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Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development

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Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development

Description

The Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne School of Education site-director of the Appleseed Writing Project (AWP) designed this project to explore the dialogue between writers' workshop, peer coaching, and narrative methods as a reflective process for professional development within a National Writing Project site (NWP). In the introduction to this special issue, the coeditors explained the 1974 foundation of the National Writing Project by Jim Gray (2000). In keeping with the NWP mission to improve writing and learning in K–12 schools and to provide a professional development model that connects learning and classroom teaching (Lieberman & Wood, 2003), the AWP has promoted writers' workshop and peer coaching as philosophical changes. Writing workshop requires a philosophical shift from traditional spelling, grammar, and mechanics drills leading up to mastery of the five-paragraph theme, which Moss (2002) believes under-prepares children for college. Peer coaching requires a shift in perspective of professional development by external experts to collegial engagement in learning communities. The purpose of this peer coaching action research was to professionally develop classroom teachers who were in a philosophical change process while implementing aspects of writers' workshop in their classrooms. The process included professionally developing Lindsay as an AWP teacher-consultant (TC) so that she could coach classroom teachers in the processes of teaching them how to peer coach.

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Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development

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Introduction

The Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne School of Education site-director of the Appleseed Writing Project (AWP) designed this project to explore the dialogue between writers' workshop, peer coaching, and narrative methods as a reflective process for professional development within a National Writing Project site (NWP). In the introduction to this special issue, the coeditors explained the 1974 foundation of the National Writing Project by Jim Gray (2000). In keeping with the NWP mission to improve writing and learning in K–12 schools and to provide a professional development model that connects learning and classroom teaching (Lieberman & Wood, 2003), the AWP has promoted writers' workshop and peer coaching as philosophical changes. Writing workshop requires a philosophical shift from traditional spelling, grammar, and mechanics drills leading up to mastery of the five-paragraph theme, which Moss (2002) believes under-prepares children for college. Peer coaching requires a shift in perspective of professional development by external experts to collegial engagement in learning communities. The purpose of this peer coaching action research was to professionally develop classroom teachers who were in a philosophical change process while implementing aspects of writers' workshop in their classrooms. The process included professionally developing Lindsay as an AWP teacher-consultant (TC) so that she could coach classroom teachers in the processes of teaching them how to peer coach.

Improved teacher instruction through implementing new philosophies like writers' workshop does not occur due to a request or a simple desire that the teacher has for change (Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). The desire to change must be

transformed into practice. The process begins with professional conversations rather than mandates or disjointed in-service.

Vidmar (2006) describes peer coaching as the vehicle through which teachers engage in meaningful professional dialogue. This process allows instructors opportunities for preobservation conversations, an observation, and finally a vital reflection session. The process creates a nonthreatening professional relationship and allows instructors to gain awareness and improve teaching practice, and promotes long-term change.

A philosophical change in understanding how to teach writing can be a natural result of peer coaching. Teachers staying behind closed doors, practicing talk-and-chalk instruction, rote memorization, and regurgitation of facts are no longer valid or effective means of educating. Awareness and tolerance for others' ideas and ideals combined with teacher enthusiasm provide a framework for professional development. No longer is writing limited to grammatical function. Writing has opened the door to greater discovery of the world. Teachers' support for one another while opening this door for students necessitates a change in how we think and how we teach.

The school under study, a small private, K–8 building in an urban area, hired the AWP teacher-consultants to provide three years of professional development. Stage one was a one-week writing workshop during summer 2006. Stage two was peer coaching to continue the participants' development as they implemented elements of the writing workshop learned during the summer. Finally, stage three engaged two teachers as peer coaches to their colleagues. The question was: What role does peer coaching play in the philosophical change process and ongoing professional development process of classroom teachers trying to implement elements of writing workshop?

