my first days on campus. I went to a department chair's room and knocked on the door and said, "Hi, can I come in?" Her response, "No, not now!" I had to calendar my persistence. I had to keep showing up and that took planning.

Scheduling persistence was not all coaches had to do, they had to schedule blocks of time at several schools with many teachers. School-based coaches were assigned not less than two schools and in some cases up to five. Those interviewed were at any given time balancing not less than six teachers and in most cases ten or more teachers per campus. This required a great deal of flexibility and organization on the part of the coach. This challenge increased the urgency for school-based coaches to begin deliberately organizing small group sessions and cross school training opportunities hereby reaching more teachers in less time. The Tools presented at professional development sessions became a scaffold for coaches as they considered news ways of working with teachers. The Tools provided a menu of resources they could know and understand deeply and then draw upon those to meet specific needs expressed by teachers.

According to coaches, they spent not less than three days a week in classrooms with teachers. Five of those interviewed described the classroom work as mostly one to one with a teacher. For those remaining, the work was a combination of one on one time with a teacher during instructional time, professional conversations and training during department meetings, school wide professional development, and small groups of teacher teams. For many coaches,

this created some uncertainly. There wasn't a "play book" of sorts to follow. The coach was to draw from their prior knowledge as a practitioner, the research-based inquiry nature of the Monday Meetings, and the expressed needs of the teacher. This represents the reciprocal nature of the work in that just as teachers were asked to stretch their instructional boundaries and make new meaning to meet the needs of students, school based coaches were stretched to meet the needs of teachers.

Another coach described organization and scheduling as a battle. She said it always felt like someone got left out. "I had to gather schedules from all four of my campuses, determine needs (based on classroom visits and data analysis). For this coach, three approaches were utilized to organize her time: scheduling common staff development for all campuses; calendar schools a week at a time-a morning block and afternoon block; and determine which teachers needed one to one time. "The one to one time had to be strategic. I learned to invest time with teachers who had an expressed or observed need but also who were willing and open to having me in their classroom." The coach described how scheduling this strategy of one to one actually influenced others. She recalled one school she worked in had six teachers in the department. She attended department meetings/common planning and acted as a colleague, sharing ideas, strategies and problem solving with the six teachers. Two teachers were willing to have her schedule an extended number of days in their classroom. The coach soon realized she was influencing who she had internally labeled as the most resistant member of the team. The coach described how this influence occurred, "I found out as I planned with them, he (the resistant teacher) would ask the teachers for the lessons, he then did them in his classroom…he never let me in (his classroom), but indirectly I influenced what happened in the class. I had to be strategic in my schedule and know I could never get to everyone in the same way." She went on to

68

comment that it was important how she responded and interacted with her "more open" colleagues. In addition she stated, "If I had gloated or had the 'I told you so' attitude then I knew I would shut the door for learning with all of them…after all it's their school."

School-based coaches saw themselves as advocates for building and advancing professional community in schools and within departments which led to enhanced capacity in others. Coaches found they could be the unifying voice for a department; especially when they were provided consistent common planning time. Coaches shared the importance of "putting everything up front", "having no hidden agenda", "spelling it out", of "being transparent". Designated time with teams of teachers provided the school-based coach an opportunity to "present current research, or an instructional strategy, or analyze our department student data and then create a plan for action in the classroom…this way I gave the same message, I used the same words. Now, that didn't always mean everyone always listened with an open mind but time together took a way an element of secrecy." Each school-based coach emphasized the importance of and frustration with the element of time. Coaches overwhelmingly shared the frustration that there was never adequate time to fully engage teachers in complete cycles of planning, implementation and reflection. Given the number of schools assigned to school-based coaches, between two and six, and number of teachers it was increasingly difficult to plan in advance activities to be conducted with teachers. For many coaches, schools within the same district often operated different schedules. Once "invited" into a classroom by a teacher a school-based coach found the pace difficult to control. An initial observation and planning often took longer than anticipated and then a coach was forced to make a decision to stay with the teacher or abandon the early planning to meet the expectations of competing school. For several coaches their approach was to address large amounts of content or student expectations even if it meant

69

delaying attendance at another school. This would often lead to addressing more than could be learned and processed at the depth necessary for quality teaching and learning.

Common planning time was not a regular occurrence at each school. Campuses with designated professional development time within the school day had the opportunity to benefit from extended learning opportunities with school-based coaches. It was in these 45 to 90 minute sessions between one and four times and month where school-based coaches provided a significant number of teachers an opportunity to explore misconceptions in content, learn new instructional strategies, and engage in data analysis of current benchmark, State, and formative assessments.

Because school-based coaches are charged with providing quality teaching and learning experiences for classroom teachers in the most pliable setting- the classroom, coaches made choices and negotiations within their understanding of their role that influenced their decisions and enactment. One coach, explained how she did this: "Here let me (coach) model the problem first. Watch me, script my questions and then we'll talk about it." For other coaches, the choice was to assume the role of observer in the beginning. One described the importance of stepping back and watching. "I have to find my fit, if I move too quickly I might focus on what I think they need and not what the teacher wants." The use and application of professional development varied from coach to coach and for those interviewed it was often described as trial and error. There was an element of unpredictability in the work of the school based coach and that dynamic was often described as the teacher and the unknown classroom.

One school-based coach described the work like living on an island. She came back to the mainland during the Monday Meetings. For her, and others, the support gained from listening

and interacting with fellow school-based coaches was invaluable. Interestingly, it was often the informal points of interaction not the organized meeting time that was seen as most valuable ways to engage. One coach indicated that his lunches at a local restaurant, China Buffet, with fellow coaches often proved the most enlightening. For him, it was the relaxed nature that cultivated rich sharing and problem-solving. One might question if it was easier for a coach to remain instructionally unchanged and less provocative in creating opportunities to learn when commiserating with those living on similar islands.

For coaches, a cycle of learning and points of intervention were dependent upon the level of knowledge of the school-based coach and classroom teacher. This cycle was a new way to engage in teaching and learning. The cycle was summarized by coaches as:

A. Framing the question or problem

B. Have conversation, study, questioning, and data collection

C. Application and try it phase

D. Explore new learnings and understandings

E. Practice, internalization, and raising new questions

F. Revisions and new understandings for application
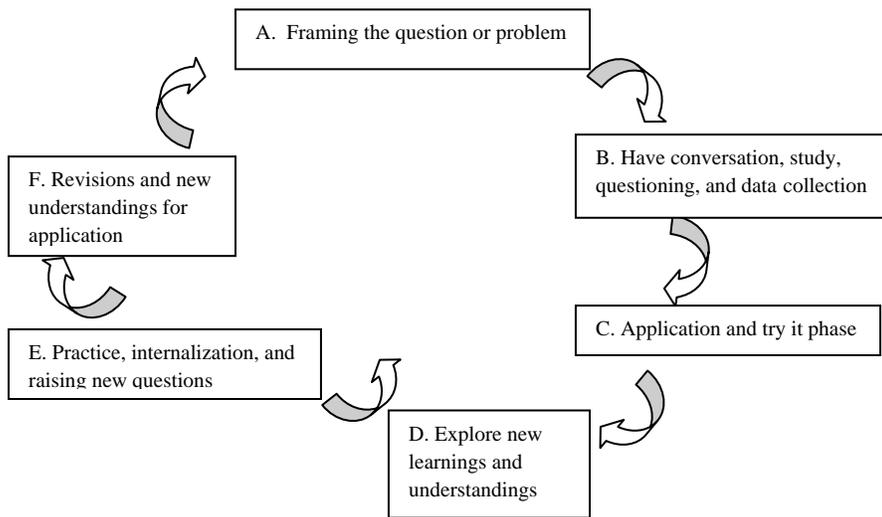
Much of the work with teachers was one to one and small group. Coaches expressed a results-minded attitude but did not always plan deliberately for their entrée into the learning cycle. Several coaches interviewed noted that initially the Monday Meetings moved too slowly from

conceptualization into action. Noted by one school-based coach, "How long do we talk before moving into action…action is where we can see implementation and growth." Consequently, many school-based coaches moved quickly into action at their school site(s) without necessarily a clear purpose and vision for what they were striving to accomplish (annual report, 2003).