Contextualizing the Study in Professional Development

One of the central tenets of the NWP is the concept that teachers make the best teachers of teachers. The goal of the Invitational Summer Institute at local writing project sites is to develop participating teachers into teacher-consultants, who can eventually develop their professional skills to the point of delivering in-service in schools for other teachers. Connecting the concept of teachers teaching teachers for professional development to the request for in-service by a small parochial school in the Midwest, this project was designed to interface writers' workshop, peer coaching, and narrative inquiry as the action of professional development to facilitate a shift from writing instruction focused on passing the state test to writing as an engaging process. Using narrative methods as a foundation (Polkinghorne, 1995), intermittent focus group interview data and individual conferencing data became the narrative data sources for analysis and the professional development of the participants.

Subjects included nine elementary classroom teachers, who participated in the initial one-week summer workshop, and the principal. Four of the nine teachers participated

more extensively by engaging in the peer-coaching process. Peer coaching included a preconference, observation, and postconference (Vidmar, 2006). The time allotted for each preconference, observation, and postconference session was 45 minutes, making it a 2 hour and 15 minute cycle.

The professional development was multilayered. Glenda, AWP co-site-director modeled for TC Lindsay (coauthor) how to coach through a preconference, observation, and postconference. If you have read the introduction to this issue or other articles in the issue, you will understand that Lindsay attended an ISI and is growing in her teacher leadership development. She attended the AWP 2004 ISI. Lindsay and Glenda worked together to coach three teachers from the K–8 building. In practice, the two researchers modeled the coaching process and collected and analyzed data through narrative methods. Intermittent data were collected through audiotaped focus groups in January 2007, March 2007, May 2007, January 2008, and May 2008. The focus groups included the participating teachers, co-site-director, AWP TC, and the principal, who later emerged as a coresearcher. Each focus group lasted 45 minutes.

The project began with the nine teachers participating in a one-week 2006 summer writing workshop. The subsequent peer coaching and focus groups were intended as ongoing professional development and action research to support the participating teachers in their development as they implement elements from the workshop into their teaching. This well-grounded process (Vidmar, 2006) gave participants the opportunity to develop a scholarly approach to their teaching and professional development in the context of practice.

Scholarly Practices in Professional Development

Since one of the goals of this project was for participating teachers to take a more scholarly approach to teaching writing and ongoing professional development in the context of classroom practice, we began with an initial focus group dialogue in February 2007, following a one-week writers' workshop during summer 2006. One of the main themes that emerged in the narrative data was initial enthusiasm fading before the end of the fall 2006 semester. Jessica (names were changed) was "enthusiastic in the summer" and needed "the enthusiasm to come back" into her teaching. She believed there was more that she could pull from her students if she could better implement writing as a process.

Karen also started out with a lot of enthusiasm, did more writing than in earlier years, did mini-lessons, and successfully engaged students to make lists in their writer's notebooks of things they could write about but found it difficult to move beyond generating ideas to writing stories and the conferencing stage because of behavior issues. Karen found it difficult to conference with first graders on an individual basis or even small groups while making sure that everybody else stayed engaged in writing independently.

The initial enthusiasm of Karen and Jessica waned due to a lack of a clear understanding on the "how to" implementation of this writing strategy. It appeared that one of the major reasons could be that their usual classroom routines and management needed to change to accommodate this teaching strategy. The students, as well as the teachers, needed guidance and support in deciding how to make the needed adjustments. Quite possibly, this could have been resolved through peer coaching of the administration. The year that this writing project was implemented was the first year for the present administrator. She had not been trained or well-informed of the process.

Jodi expressed that she "used all the ideas up" in the first few weeks of the semester. Viewing the demos from the writers' workshop as take away, preplanned lessons to use in her own class rather than a philosophical change, Jodi had not translated the process into her own work as a writing teacher. She was back to working on writing short paragraphs as she had done in prior years. Jodi's words show her technicist approach to teaching.

> I am just trying to get them to stay on topic and to not vary around and try to think up something for them to be excited to write about. The topic itself seems to be the hardest part for me to get going, and again scheduling it in. I have to actually say, "Friday, we're going to do writer's workbook. Tuesday, we're going to do writer's workbook." Or it gets blown off because there are so many other things that come in.

Shannon, a middle school teacher, also started out strong and then faded away. She was growing in confidence that mini-lessons were valuable for students to improve their own writing. She was still in "a quandary over grammar and parts of speech." She acknowledged that her students had responded well to their writer's workbook, but she had failed to allow for time and consistency. She described a pattern of inconsistency, reverting to more traditional lessons from the past.

Shannon and Jodi could have benefited from more collaboration with each other and the other teachers involved in this project. Collaboration time could have occurred before or after school on a regular basis, at monthly faculty meetings, or regularly scheduled AWP meetings. This responsibility should have been shared between the teachers and the administration. In some ways, this difficulty was mirrored in Karen and Jessica's situation: the need to understand the usual practices and procedures were in a state of transition without definitive guidelines.

Karen related to Shannon's inconsistency. She expressed confusion "about exactly how to use the writer's notebook at the second grade level." Although her students had many lists in their writer's notebooks, there were far fewer expanded or completed writing pieces. Karen had saved everything her students had written and could pick out students who had a strong voice, but she was not sure how to engage students in understanding

the concept of voice. She could recognize students' excitement about using words that were more active but felt inconsistent in moving all of her students to a higher state of writing engagement. Both Karen and Shannon noticed a pattern to their inconsistency: beginning with writers' workshop, reverting to more structured teaching, and then restarting writers' workshop.

When asked how they were measuring success of implementing elements of writing workshop in their teaching practice, there was no consistency. Shannon had expected that assessment would happen during conferencing with her students, but it became evident to the researchers that she was only conferencing with students who were struggling to get started on their writing or expressed needs. She realized that she did not even know what some of the students were writing.

Danielle measured success by the kids' wanting to take their notebook everywhere they went and being excited about having it with them. When they had free time, Danielle would "tell them to read a book or write a story, and the kids [were] more often grabbing their writer's notebooks to write a story." On a particular day when she was working on main idea, three supporting details, and a concluding statement, she assessed her teaching as a failure because the students did not have this format that is often used to measure writing on standardized testing. Juxtaposing students' greater interest in writing next to scores based on writing standards raised a critical question concerning how to measure successful teaching for writing.

Jodi used finished products and works in progress on students' log sheets to determine success. In the first quarter, she required one piece and graded it as she had graded finished products in the past. It was a major change in the process that she allowed student to pick which writing piece they wanted to submit for grading. Free choice resulted in students turning in the piece they had found to be the most fun to write. In the second quarter, Jodi became more focused on seasonal activities and did not require the students to turn in a finished writing product. She doubled the expectations for the third quarter as a way to catch up. Like others, Jodi saw success in the students' willingness to take out their writer's notebooks and write. She set clear expectations for numbers of products, but she was not clear on how to measure success in terms of the quality of writing products. There was a definitive shift in students' prior resistance to writing on demand and the current use of writer's notebook that allowed them to write with more freedom.

One final measure of success was students' willingness to share their writing during "author's chair." Each teacher had implemented author's chair, something that none of them had done prior to their experiences in the summer workshop. This provided them a new way of thinking about assessment. Although the teachers did not initially think about author's chair as a kind of assessment, reflectively they considered how students "fight over getting in the author's chair and sharing their writing, and we always run out

of time." The teachers began to reflect on how they listen and hear what their students are doing and how writing is improving.

Several of the teachers, after hearing of each other's frustrations and concerns, realized that assessment had changed. The author's chair became the new standard for determining student interest and creativity. The philosophical shift was beginning, unbeknownst to the teachers. Quantitative measurements were becoming less important and student responses were becoming more important.

Karen had moved away from a traditional grading system to one of taking notes on her students' writing and making a note when students had incorporated the concept from one of her mini-lessons into their writing. If she saw any real problem, either in terms of expression or structure, she made notes about that as well. She struggled with what to put on the report card where it listed "written expression." Here she was required to rate their writing as very good or satisfactory. She tried to use her narrative data to determine the grades but knew it was subjective.