Influences on Coaches' Efficacy

A tension existed for school coaches. Coaches had to take resources and personal learning and translate that in to purposeful action in schools. Without a formal mathematics or science program to guide the efforts of school-based coaches, what is the agenda they press forward with teachers? How do they create the professional relationship bound with a common purpose in improving teaching and learning? These questions and others caused coaches to question their level of confidence and credibility. Several coaches talked about the need to have more answers than questions before entering a teacher's classroom. Several coaches spoke of the pressure to be "right". The challenge inherent in this was the presupposition that the coach had diagnosed and knew the needs of a classroom before spending time with a teacher, analyzing data, or co-teaching. These activities provided coaches a sense of student understanding and classroom culture from which to influence their decisions and actions, According to one coach, he built credibility just by showing up at the classroom. "If I said I would be there, I was. Sometime I would only help with classroom management. It was safe for me and a need for the teacher. I really became a coach once I used the tools to get teachers to learn…then the light bulbs would go off."

Insecurity, for some coaches, developed as a result of the resistance often felt by coaches from teachers. For several coaches a structure such as Action Agenda provided a mechanism to make the work less personal and more professional. One coach shared, "I had a structure to guide

our steps, it wasn't about me or him…it was what is our next step." Another coach described it harder than her first year of teaching. In her early years of teaching she had to wrestle with her own insecurities, but was able to do that privately in her classroom with her students. As a coach she commented in the beginning teachers would test you to cover their own insecurities. The result of the insecurity was often demonstrated as competition of egos and led to unproductive learning opportunities. "I was surprised several (coaches) felt insecure in entering the classroom and sharing their content. They would work on an activity and plan a lesson independently or with fellow coaches (during a Monday Meeting), but in the classroom they wouldn't always walk the talk. I saw them facilitate learning as teachers of students in classrooms and even their personal learning, but as coaches they felt they had to tell teachers what to do versus letting them (teachers) discover it or have a conversation and investigate it (the content)."

Monday Meetings were the forum to frame the landscape of work the school-based coach would engage in at their school sites. For eight school-based coaches interviewed it was the translation of the Monday Meetings in to their independent practice that remained a challenge. School-based coaches held the common belief that changing thinking and behavior would result in increased student achievement. School-based coaches expressed the importance of displaying professional growth and cognitive dissonance. One coach describe her role as, "It is a way of being that describes and dictates your doing." This proved significant for coaches as they expressed the challenge of operating in a model where there was uncertainty. The uncertainty was due to the fact that interactions with teachers were not driven by a specific curriculum or textbook but by principles of teaching and learning. This belief was cultivated in a number of ways and translates in to a model for interaction at both the coach and teacher level. Eight participants in the study expressed a reciprocal nature to the development of the model. As the

knowledge base of the coach increased the model was adjusted and "tweaked. Monday Meetings were the private venue for the school-based coach to navigate through uncertainty of working with adults and grow in their understanding of mathematics and science. For many coaches the Monday Meeting was an opportunity to assume the role of learner. For others, it was difficult to be vulnerable in front of their colleagues and an element of competition and sometimes hostility took hold. "Everybody needs time to grow. Humility-knowing that you aren't the expert in everything…that was hard for some coaches. Some of them felt like they ALWAYS had to be right. You never felt like they were sincere…I tried to avoid those people after a while."

One interviewed coach expressed insecurity and a lack of sensitivity perceived related to the needs of coaches. In her words, "We didn't matter enough…our experiences should be used to determine the actions we take with teachers." Many of the school-based coaches found value in the Tools, readings and strategies they were learning but two commented regarding the lack of acknowledgement they felt for their personal knowledge base. "We had a lot of good ideas. If it didn't fit in the agenda then we really didn't have a chance to share what we knew." Many coaches saw the Monday Meeting time as a way to show their credibility through competition of words instead of viewing the knowledge base of the coach as the foundation all of the resources and Tools were dependent upon.

Learning for the coach became public during classroom interactions between school-based coaches and teachers. Seven school-based coaches interviewed and observed expressed the importance of initially modeling the kinds of behaviors and expectations they hoped to see developed. "I'll never ask a teacher to do what I'm not willing to try", expressed a coach. For many, the use of the Tools, described earlier, became an opportunity to publicly assume the

stance of a learner. School-based coaches identified several attributes or habits of mind which served them in their role and influenced their confidence.

Three main dispositions emerge as significant from the analysis of interviews. First, school-based coaches describe their need to be flexible and open to new ways of learning. For coaches, this appeared to be most significant as they began their work with teachers. Willingness to be flexible was a signal to teachers that the coaches' role was to provide support not to evaluate and criticize. School-based coaches soon realized that each teacher compelled a unique kind of support and approach. Just as students require differing instructional approaches, so is true for the teaching staff. Displaying perseverance, being consistent, and having a "thick skin" were all ways school-based coaches described the dispositions that allowed them to stay focused and attentive to their work. One coach described having the door shut in her face just as she approached the room for a scheduled classroom observation. Another coach commented that in her first year she had several teachers who were "absent" on the day they had scheduled either a demonstration or co-teaching opportunity in the classroom. When asked why they continued to persist and show up at the same teacher's door time and time again risking the click as the coach approached; coaches consistently commented it was because of their personal belief for the work they were taking part in. The commitment to students was a driver for several coaches. One coach commented, "Let's be honest, I took this job because I was going to make more money…it was a stepping stone. Now, I see how we (school-based coaches) can make a difference." This push back and avoidance by teachers carried over to the Monday Meetings in the coaches' attitude. It was difficult for some school-based coaches not to assume the role of victim in their work but to understand teachers often responded out of insecurity and lack of clarity about the role of the coach and potential relationship to be formed with school-based coaches. For those

school-based coaches able to develop productive working relationship with school staffs it was necessary to persist in the beginning. They had to believe in their abilities and value the presence and effort they could potentially provide to both teachers and students.

Coaches had to be learners before they were coaches for teachers. If the school-based coaches themselves experienced challenges in content, pedagogy, and explored the dynamics of interactions in teaching and learning then they were more likely to assist teachers in making these same examinations of practice. This time for learning was time to build internal credibility and confidence for coaches. Intensive time, trust among colleagues, and a set of Tools for anchoring the learning all influenced the translation of the model in practice.

Tools for Engagement

During the tenure of school-based coaches, each district put increasing pressure on teachers to implement district curricular documents. School-based coaches worked during a time of high accountability and state testing. El Paso Collaborative staff acknowledged coaches worked during a time of great pressure in schools and districts. As one coach stated, "It's all about the state Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test (TAKS). I'm on the district committee developing the benchmarks for science. The district wants everything to support the Test. We're supposed to be about teaching and learning." Teacher isolation and autonomy began to break down and teachers began to engage in collective professional development related to the issues and data most personal to them. Chunking, combining and refitting aspects of professional development, was a strategy school-based coaches relied on to meet the needs of teachers and keep the work manageable.