Grading was not the main challenge that the teachers experienced during the implementation of writers' workshop. Consistency was the number one issue. Other issues included engaging students in the process of self-critique, peer conferencing, building trust with the students concerning the writer's notebook, assessment, and grading. It was against this backdrop of initial experiences with writers' workshop that the teachers began to entertain the potential of peer coaching to advance their teaching. Though several expressed nervousness about it, three teachers felt like it would be worth the risk in order to receive professional feedback.

Effective assessment could only occur after the teachers understood the process involved. They were not teaching students grammatical functions or formula writing. The instruction was a philosophical change that could not be measured in a rubric or percentages. The teachers needed to clarify the "why" of their instruction. What did they want the students to learn should have been the question they were asking. This cannot be answered with quantitative data. Rather, it is a reflective observation of what the intention was and how the students responded. What worked well? What did not work well? How often did the teacher see students voluntarily and independently writing in their writer's notebook? Student assessment became a matter of what they shared in the author's chair and how they felt about writing. The expectation of a letter grade remained an issue, but it was no longer the driving force. The philosophical change the teachers were experiencing required greater insight and reflection than any other methodology because it is not a method; it is a way of thinking.

Peer Coaching as Professional Development in Practice

The theme of isolation was very apparent in the teachers' responses. During the debriefing with teachers about their experiences with the implementation of writers' workshop, it

was clear that they were not the collaborative group from the summer session. They had reverted back to their traditional isolated roles. It is logical to surmise the next step must be peer coaching. Hall and McKeen (1989) contributed to the establishment of peer coaching by showing how it is a viable tool that can overcome many obstacles such as isolation in schools that hinder growth and cripple change. They suggested that peer coaching was not one more thing that teachers need to do, but a way to create an environment of knowledgeable professionals that are equipped with the content and process to impact student achievement. Furthermore, peer coaching creates a safe environment that can assist in adapting methods to reach a more diverse group of students (Little, 2005). NWP sites have built on this concept of teachers teaching teachers (Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Huffman & Moss, 2008; Moss, Springer, Dehr, 2008).

Teachers' use of peer coaching as a viable model to assist others in teaching has an unlimited potential due to the fact that it can be applied to a teacher at any level. Regardless of the teacher's subject area, grade level, or number of years of experience, the coaching process equips teachers to become collaborators, and collaboration provides students with expert instruction (Boman & McCormick, 2001). While Boman and McCormick (2001) focused upon peer coaching's use with preservice teachers, Huston and Weaver (2007) echo this belief and further suggest that peer coaching is an opportunity for a more experienced faculty to renew thinking, integrate the latest instructional advances, and adapt to the ever-changing façade of the students in the classroom. Furthermore, Zwart et al. (2008) contend that the peer coaching model is versatile enough to be imbedded in any larger project that results in overall school improvement.

Peer Coaching as Professional Development in Practice

We defined a peer-coaching cycle as consisting of a 45-minute preconference, a 45-minute observation, and a 45-minute postconference. In this study, pre- and postconferences lasted an average of 30 minutes and were not always formal in nature. After meeting with Danielle, Shannon, and Karen individually, Lindsay and Glenda observed each of them, took notes, and then typed the notes for the postconference meetings.

Observation Notes for Danielle (grade 3) from February 20, 2007

By Lindsay Sloan and Glenda Moss

Observation focus as determined in preconference: Appropriate integration of science and writing

Observation narrative analysis: We first must say that we were very impressed with the lesson that we observed today in your class. Most of our experience is in language arts, and today we had our eyes opened to a number of possibilities that we could integrate or collaborate with another teacher to enrich instruction in our classrooms. During the time

we spent in your classroom, we observed the use of the writer's notebook in a way that enriched the students' learning of a science concept, while still allowing them to connect to the material, use their new knowledge of the earth, and provide a time for them to create a story that entwined all the above. You used multiple sources of information, textbook, children's book, apple, poster, and the children's experiences. We noted that the students had easy access to their writer's notebooks. The fact that they were decorated showed us that they were something different than their traditional notebooks for class. It was interesting to see the ease in which the students participated in the lesson. This showed us that they had written in them before and were familiar with the concept of the writer's notebook. We also noted the fact that the lesson incorporated the use of the elbow buddy more than once, which allows the students to receive feedback on their ideas even though you did not have time to read each child's response. This was an effective use of the elbow buddy, and the students used this opportunity well. This lesson seemed to have a natural flow and the students seemed to be engaged and demonstrated a number of ways their understanding of the layers of the earth and the ability to describe something.

Questions: You demonstrated expert ability to integrate writer's notebook and learning science. Do you plan on integrating writing with some of your other content areas? And if you do plan on continuing, what are some of your ideas? How do you think your students feel about using their writer's notebook in a content area other than language arts? Do you have any concerns with this kind of integration? When you used the sticks in the can idea for sharing, one girl who had her hand up to share did not get to share. Can you share your thinking about this process of sharing?

Suggestions: Our only suggestion is that maybe you open your classroom up so that other teachers in your building could see the implementation of the writer's notebook in your room and how you have successfully integrated it into the content areas. We think that watching you would inspire other teachers to have the confidence to try something like this in their rooms.

An important consideration is realizing that the students were comfortable with their writer's notebooks. It appears that the students have changed their thinking that each subject is an isolated curriculum. The ease of using their writer's notebook in a non-language arts class is a sign of great success. The teacher has created a comfortable and secure environment in which the students have embraced change. This demonstrates one way in which the student and teacher thinking have begun to change.

Danielle's Observation Notes for Jessica (kindergarten) from April 17, 2008
Observation focus as determined in preconference: 1) Student participation/Student interest and 2) Was the lesson a good way to assess the SIP rubric?

Observation Narrative Analysis: Jessica did a great job of keeping the students tuned into the lesson. She goes with the flow and allows the students to help her make

decisions. I was amazed at how quickly she took student suggestions and frequently recapped during the lesson. Jessica read the book with great expression and paused with enough time to allow the students to look at the pictures and process the information. Her facial expressions made me feel the book as well.

During the entire lesson Jessica held student interest, had student participation, and assessed each student. I thought this was a good way for students to show that they knew the end mark used in the book. When a student did not properly identify the end mark, Jessica questioned him/her and worked through it with the student until he/she properly identified the end mark. The students usually corrected their answer right away. The entire lesson was very controlled and definitely held student interest.

Questions: Do you change the rubric in any way to fit kindergarten? If so, how do you change it? Have you ever assessed for students knowing their end marks? (Are there any other assessments you do for end marks?) Have the students ever questioned the text before, as far as: Is what the author chose the proper choice? Was this a new type of lesson for them?

Suggestions/Questions: I really don't have many suggestions because of my limited experience in kindergarten. I wonder that when questioning the students could you ask your question in another way rather than saying do you agree? Could you say: Is there another end mark that you think might work? That way you are giving them the option of thinking about the end mark rather than just agreeing. Could the students say the sentence using different end marks and then decide from there?

Narrative Analysis of Teachers' Experiences

Change in thinking or philosophy was seen in several areas. The youngest students, kindergartners, were excitedly writing more than Jessica expected. Although Jessica could not specify what the one catalyst had been to create the change when compared to former classes, she realized that the new process required more time. Patient implementation of the writing strategies would produce improved, quality writing for her students.

Jessica found that she had been successful in introducing writer's notebook to her students. She was astonished at how her students asked to write daily and noted that two or three years ago, she "never would have gotten the kind of work out of them." Even though her kindergarten students were not spelling per se, they were attempting to put words down together. Jessica could not explain how her students were grasping the concept of sentences and ending punctuation for communication purposes, but her students were constructing sentences and using periods, question marks, and exclamation marks. She felt pleasure at the progress of her students and at herself for embracing the idea that she was developing a new process that needed time.