Coaches used the Tools, to break district expectations into manageable chunks. Coaches used the district expectations as an opportunity for conversation and professional study. One

coach shared the increasing emphasis and pressure on teachers to engage students in more lab based activities in Science. She commented that engagement in the PTM lesson design process with herself and two colleagues afforded her a way to raise questions about both content and practice while not appearing to be unprepared and ineffective in her teaching. The coach presented an instructional tool and fostered ownership and capacity in the teacher. The work of school-based coaches was often defined as problem solving. Problem solving related to issues of management and content. Coaches stated the importance of making teachers feel comfortable in order to push them to make them think. Raising questions related to teaching and learning was a primary role of coaches. Cognitive Coaching assisted coaches in knowing how to construct questions that enabled teachers to take risks in their learning. The Classroom Observation Protocol was a diagnostic tool that served to provide the menu of options for study in the PTM process. Teachers self-assessed their teaching and student learning using the Protocol. This assessment became the open door for investigation and inquiry and the way school-based coaches incorporated cognitively engaging questions into their planning and reflection.

The process of Cognitive Coaching created a structure for feedback and allowed learning to occur. "Cognitive Coaching provided me a plan to map out my PTM practice with teachers," commented one coach. "Most effective, was the Cognitive Coaching SM because this made me shift how I conducted myself as a person", expressed a coach." "I realized it was the content, developing the thinking (about the content), it was really developing leaders for the campus…it was grueling… I had to practice and practice but you get to this point that you just do it." One coach recalled an experience in a Chemistry classroom. The conversation was a reflecting conversation focused on assessing student learning and a particular task. The coach realized structuring feedback by asking questions such as, how does this assess student learning and what

ways does this impact student learning?" He commented that he knew what he saw in the classroom but when the teacher said…."Hmmm, I really don't think it assesses what I'm teaching and what my kids need." The coach commented that the technique of knowing how to listen and question was an art form.

Coaches found they learned a new language and process to engage in more thoughtful and timely planning with teachers. The steps of the PTM: study and compare resources and standards; design assessments; plan for the instructional lesson(s); implement the lesson(s); and finally analyze the process and learning were aligned with the Cognitive Coaching SM planning conversation map: establish a learning goal; determine indicators of success; determine strategies and approaches; examine the role of the teacher/coach; and reflect on the process and learning. One coach shared, "When I stopped with the labels and realized the processes were aligned, my work became more productive and seamless." Coaches found the alignment of the process of Cognitive Coaching to the Professional Teaching Model (PTM) beneficial. The conversation frameworks provided guidance for most every conversation a coach might engage in. Tools and skills learned to facilitate the use of the maps include paraphrasing, pausing and wait time, and the structure crafting and asking meditational questions; the goal being to support and enhance thinking. A school-based coach described the PTM and Cognitive Coaching process like something of a marriage, "There is a give and take-a blur of lines-like spouses- they flow together (laughter) usually!"

Another application of a Tool identified by a coach was the Classroom Observation Protocol. It was described by a coach at an afternoon professional development session as a "tool for collegial and purposeful conversations about teaching and learning." She went on to share with her science teachers that the Observation Protocol allowed learning to be public, opening up

with one another focusing on areas that were most important for students. In this case, teachers selected four areas for study during their afternoon professional development session:

- The opening of a lesson and summary of previous learning;

- During the main work period, are students making connections and applying concepts to solve problems;

- Who is doing the talking in the class and who justifies answers? And;

- Opportunities to synthesize learning during the daily closing.

Teachers spent 35-40 minutes in a colleague's classroom collecting student work samples, the questions asked, and the tasks assigned to students. After the observation, teachers reconvened in a small group setting to debrief and analyze what they observed. Conversations and questions were anchored in the data collected from observations and the Classroom Observation Protocol. For this coach, she emphasized the collaborative and inquiry nature of the observation. She stressed that it was about how we could question our practice collectively not judge another colleague. For her, this Tool provided guidance and a structure to influence instructional conversations.

Two coaches chose the strategy of observe and support and saw the Tools as having less direct and deliberate application for their work. Their approach involved little planning on part of the school-based coach and relied on their personal knowledge base and experiences. This became problematic in that the coach was seen as a sounding board and another set of hands, but missed the opportunity to leverage significant changes in the classroom because each day was unexpected and unplanned. With this approach, there was little opportunity for deliberate instructional intervention and advancement. Another coach found the use of the Observation

Protocol less helpful in her work with teaches. "I liked it as a discussion tool for us (coaches). We could talk about our classrooms more objectively, but I found it difficult to get others to see it as something that wasn't evaluative. I pretty much gave up on it. I didn't use it much." For coaches it was not just the accessibility to Tools and structures for their work but understanding how to use them with teachers that provided support in the enactment of the model.

Most coaches found purpose in using the Tools to engage and maintain the focus on teaching and learning. For example, the Professional Teaching Model (PTM) provided a lesson development structure giving emphasis to the study and inquiry of what students should know and be able to do in addition to the consideration of the level of cognitive engagement. The PTM process also provided opportunity for school-based coaches to assess and reflect on the lesson design process with teachers while using their Cognitive Coaching skills. It was in this phase of reflection and analysis that new insights often occurred. The coaches' skill at asking meditational questions based on a lesson design process was viewed through the lens of the Protocol. This was collaboratively enacted and created the safe environment and mechanism for analysis of lesson implementation. This process became a place of common ground for teachers and coaches. The Tools became a leverage point for school-based coaches in their work with teachers. Tools such as the PTM, Cognitive Coaching SM, and the Classroom Observation Protocol were useful mechanisms in negotiating district obligations and expectations while attending to issues of teaching and learning.

Urgency for Capacity Building

Coaches experienced the model as a capacity building professional development model. Explained by the school-based coaches as a means to "teach teachers" with an end result signaling improvement in student achievement. One coach described capacity building in this

way, "That means that teachers are able to help kids meet their needs and we are able to do that together. We work together to extend their knowledge-content and pedagogy- then they (teachers and kids) use this work as a lifetime learner even when we are not there." The capacity building aspect of the model simultaneously impacted the growth of the school-based coach. For each participant in the study this was identified as a personal benefit of participation. The school-based coaches engaged in inquiry-based learning and then in varying degrees and methodologies transferred these practices to the teachers with whom they supported. One school-coach realized that without the study, dialogue, and rehearsal phases of the coach-based professional development (Monday Meetings) their understanding would be lacking and the coach could speak less authentically with teachers. Coaches identified two ways they built capacity: attending to trust and the level of cognitive engagement and engaging in meta-cognitive behavior;

Each school-based coach expressed this importance of encouraging and expecting cognitive engagement from the teachers with whom they worked alongside. Cognitive engagement was explained by coaches as a willingness to express an instructional need and then respond to that expressed need. The coach has the responsibility to open the window of discourse related to teaching and learning. For many teachers the willingness to engage or "play", referred to by one coach, was dependent on the level of trust expressed between the teacher and school-based coach.