Implementation of peer conferencing presented some concerns and growth for Karen. Through peer coaching she understood the importance of conferencing with

students. However, the challenge of time presented itself. Karen resolved some of this issue by incorporating the writers' workshop in her regular classroom routine. Although Karen shared some frustrations, it is important to note that a change did occur. Her students were doing something different in their writing and thinking. Time constraints will be ever present. The growth in kindergarten paralleled the second grade room: students became more independent in their daily work to allow the teacher more time for conferencing.

Karen, who participated in peer coaching in spring 2007 and 2008, provided evidence of the developmental nature of writing as a process and the role that peer coaching plays, as the following quote shows.

> This year one of the things I've done as a result of the peer coaching that occurred last year is conferencing. I have a difficult time in second-grade conferencing with the kids. This year I did put writers' workshop as one of my centers. When the children are engaged in other activities I do have some time to sit down with three or four of them in that period of time and talk with them about their writing and talk about what's good and what they can work on. That's been the one thing I have done different this year from the past. I'm a little discouraged this year only because of time constraints. I seem to not be getting into it as much as I'd like. Part of that is me. I think that I need to take this next summer and just read some of this material and have like a syllabus of what I want to accomplish.

For at least one of the teachers, Shannon, the need for peer coaching/collaboration time was an immediate need. She realized that she had become inconsistent in her expectations of the students' use of the writer's notebook. Consistency in classroom expectations and procedures provide the students a framework for success. Evidence of the philosophical change can be seen in Shannon's realization that additional peer coaching would redirect her back to effective use of the writer's notebook. For the teacher, affirmation or direction from a colleague can provide the same consistency. Once she re-established that expectation, then she could move to the next level. Shannon had attended the AWP's fall writing conference, where Ralph Fletcher was the keynote speaker. She worked on multigenre research that she learned about from one of the breakout sessions in which an AWP teacher-consultant demonstrated a teaching lesson. Shannon admitted that she had fallen back into the pattern of inconsistency with the writer's notebook. She hoped that another round of peer coaching would help her.

For Danielle, her struggle was time. She believed that she did not have enough time to conference with her students. Not having enough time indicated that the change was not occurring at an acceptable level for this teacher. If given the opportunity to see

Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development

Karen's centers and how she was addressing this time issue, Danielle would have realized that a simple change in her daily routine could have given her the necessary time. It is important to note that a change did eventually occur when Danielle realized that her 21 students needed something she was not providing. Danielle continued to identify "conferencing" with her students as her biggest concern. The issue was tied to managing time. Danielle's instructional pattern involved allotting 30 minutes for students to write, followed by a mini-lesson. The students did not stay focused on Danielle's mini-lessons, causing her to lose instructional time. She was wondering how she could work conferencing into the already hectic day, during which a "huge line of 21 students [could be found] waiting for [her]" to answer their questions.

Peer coaching can be seen as a solution in that it provides professional educators the opportunity and the time to collaborate and cooperate across grade levels. The specific needs of the students will vary greatly from kindergarten to middle school. As seen in Jessica's class, the discovery of ending punctuation was to be celebrated. For Shannon, embarking on a multigenre project would provide students with the discovery of understanding how knowledge is interrelated with life experience, academic learning, and self-discovery.

The bridge of these learning differences is peer coaching. Teachers helping teachers, parents being used to supplement instruction, dividing students into smaller groups are examples of positive outcomes from peer coaching. Teachers' understanding and flexibility in meeting the needs of the students required more than one way of thinking, of doing, of resolving. For Jessica, Danielle, and Shannon peer coaching gave them the needed encouragement and validation for their philosophical change.

Although Jessica had not participated in peer coaching in 2007, she was entertaining the idea in 2008. She had 26 kindergarten children and an aide. She and her aide were struggling with getting everybody up to the computer lab at the same time. Each week the aide took 13 students to the computer lab while Jessica worked with 13 students. She also had several mothers come in and help while she did a writer's notebook activity. Sometimes she would go with students to the computer lab while the aide and mothers would work with students on writing. Her students worked with an elbow buddy to share writing and give feedback. They thought it was fun to work with a partner like a teacher.

This paralleled teachers' wanting to assume leadership roles and to give to other colleagues what had been given to them. Shannon and Danielle both wanted to be peer coached, but they also want to peer coach someone else because they had each been peer coached in 2007. They wanted to move forward in their skills toward the goal of all teachers working in a kind of collegial fashion to peer coach each other as a way to engage in ongoing professional development in practice.

Jane, the principal, remarked how when she came on board in 2007, following the summer workshop, she found writers' workshop and peer coaching talk as a foreign language. By January 2008, Jane was conscious of a change process taking place. She stated to the teachers,

> What I have heard here is a shift. A philosophical change is happening. I am hearing that students are excited. You created the mechanical situation last year. You have a different sense of ownership, which is creating a different sense of ownership of the students. I am definitely hearing a philosophical change among all of you right now. Some of you said there is much more student excitement. They ask for it. They want to do it. The kids are excited. I heard that over and over and over again. So the shift is happening. That's only because you are allowing each other to go through the growth that has to happen. As far as time constraints, we can do things administratively to handle that to support you. There are solutions to create time for conferencing. I'm excited to hear from you reasons why this will work as contrasted to last year's reasons why it wouldn't work. That's a big change from last year.

Jane had attended all of the focus groups and supported the teachers with flexible scheduling for the peer-coaching processes. Peer coaching within itself is a most valuable resource for professional educators in that it validates the educational journey of students and teachers. As teachers continue to discover the most effective ways of implementation, they must recall these beginning stages. Whether it is the "author's chair," the constant companion of a writer's notebook, conferencing with elbow buddies, free writes, conferencing at centers in the primary grades, or balancing rubrics with mini-lessons, the most important component is the student's enthusiasm.

This study has shown that a philosophical change can begin with teachers and then be implemented in the classroom. Methodology is crucial, but student interest is critical. Teachers depending on teachers for evaluation, instruction, and support provide a framework for innovation. A philosophical change is successful when it is owned by the teachers, supported by the administration, and reflected in the student's enthusiasm.

Jessica's efforts and those of the teachers were paying off. She could also articulate a change in herself.

> We took the workshop a year ago. The current first-grade class is interested in writing. The current second-grade class had not experienced teaching based on writers' workshop because we had not had the summer workshop. I will be curious to know next fall how that second-grade class will be. Maybe it has nothing to do with it, but I will be interested to see. This year's kindergarten children are very interested in writing.

Jodi also noticed a shift in her middle school social studies classes.

> In conferencing in the middle school, I am asking for more in my students' writing. "Tell me more." We are shifting from competition to be the first done to working on quality. When students ask, "How long does it have to be," I say, "As long as it needs to be." They have gotten to where they don't ask about length anymore. That's why writer's notebook is so good.

This shift in teacher's personal expectations of student writing and student's personal expectations was evident but not addressed by the teachers. The teachers' individual confusion, frustration, or lack of continuity should have been shared before the second semester, but the lack of collaboration time resulted in isolation and limitations to implementation of a new way of approaching writing instruction. Until Glenda and Lindsay came in for the focus group, the principal was not aware of the teachers' frustration. It was then that coaching became a key component in professional development for successful implementation of a new philosophy into practice.

If the need for collaborative time had been addressed, and if the teachers had skills in peer coaching, there could have been a more definitive in-house support system incorporated into this process. Peer coaching as an early intervention combined with teacher collaboration could have provided the necessary ongoing spark when implementing a new program, process, or methodology. However, some of these stumbling blocks provided the teachers with a better understanding on how to effectively implement the philosophy and a peer-coaching process.

Another factor was that the school's SIP (School Improvement Plan) had been rewritten. The focus of the plan was to improve writing and speaking skills. The staff had developed a writing rubric, and it was being implemented at the same time. Some frustration could be seen from teachers' trying to change how they taught while at the same time changing how they assess what they taught.