The importance of trust described by coaches is congruent with the research of Bryk and Schneider (2002) who describe three types of trust in learning communities: organic trust, contractual trust, and relational trust. Displaying organic trust is operating from the belief that you are doing what is right. Contractual trust exists when one's actions support the completion of a product or scope of work defined. Relational trust is the congruence of one's actions and

beliefs. The researchers identified relational trust as that which unites both organic and contractual trust and can impact the capacity of a community and improve student learning. According to school-based coaches, teachers were more likely to open their classroom doors and engage in learning with coaches only when they felt little threat of evaluation and judgment. A willingness to be vulnerable and sensing genuine professional concern, qualities of relational trust, allowed teachers to step into the work of teaching and learning with a school-based coach. As one coach described, "I tried to make the risk minimal, making them (teachers) as comfortable as possible. I tried to build the trust by not ridiculing them, build up their confidence. I wouldn't judge them. It is about teaching and learning and a process of growth-not good and bad." She stressed that you couldn't lose sight of what you were trying to accomplish. "I had to influence teaching and learning. I did this by modeling, sharing resources, asking questions and ultimately listening."

Building capacity was also demonstrated by coaches as they engaged in meta-cognitive behavior. Meta-cognitive behavior, defined by coaches as thinking about your thinking, enabled school-based coaches to articulate their perspectives and rationale with teachers in ways that maintained open lines of communication and opportunities for collaboration. This behavior became a basis for engaging in reflective practice as well. When coaches are "thinking aloud" their actions are given meaning. One coach expressed the ability to bring new ideas and approaches to the classroom without sounding as if she believed the teacher was inadequate with whom she was working. Coaches described this as a subtle approach to building the capacity of the teacher. Coaches operated from an assumption that the teacher would recognize the action as an instructional approach or strategy he/she might consider implementing, ultimately having a lasting impact.

A classroom observation demonstrates one coach's use of the capacity building strategy of meta-cognition. During the four minute passing period before the beginning of class the coach and teacher were placing colored math cubes in the center of each of the six tables and the coach said aloud, "I know we need to shoot for 100% engagement instead of what seems like 50%. I'm wondering if we collect data during the math launch and work period if it might begin to help us analyze what's really going on. I'm thinking about keeping a tally of who is talking and how often." The coach never made eye contact with the teacher but spoke aloud as they moved table to table. Neither the coach nor teacher confirmed the use of the strategy with the other but the coach proceeded to rip a sheet of paper in half and tape it to a roll sheet listing the names of the students. She placed this on a clip board and set it next to the basket of manipulatives and the mathematics textbook. Class began. In the first four minutes of the lesson the coach made two tally marks. Seven minutes into the lesson the teacher also began to make tally marks as well. During a follow up conversation about this observation the coach was asked about her intention. She commented: "I knew if I made a suggestion and expected a response the teacher would feel threatened…you know like I'm better or know more. But see, this way I shared a strategy that got us some good data and she was more comfortable." Engaging in meta-cognitive behavior was an immediate tool of engagement with teachers and maintained a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom. According to coaches when teachers were more relaxed and comfortable there was a greater willingness to try and sustain instructional approaches that lead to capacity in the classroom.

School-based coaches engage in their work within the complex and rapidly changing environment of the classroom. The context of the classroom forces a coach to make decisions and choices about how they interact and engage with teachers. These decisions are both congruent and incongruent with the model as written and taught through professional development. Examples highlight the complex nature of the enactment of the role of a school-based coach and the fragmented implementation of the model as a result of the context.

This example is a description from an El Paso Collaborative notebook containing observations and coach questions and feedback and written as I observed the practice. I am approaching the long, narrow training room about 50 feet x 25 feet where three school-based coaches (staff developers) are conducting day 4 of the TEXTEAMS module on Integrating Physics and Chemistry. The room is filled with 8 oblong wooden tables, angled so that each person can see the head of the room. There are four tables on each side of the room with 6 plush red cushion backed chairs seating the 48 high school teachers attending the training. As I enter the back of the room I hear bursts of laughter and chatter. I see several people moving across the center aisle to another table conversing and sharing what looks like elastic play dough. I find a place in the back of the room and observe the group of teachers at the back table on the left side. I am surprised to see a young girl about 8 years old sitting off to the side and bundled up in a jacket with a can of apple juice and a book sitting on her lap. She offers a slight smile as I sit on the table next to her. The teachers table is covered with four beakers of various sizes, chart paper with a data table drawn on it, markers, a green box of Borax, a gallon of spring water, a bag of Doritos-opened and half eaten, a large bottle of Elmer's glue, and four plastic sandwich bags. Two teachers are standing next to the table, one holding a measuring stick next to a lavender

colored mass about the size of a small potato. The teachers are measuring how long the mass can stretch without breaking. Much of the conversation at the table I am observing is not discernable because it is a language other than English. I assume it is Filipino because one of the teachers at the table I had met at a meeting earlier in the year. During this time she shared that this was her second year teaching in the U.S. from the Philippines. The three coaches are roaming from table to table, leaning over each table as they talk to the group of teachers. The conversation and laughter grows as the teachers at each table measure the colored mass and record the data on their chart paper The three coaches always seem to be evenly spread out throughout the room There is only a brief 30 second interaction between them before one coach speaks to the group. She stands just right of the middle by the wall and tries twice to get the attention of the group by calling out to them. On her third try she raises her hand in silence and immediately the other two coaches raise their hand in silence. Several teachers raise their hands and the room is filled now with murmurs of conversation unfinished. The coach instructs the group they have only two minutes until each table presents their data at the front of the room.

When asked about the observation and professional development session one coach commented on the difficulty of maintaining teacher's attention. "We have to do everything we can, food, games… you know. It's hard. We are asking them to try this stuff and after school! Sometimes it's the only time we have." She went on to comment that sometimes she did not delve into the content as she would have liked because of time restraints. "We can't get it all done in a day." She went on to say that her hope was that the spark of enthusiasm and "fun experiments" would keep the teachers interested and asking for support. She also went on to state the significance of providing professional development with other coaches. "If we had to do it alone, geeze, I'm not sure we could get it all done. We spend hours prepping and then it's over."

Most coaches shared a frustration. The frustration was the challenge they felt to reach

teachers in compelling ways while breaking through the barrier or wall of mistrust by teachers.

This lack of trust was often as a result of past interactions. A coach shared the reaction by one

teacher, "We had you (coaches) before. It just meant more work for me. I always felt I had to

watch my back." In some cases, coaches made conscious choices in how they spent their time

albeit different from their Action Agenda. One coach shared, "I found that by the time I got my

foot in the door and could actually co-teach, it was time to move on. How am I supposed to do the

PTM if they don't even let me in? It's tough. I know we weren't supposed to but sometimes you

gotta do the stuff they need… I would make copies and even help check the lab sheets. I know it

was busy work but that's what they needed…later on they might be willing to try (the PTM).

Another coach described his deliberate decision to assist a teacher in preparing for a lab.

"One thing I learned…we had to get teachers to do more labs. I know we had to do this. The

district wants this too but teachers, you know, they don't have time to get it all ready…Remember

when we were gonna do the chemistry PTM…they didn't want to do it. Too much stuff…I know

it wasn't that bad but it seemed like a lot. So, I would get the stuff. Teachers liked that. They felt

like I got it. It took time-I was at Wal-Mart a lot. You know, this helped me. Not everybody, not

everybody would do it with me but a lot of them saw the benefit and then let me stay in their

classroom."

One example drawn from log notebooks captured the experience of one coach who

believed her actions were in alignment with the goals to build internal capacity through

questioning. The log notes explain a coach's intention during a professional development session

to ask authentic questions of teachers. Authentic questions were described by the coach as

questions related to the content being studied and what was "actually going on" in the classroom.

She went on to explain that she wanted to keep her opinion out of it. "It's not about me." A later entry detailed the coach speaking with a teacher during her conference period about a recent lesson. Two questions asked were written down in the log notebook. First, "why didn't you…" and second, "If you had taught the alternate formula the kids would have… why didn't you do what we talked about." This example captures the challenge coaches face in the classroom. A coach can express a desire or intention but in the moment of enactment the challenging context of the classroom can influence the coaches' interactions.