One criticism of peer coaching was outlined by Lam, Yim, and Lam (2002). Despite the fact that the peer-coaching approach impacts teaching practices and student achievement, teachers are hesitant to embrace the idea of another colleague in their classrooms. The fear of scrutiny impacts their self-esteem and overshadows the possibility of assistance or improvement in their practices. In a sense, their professional respect is at stake. However, this was not evident with the teachers who participated in this study. In the observation notes, it is abundantly clear that the professionals involved remained professional and the respect is apparent in the language found in the observation notes. There is no scrutiny or unnecessary criticism.

Kohler, Crilley, Shearer, and Good (1997) indicated that another criticism of peer coaching is a void of formal observatories. However, our use of peer coaching does include observation and a postobservation conference, at which time the teacher receives

a typed report — observation summary, questions, and suggestions. Examples with Danielle and Jessica were given earlier in this narrative analysis. We integrated narrative methods within the peer-coaching process, modeling inquiry in teaching, and authentic assessment of teaching. We wrote our observation notes into narrative data and analyzed them to provide feedback on the issue of integrating writing for learning science for Danielle and participation and interest level for Jessica.

This writing forces the observers to review the experience and present the data they collect into a narrative analysis that will serve multiple purposes. It is a record of the observation with reflection and suggestions. It is used to facilitate and focus the postconference around the teacher's professional development needs, which they identify in the preconference meeting. It gives the teacher a meaningful resource for further reflection and change. Over time, teachers can use this kind of written feedback as a way to determine if they are making the kinds of changes they want in their practice to engage children in learning. In this way, peer coaching as a narrative inquiry process for professional development empowers teachers and reforms education.

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Profession and Professionalism for Coaches --- Profession of Coaching --- Credentials --- Professionalism and Ethics --- Become a Professional Coach? How to Start a Coaching Business. General Resources and Topics. Have a Question, Suggestion or Resource About Coaching? Post it in the Library's LinkedIn group Action Learning and Coaching For Everyone. Understanding Coaching. What is Coaching? How Does it Compare to Other Fields or Professions? The field of personal and professional coaching has grown rapidly in the past 15 years and, as with most fields and professions that experience this kind of growth, there are many different perspectives on coaching. Here's a definition that perhaps most people would agree with. Coach and Evaluator: Exploring How to Negotiate Both Functions in the Role of Supervisor. Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development. scholarlypartnershipsedu, Aug 2018. Glenda Moss, Lindsay Sloan, Jane Sandor. Tweet. This is a preview of a remote PDF: https://opus.ipfw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=spe. Glenda Moss, Lindsay Sloan, Jane Sandor. Peer Coaching and Action Research as Professional Development, scholarlypartnershipsedu, 2018, Volume 4, Issue 2 producing fruitful professional development practices. This small-scale action research aims at identifying the. perceptions of three teachers in a private language center about peer-coaching and their actual construction. of knowledge in a peer-coaching activity. Data were collected through two narratives and the transcription. of recorded conversations among participants after the observation of their classes. The results suggest that. before peer-coaching teachers held three types of perceptions towards observation and feedback: a cautious. Action research is a philosophy and methodology of research generally applied in the social sciences. It seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection. Kurt Lewin, then a professor at MIT, first coined the term "action research" in 1944. In his 1946 paper "Action Research and Minority Problems" he described action research as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of... The subsequent peer coaching and focus groups were intended as ongoing professional development and action research to support the participating teachers in their development as they implement elements from the workshop into their teaching. This well-grounded process (Vidmar, 2006) gave participants the opportunity to develop a scholarly approach to their teaching and professional development in the context of practice. Peer Coaching as Professional Development in Practice We defined a peer-coaching cycle as consisting of a 45-minute preconference, a 45-minute observation, and a 45-minute postconference. In this study, pre- and postconferences lasted an average of 30 minutes and were not always formal in nature.