The navigation coaches had to make on a daily basis was a difficult one for many coaches. Coaches were active participants in the learning process but log notebooks, interviews and observations show the difficulty coaches faced in making sense of their learning in the context of the classroom.

Summary

When asked to describe what one hoped to see as a result of the School-based Coaching Model of professional development one director stressed the importance of being embedded in an organization, a seamless member of a school community. She stressed the importance of leadership. "If I did it again, I would look more closely at leadership skills-even if they didn't have all the content-if they (coaches) knew how to listen and not shut teachers down then this would help keep an open line of communication with their school." Others shared in the value of leadership and its representation in the classroom. Leadership for coaches was most often demonstrated in their methods of engaging with colleagues and capacity building approaches. Coaches describe the Model as a cohesive network of individuals working together, learning from one another, and holding themselves and their colleagues accountable for learning. One coach offered a metaphor to describe what a coach does and who a coach is: "It is like being a

priest for a church…the priest, yes he wants to build a good congregation, he wants to spread the Word, but it is sort of…so in a way he wants the church to grow but at the same time… he is selfless on his part… it can't be about him. It has to be about the people in his church seeking out wanting to grow. To be that kind of person …not selfish… concerned about others…it's not about me growing-- even though you do." For her, it was unlike other professional development of the past, "Coaches are as close to the teachers and children as possible…dealing with what they face on a moment to moment basis…trying to make the best of it." Without a program to guide the teacher and coach a significant amount of discretion was held by both parties. The school-based coach held responsibility to share the process and potential value of the model in such a way that conversations related to teaching and learning and classroom practice would be altered.

<center>The Model as Achieved and Analyzed in Context</center>

School-based coaches operated in an era of accountability and pressure from State and Federal requirements to ensure that all students were achieving at high levels. School-based coaches also reacted to pressure related to the written model. They were expected to internalize the written model and enact it in ways that influenced the classroom teaching and learning environment. This task was filled with complexity. The school-based coaching model at the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence was not constructed to have coaches act and respond as independent agents of change. Instead they were to be a part of a collective body whose charge was to impact teaching and learning in area classrooms. Coaches adapted to their role over time and as a result of their experiences. In my study I assert the complexity and evolution of the model and how pressures on coaches impacted the coaches' level of security for enactment and learning. This was evidenced in their relationships. The story of the El Paso

<center>88</center>

Collaborative for Academic Excellence's model of school-based coaching is a story of

relationships toward learning.

Coach: Personal Development

School-based coaches grew personally and grew in their knowledge of instructional

practices and content as a result of the professional development they received and provided.

This knowledge base did not always transfer to teachers in the classroom. The professional

development for the school-based coach became a lab for personal development. The

professional development was designed to engage coaches in study and reflection of the content

and raise uncertainties related to teaching and learning. The intention of the school-based coach

was not to be selfish and self-absorbed in their learning but for many the balance of personal

learning and professional responsibility was difficult to manage. The structure of the school-

based coach work was such that raising questions and uncertainties was behavior valued by El

Paso Collaborative staff. This value might have been held by coaches as well, but if they did not

understand how to manage their own learning while simultaneously extending and supporting

teachers then the transfer and invitation to learn for teachers likely would not occur. Coaches

mentioned the value they held for being meta-cognitive in their work with teachers but often

found it difficult to embrace this in their own professional development. Coaches utilized this

capacity in isolation. Least often in the very setting that coaches could be unguarded and

embrace the stance of a learner.

Content Knowledge and Confidence

In many cases the school-based coach was being challenged and expected to engage in

ways that were personally unfamiliar and cognitively challenging. The job description for

coaches emphasized the importance of a high degree of content knowledge demonstrated through the acquisition of a secondary certification. It has been stated that "elementary teachers teach students and secondary teachers teach content". In theory, secondary certification in mathematics or science should translate to a certain level of confidence in sharing that content knowledge in such a way as to effect change in the classroom. In this model coaches were posited to work with secondary teachers. If teachers and coaches operate from the statement above then the emphasis in professional development would need to be altered for the teaching and learning environment to be more student centered and inquiry-based as indicated by the goals of the El Paso Collaborative coaching model. Coaches had to understand how to access the knowledge base of teachers as well as engage them. The content knowledge was not enough. This contributed to coaches insecurities. For many coaches they relied on the content they knew and personal experience to guide their classroom work.

Professional development sessions, with participation of post-secondary mathematics/science faculty, coaches experienced the same cognitive dissonance raised with teachers in classrooms. The challenge for coaches was the difficulty many had in examining their own depth of knowledge. This was particularly true in science. Certification is awarded by a specific discipline such as Biology or Chemistry yet there were no distinctions in coach's school and classroom assignments. Coaches were asked to work with all mathematics/science teachers on staff. In addition, persons selected for coach positions might have secondary certification yet primarily have actual teaching experience in middle grades. When a coach was asked to invest time with teacher with high school experience the coaches' personal knowledge base was often challenged. A teacher might test the knowledge of the coach and the coach might speak in generalities or speak out of their comfort level. The lack of confidence and defensiveness

90

deterred the coach and teacher from reducing their guard and embracing the inquiry nature of their work.

Coaches were in leadership positions and held a presupposition that they had answers and could affect change. In an era of accountability students and teachers felt the pressure for progress often measured by "how high their scores are" and "how many questions they (students) got right". Coaches' confidence was shaken because of external pressures teachers were under. Many coaches shared the difficulty in having teachers trust them enough to let go of the test driven materials they used to try a process like the PTM which was going to "eat up" two weeks of instructional time. Coaches were asking teachers to buck their own system and with approaches that coaches themselves were not fully comfortable with.

Readiness for Implementation

The El Paso Collaborative built a history on providing professional development to teachers. Staff determined the development of instructional tools would provide access to classrooms and bridge relationships with teachers. Conceptually this made sense but practically the development of the tools took time. Upon hiring the school-based coaches only two tools were in draft form, the curriculum frameworks for mathematics and two content based modules known as TEXTEAMS. The PTM was soon to follow in draft form four to five months later. Because Tools were not classroom ready, in the critical early stages of implementation, coaches had to draw on their own knowledge base and experiences as they worked with teachers. The model evolved as the tools developed and the tools were richer as a result of the classroom experiences coaches brought to the developmental table. A difficulty for many coaches was learning to be okay with the ambiguous aspects of the model while not letting go of the core

principles and mission. Describing the model and its development might be likened to that of a science experiment. You generate a hypothesis or theory and then experiment, trying out methods and approaches while monitoring and adjusting. Experiments are often conducted more than once looking for patterns and findings that can be replicated.

New Learning

I am reminded of when I was learning something new and difficult and had the expectation to extend that learning to others. Two criteria were present for the learning and transfer to occur. I was passionate about the content I was learning, holding value in the work. In addition, there was a structure to present the content to others. I was not constructing the mechanism for transfer- only implementing it. This is unlike what the school-based coaches in the study experienced. By having the mechanism in place, in my case a training design and a framework, I was able to focus on the excitement and value perceived in the content and assimilation of new learning. My energies were spent on the cultivation of the learning and passion in others instead of on the construction of the learning framework. Costa and Garmston's model of Cognitive Coaching (2002) provide a lens from which to explain this. The authors describe support functions to guide the decisions coaches make in how and when to intervene with colleagues. Three support functions- Cognitive Coaching, collaboration, and consulting interact to improve instructional practice. Each function plays a different role, with different intentions and mechanisms.

1. Cognitive Coaching SM: The intention is to transform effectiveness of decision making, mental models, thoughts and perceptions to habituate reflection.
2. Collaborating: The intention is to form ideas, approaches, and focus on inquiry.

3. Consulting: The intention is to <u>inform </u>regarding pedagogy, curriculum, policies and provide technical assistance.

Coaches are constantly making decisions on how and when to intervene with teachers with the desire to build thinking capacity in the teacher. In other words, when the coach is not present with the teacher, the teacher has internal skills and strategies to draw from to make thoughtful choices, establish and monitor plans, and navigate through struggles that present themselves in the classroom. The quote describes the pull and tension for school-based coaches as they make constant decisions about when and how to intervene with teachers.

> "The coaching actually comes through the models or tools we have learned as staff developers (school-based coaches). What I mean is I am getting them (teachers) to start thinking differently about what they are doing not me telling them this is what you need to do but me guiding them and asking questions that is guiding them to new ways of thinking, teaching in the classroom, or lesson planning, or thinking about student learning. And then moving on from there to let's actually start to do something-plan the lesson let's try this lets start planning and once again that's where I am still questioning and still talking. I am not telling them do this, do that, do this, do that. I am helping to guide their thinking as to what the lesson looks like or what should we do. Occasionally I might have to you know, I might have to say something to get them back on focus. I can do this because I know enough content, it's our focus. I can see something that would be critical for kids to learn that we are missing. Normally, it is about guiding their thinking. It's important that the students, uh, the teachers do the discovery

of the lesson planning or the pedagogy because if the light bulb goes off in them…they own it, they know it, and they want to continue to try it. They don't just say ok I'll give you one try and put on the dog and pony show. It's where they say hey this is working. Not I was right or they were right. They see I can really continue to do this."

My study reveals the desire coaches have to build the cognitive capacity of others. This was expressed as a benefit as a result of receiving formal coaching training. The application and internalization of these coaching skills and the school-based coaches' ease from which they move from one support function to another tells a different story. Inherent in the work of the coach is the assumption that school-based coaches can determine the varied needs of teachers accurately as they are presented in the classroom. The data reveal the importance of the Tools developed during the tenure of the school-based coaches. These Tools became the mechanism for action with teachers. In addition to the Tool development, is the need for greater diagnostic measures for coaches. What questions should a coach ask to determine need? What is represented in the classroom that might determine a need? The canvas school-based coaches operated from was so vast and this made decision making more complex and that can lead to limited and often unproductive decisions on ways to intervene with teachers.

School-based coaches were expected to draw on their classroom teaching experiences and research based instructional practices in order to change practice and impact instructional practice in others with whom in many cases they did not have an established relationship with. The framework for coach interactions became more apparent with the construction of the Tools. This explains the representation in the data where school-based coaches expressed a lack of sensitivity by program staff to their personal knowledge base. In my personal experience

mentioned above I selected and chose the area of passion and focus. This was congruent with the needs of the program and grant constraints but none the less I was a decision maker in the selection of content. Programmatic decisions were made, with good intention, but in the initially parameters were determined for coaches. One might wonder if a greater stance of inquiry and investigation into both the knowledge base of the coaches and their suggested guidance might have yielded greater transfer into implementation.

Summary

My study set out to capture essential learning and meaning related to what contributes to the construction and enactment of a model for a school based coaching. School-based coaches learned to exist in two arenas. First, coaches experienced interactions that enriched and supported their personal growth. Coaches learned from one another and from program staff. The majority of their time for learning existed with teachers in classrooms where they were charged with the assimilation and implementation of prior learning. Next, mechanisms and structures were necessary supports for school-based coaches that influenced their understanding and enactment of the model especially in a time of accountability and external pressure for schools. The timing and development of the structures and mechanisms created a breakdown for coaches. Although coaches valued their personal learning, this breakdown often created a lack of confidence that resulted in fragmented implementation. Coaches lacked a complete toolkit to manage the complexities of enactment.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Review of Purpose

School-based professional development addresses issues of practice in the classroom. Teacher practice is then examined in the context where it occurs. Increased awareness of issues of teaching and learning can then be addressed in safe and authentic environments (Coburn, 2003). Current trends in professional development utilize the practice of school-based coaches to raise levels of awareness and elevate the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. These coaches provide organized instructional support and assistance to classroom teachers (Neufeld and Roper, 2002). Few studies have examined what it means to be a coach and how coaches are socialized into their role. This study examined the role of the school-based coach, how coaches view their role, and their work related to improving teaching and learning. This study examines the role and enactment from the view of the school-based coach. My study set out to understand what it means to be a school-based coach is from the voice and stance of those most directly involved in its enactment. Anecdotal and conceptual research tries to capture the approach and implementation of school-based coaching, but this is most often captured from the perspective of those who develop, promote or fund those in the positions of school-based coach. Little empirical research has been conducted that tells the story and complexity of a school-based coach from the voice and enactment of the coach. With greater understanding of how school-based coaches conceptualize and enact their role; practitioners, professional development providers, and policy makers will be afforded perspectives and new understandings to guide the decision making which influences and impacts future teacher and student learning.

Descriptive Research

Descriptive studies give us important details. It allows researchers to make careful descriptions of educational phenomena. The primary concern in descriptive research is to consider "what is". It is not concerned with solving a problem or providing a clear cause and effect relationship. Descriptive research provides an opportunity for in depth portrayal into the complexity of one or more cases in a particular system or situation. These details can influence our decisions and understanding of particular systems and cultures. The details and complexities highlighted can then be represented in a particular context giving the reader a rich, detailed and specific depiction of the actors involved.

It was important, in my study, to use a descriptive and interpretive approach. The professional development model of school-based coaching is filled with complexities and the enactment of the model by the coaches warrants a descriptive approach. The actions and substance of the coaches was best captured over an extended period of study. The story and significance of the actors was detailed through thick description. From the description, nuances and the complexities, detailed in such a way that the reader can step into the role and meaning the coach gives to the model and their translation of what it means to be a coach.

An examination of other research and this model of school-based coaching yield several comparisons. Generalities that can be drawn from the models studied include the scope of coaches' work. In many cases, it is indicated that coaches were expected to impact a significant number of teachers, schools or levels of teaching. Either approach can create anxiety for coaches. Coaches become increasingly concerned about the number reached and less effective in their instructional approaches. To work in this way can diffuse the potential impact.

The study of this one model of school-based coaching several differences in comparison to other models studied. Unlike most models there was no prescribed curriculum assigned to coaches. Coaches were to impact teaching and learning through the curriculum currently in practice. The individualized nature of the model created a strong reliance on the Tools developed. Although several Tools were developed over the course of the implementation of the model, coaches made selections and decisions about the models they would employ based on their preference and fit to the teacher they were working with at that time. One coach emphasized, "I didn't use them all…the case studies, you know I liked them but it just never seemed to fit with what I was doing. Maybe if I worked more at the department level…"

Another unique aspect detailed in this model was the significance of the coaches' voice. As indicated in a previous chapter, perspectives and experiences of the coach influenced the revisions and evolution of the model. An example is drawn from planning notes which describe the changes in several of the Tools, in particular the Classroom Observation Protocol. Coaches strongly urged the numbering scale to be dropped from the Tool. They were concerned, after initial use, that teachers would perceive the numbers as an external evaluation. The Tools was modified. As coaches utilize and experience the Tools recommendations were made to adjust and modify them. The observations of coaches in practice also had significant impact on the development of the model. Planning notes indicate patterns and trends over time that lead to adjustments in professional development. For example, coaches in the later months of implementation not only experienced case studies but began to write them as well. Coaches drew from particular challenges in practice as a source for their case study. These case studies were utilized during coach professional development.

Through the examination of the various enactments of school-based coaching what is unique and common practice in implementation is illuminated. The particularities of this model of school-based coaching is influenced by those who enactment the model.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations of the study to be noted. The timing of the data collection was problematic. Data collection began just as the grant funding for the school-based coach position was concluding. Coaches were in transition and in many cases already in new positions. This offered a fresh perspective for many, but many coaches had difficulty recalling details of the early days of their enactment because of the time lapse in addition to immersion in to their new role. Coaches also made comparisons to their new position. Many coaches credited the professional development they received while in the position of a school-based coach as a critical factor in obtaining the new positions they were able to assume. Although fraught with complexities and challenges, the community that was formed for coaches was an instrumental juncture in their professional lives. "I didn't think I'd miss it but I do." "We … I miss the experts we learned from… the challenge." "I don't have anything like this anymore. I didn't realize how much we were on the cutting edge. We are ahead of the game, compared to the district." It was difficult in the interview process to gain access to school-based coaches. The demands on their time and priorities now rested with other organizations.

Sustained observations presented another challenge. Observations were often cancelled due to other commitments and in the case of many school-based coaches their areas of focus were no longer consistent with the study. I relied heavily on available log books of observations and annual reports that provided descriptive data of classroom observations. Although an on-line log was utilized by coaches on a daily basis to capture who they spent time with and in what

ways, this data collected resulted in little value to my study. Data was difficult to retrieve, often fragmented and incomplete. This was as a result of challenges faced in the design of the on- line instrument and the management of the system. Collaborative staff did not receive access to reports of coach activities for over six months. The delay, due to technical difficulties, reduced the potential impact this type of instrument and data could provide. Initially, the log was intended to assist district directors in monitoring the time coaches spent at various campuses and with whom so that they could engage coaches in reflective conversations to assist them in making more strategic instructional decisions. This was difficult without timely access to the log data. In addition, coaches viewed the on-line data collection was of little value to them in their work. Many coaches expressed that the logs were utilized only to monitor their time and to meet program guidelines. "We did it...Yeah, they told us it would help us but we never saw it. So, how important was it really?" The concept of the log was important but for it to be a productive instrument it must be accessible to both the coaches and program staff. It must be an active instrument meaning an instrument that is readily available to inform practice.

For some coaches there was a lack of attentiveness and energy for their work at the end of the grant period that coincided with the classroom observations. The quality and level of intensity of classroom engagement with teachers was often over shadowed by their need to search for a new position of employment. I believe this might have influenced the decision some coaches made as to whether or not they chose to participate in this study. The coaches were tired and in some cases frustrated with the way their districts handled their transitions out of school-based coaching. One coach shared her frustration at the start of the interview, "…they (the district) dumped us. They took the tools we shared, but they basically forgot us. I don't know. It wasn't handled very well."

As indicated earlier in a previous chapter, the researcher had a dual role. I was a former program director of the grant. Although I did not directly supervise the school-based coaches, consideration must be given as to how the role influenced and filtered participants' responses. The focus of my study examined the coach, their perspective and translation of their role. It did not directly examine coaches' impact in quantitative ways. This focus enabled coaches to set aside some concern related to issues of perceived supervision and authority. The delayed interview dates actually may have been helpful in capturing fresh and genuine responses by some participants without worry of any perceived supervisory capacity.

<p style="text-align:center">Implications and Lessons Learned</p>

A valuable lesson from my study is the importance of having formal mechanisms in place to support the work of school-based coaches. Without theses mechanisms coaches relied on personal experience to influence interactions with teachers. Coaches often moved forward in their work with a lack of clarity and confidence. For many the task of assimilating new tools and professional development inhibited their confidence and enactment with teachers. The construction of the Tools was rich and valuable. Certainly, the development and use of the Tools were instrumental in the successes coaches experienced. Tools provided an entrée into the classroom for many coaches, but there was a delay in their execution because the Tools were a result of the evolutionary nature of the model. Tools were developed as the coaches participated and enacted the model. Many coaches had established protocols or ways of working with their colleagues and were then resistant to full use and implementation of the Tools. If coaches expressed limitation in their understanding of the Tools then the potential transfer to the classroom was also at risk.

School systems considering adopting a model of school-based coaching can benefit from the Tool development that occurred from this model. The roll out of these Tools would be best implemented from day one and used to both instruct the coach by raising their level of awareness and craftsmanship with each Tool but also the Tools became the menu from which both coaches and teachers determine critical points of intervention of teaching and learning. The Tools offer coaches and teachers a common language from which to interact. This is a bridge to build content rich conversations. The earlier the Tools exist in the repertoire for both the coach and teacher the greater the potential for implementation and impact.

Although the study was conducted from the perspective and observations of coaches a similar story could be told from the perspective of the district based directors and Collaborative staff. Coaches spent significant time in professional development evolving in their understanding of the role of coach. I had the opportunity to take a balcony view of the model and evolve in my understanding simultaneously. I was providing professional development to others but was in the role of a learner just as the coaches were. This brought a unique perspective to professional development. I was empathetic to the needs of coaches and this afforded me chance to step into their shoes, raise questions, and make connections from the newness of the work and position. The district directors and I met not less than bi-weekly to reflect, study and plan for professional development. We were intentional in trying to stay one step ahead of the coaches in their learning. This was possible through the school visits and observations and the time invested in debriefing coach professional development sessions. During the debriefing, it was critical to look for patterns in school-based coach responses and observations of behavior at the school level. One director summarized it as follows, "I know, you said ask more than we tell. We tried-we tried to ask them (the coaches) lots of questions- to figure out what was going on in their head.

Sometimes, it was hard…you know, hard to figure it out. I mean it was new for us. We had to be different but we were just trying to figure it out too.

This school-based coaching model is complex in nature and its enactment. Coaches are part of a social context and within this context they must make decisions and choices of when and how to intervene with colleagues so that student learning is transformed. Coaches are drawn together for professional development and are provided mechanisms of support for their work. The translation and enactment of the model are influenced often resulting in new iterations of the model. One translation occurs in the context of accountability. The El Paso Collaborative model of school based coaching prioritizes student learning at high levels. A goal of the organization is to equip students for success at the post-secondary level and beyond. This goal does not negate the importance of student learning as emphasized at the State level and widely held at the district and campus level. Coaches must navigate immediate pressures from teachers who are expecting quick results and the long term, enduring qualities of high quality teaching and learning. Coaches respond to local conditions for learning. The use of scope and sequence documents or pacing guides provides an example of the negotiation coaches faced on a regular basis. Schools felt pressure to see immediate results. Coaches made choices in their classroom based work to respond to the immediate needs of students as determined by local documents and analysis of data. It was a balancing act between short and long term implementation priorities. One coach expressed it this way, "…our focus is on conceptual understanding. You can't do that over night. It's like making a good sandwich…one layer of meat and cheese after another and then all the veggies. You have to build it." As program staff grow in their understanding of how coaches translate and experience the model, the professional development is then modified leading to a greater potential for impact in the classroom.

103

Opportunities for Further Study

School systems continue to promote school-based professional development and the utilization of coaches. An era of accountability and tightening budgets within school systems leads to an appropriate and useful area of further study. School-based coaches expressed the value and importance for mechanisms of support as they enacted the model in classrooms. In this model these were exemplified in the Tools constructed. The Tools have been more fully developed and as a result can be implemented from the initial enactment and implementation leading to a study of coach efficacy and confidence in their use of the Tools.

In addition the coaches' conceptualization of their role changed and evolved over time. A sustained study of one coach over the duration of a school year could yield both increased clarity about the how a coach steps into their role and enact it on a day to day basis. This would allow both a pre and post study of teachers with whom coaches work alongside and the outcomes to their students. The in depth case study of one coach over the duration of their enactment would be further enhanced with a simultaneous case study of those who are most directly involved with the program development and monitoring of the coaches. This would provide a rich perspective of both sides during the enactment and potentially answer questions raised from both perspectives.

In the last decade schools and districts have invested heavily both money and time in the model of school-based coaching. Impact studies that examine the effectiveness of teachers and coaches work on student achievement levels would provide rich information to school systems as they make budgetary decisions. Examination of those practices that yield the greatest impact on student achievement would afford school systems the opportunity to modify and adjust their own models of professional development for greater impact.

Finally, a descriptive study of those in positions of leadership and decision making would provide systems a useful lens to influence hiring practices within a system that values school-based professional development. Those in mid-level leadership positions have tremendous influence on the actions of those who are enacting the model or professional development. Reasoning abilities and both the depth and breadth of the understanding has the potential to impact models such as the one studied here. School-based professional development is not easy. It is complex and requires clear vision, access to content knowledge experts, and an understanding of process. A future study that examines the road to implementation and those who are in positions to make decisions can potentially impact the choices systems make for lasting sustainability.

Conclusion

Professional Development plays a significant role in the lives of educators. It is important for systems to invest wisely. The investment in school-based coaching provides both teachers and coaches an opportunity for learning to develop and progress in the classroom. The planning and implementation of effective professional development does not just occur. This model of school based coaching I studied was constructed over time and based on the enactment of coaches. My study dealt with the complexities of the enactment of one coaching model and the ways coaches made sense of the model and translated the model to action. School-based coaches were in constant battle with the importance of establishing rich and relevant relationships centered on issues of content. Coaches embraced their personal opportunities to learn and sought to support the high quality teaching and learning. The translation of that learning, although supported by mechanisms known as Tools, created challenges and opportunities for coaches.

Coaches experienced tremendous personal and professional growth. Their growth was supported with the construction and enactment of several Tools. These Tools elevated their awareness of content knowledge and provided entree support into classrooms. School-based coaches felt a responsibility to build the capacity of others while simultaneously being stretched in their own cognitive and leadership.

This model of school-based coaching and the subsequent translation and enactment of the model as studied throughout the actions and words of the coaches themselves is a significant investment. The investment is one of monetary means as well as an investment of time and leadership. Although this model is fraught with complexities, it is one worthy of study and enactment. School-based coaches bring a rich set of experiences and knowledge to their position of school-change agent. This professional development model is heavily influenced upon external commitment from teachers, program funders, and themselves. The social context in which the coaches participate and navigate through creates fragmented implementation of the model. Coaches wrestle with issues of personnel, accountability pressures, and their personal assimilation of knowledge. The complexities of the role of a school-based coach cannot be underestimated. Future iterations of the model will draw on what the coaches describe as evolutionary and constructionist in nature. As one coach stated, "The deeper you dig in the bigger the benefit." The benefits include new knowledge, strengthened relationships, and system impacts which not only touch the lives of teachers but also students.

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APPENDIX A

<u>Interview Questions</u>

Conceptualization of Role and Work

1. What drew you into this work/position?

2. How would you describe the model of school-based coaching (your work as a staff developer) at the EPCAE MSP?

3. What did you value as important/not important? How did you determine this?

4. If you could create a job description what would be on it? What would you take off?

5. How would you describe this work to your sibling, another colleague, a reporter?

6. How is your role similar and different to others coaches?

7. What do you wish others knew about your work as a coach?

8. What surprised you about yourself as a coach over time?

Professional Development/ Training

9. How did you know what to do when you became a coach (staff developer)?

10. What are some of your most memorable moments/ experiences and why? Probe for example specificity and significance.

11. Describe the evolution of your role as a coach? Talk about the professional development what went well—the most and least effective tasks, activities, trainings?

12. Describe what went on in your head as you learned to coach? How did you manage your learning and the work you had to do?

13. Describe one of your most frustrating days and why?

14. Given the opportunity to train/development new coaches-how would you do that? What should be the focus?

15. What did you stop doing as soon as soon as you could?

16. What would make someone else want this job?

Classroom-based Work

17. How did you determine what you needed to do with teacher(s)?

18. For how long would you stay with a teacher-when did you know to move on?

19. Take me inside the worst and the best learning experiences with teachers. How were they similar and different?

20. If you had an extra hour in the day what would you spend it on that would help you in your role and work as a coach?

21. What do you continue to do even though your role as an MSP staff developer/coach has ended?

APPENDIX B

School-based Coach Job Description

EL PASO COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Position: **Math Science Partnership (MSP) Staff Developer**

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Science Degree in Education with Secondary Mathematics or Science Certification, or Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics or Science; Master's Degree

Preferred; experience providing professional development in the area of mathematics or science; minimum of three years classroom teaching experience in either mathematics or science; demonstrated leadership experience; and, effective interpersonal skills.

Major Responsibilities and Duties:

- provide professional development focused on implementing the El Paso Collaborative's K-16 math/science curriculum frameworks and TEXTEAMS Training Modules to all math/science teachers in assigned campuses;
- promote student-centered, inquiry-based teaching and learning focused on math concepts and scientific principles throughout assigned campuses;
- assist teachers in the regular analysis of student achievement data to guide curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development;
- establish close working relationships with teachers, campus administrators and district office leaders;
- coordinate monthly feeder pattern meeting with math/science teachers in assigned campuses;
- work closely with school principals to plan and implement feeder-based and on-site professional development;
- maintain documentation of feeder-pattern progress toward improving student achievement;
- work closely with MSP district directors and district office math/science specialists to plan intra/inter district professional development;
- attend MSP professional development seminars during the academic year and summer to enhance content knowledge, pedagogy, and leadership skills;
- support evaluation, research, and reporting efforts associated with MSP; and,
- performs other duties as assigned.

Starting Date:

Salary:

CURRICULUM VITA

Michele W. De Bellis
Email: michele.debellis@gmail.com

Michele's professional work focuses on educational reform prioritizing the understanding of both content and leadership development within all levels of a PK–16 system. At the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, Michele was the Director of K–12 Math and Science Partnership and previously served as the Director for Leadership Development and Director for Literacy. During these ten years she provided leadership for school administrators and school-based coaches in standards-based teaching and learning. Also, her previous experience as a special education teacher and district level administrator adds to her knowledge and understanding of systems. Central to all of her work is a commitment to building collaborative infrastructures within systems that support self-directedness within any group. As a national training associate for and practitioner of Adaptive Schools and Cognitive CoachingSM, and the North American Director for the Institute for Habits of Mind, Michele has the skills, knowledge and understanding to support and assist in developing collaborative schools and systems committed to excellence for all learners. Today, her work and commitment to high quality professional development continues through Thinking Resource, a company which she co-founded.

Education:

University of Texas at El Paso	Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership and Administration, May 2009
	Master of Education, Educational Administration Leadership with Mid- Management Certification, 1998
Texas Tech University	Bachelor of Science and Certification in Elementary and Special Education, May 1990