

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ABOUT COACHING AND
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND PRACTICES IN READING
INSTRUCTION

by

JOAN M. CONWAY

B. A. Elementary Education, University of South Florida

M. A. Elementary Education, University of South Florida

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the College of Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2006

Major Professor: Vicky Zygoris-Coe

© Joan M. Conway

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary teachers' self-reporting of: a) work with a reading coach and b) attitudes, perceptions, and practices in teaching reading. The five point ratings and open-ended responses on the survey were the sources of data. Surveys were returned by 85% of teachers in five elementary schools in Collier County, Florida. Correlations of survey items were analyzed on the basis of the aggregated data and the following subgroups: certification, years of experience, school demographics, and grade levels.

The survey in this study was excerpted and adapted from a survey, which was tested for validity and reliability, used with teachers in a research study, and published by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) in *Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students* (Shaha, Lewis, O'Donnell, & Brown, 2004). Permission to use the survey was granted by Performance Learning Systems, Inc. and the National Staff Development Council (see Acknowledgements).

The primary question for this study was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices on the Reading Instruction Survey correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* Secondary questions pertained to how the results changed for the subgroups.

The literature review contained information about resources and research in reading that led to the provision of reading coaches. High-stakes for the improvement of reading instruction from federal, state, and local levels provided a rationale for the study.

The results of this study indicated that coaching made a difference for these teachers. The aggregated and disaggregated data revealed small to large, significant correlations to coaching. The items with the greatest number and magnitude of correlations to coaching were isolated skills instruction and intervention plans. The evidence of positive relationships of attitudes, perceptions, and practices to work with a coach is an important finding. The limited correlations of skilled, balanced, and integrated strategies led to questions about the content of the coaching. Further research is needed to determine whether the content of the professional development offered by coaches is comprehensive enough to impact reading proficiency levels of all students.

This dissertation is dedicated to:

Kelly Allen Combes, my husband, for encouraging me to persevere through the doctoral courses and dissertation; his unfailing devotion was my inspiration.

Helen Callaghan Conway, my mother, for instilling in me the desire to seek knowledge and envision earning a doctorate.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Collier reading coaches, specialists, and teachers are acknowledged here for their hard work and dedication to reading instruction. The quality and variety of reading instruction expressed in this study is due to their concerted efforts. An important contribution over the last 12 years was the work of Title I reading specialists in the *Acquire Reading Power* (ARP) program. Their devotion to meeting the needs of at-risk students and their teachers was the source of their success. For the last five years, reading specialists, coaches, and literacy specialists in the district expanded the support to more teachers. The effort and commitment of the school and district administrations to providing ongoing professional development to a growing and dynamic population of teachers is also recognized as part of the continuous improvements in teachers' practices and students' performance in Collier County, Florida.

Permission to use excerpts from the article: "Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students," by S. H. Shaha, V.K. Lewis, and D. H. Brown, *Journal of Research in Professional Learning*. Sept. 2004, pages 1-18, was granted by the National Staff Development Council on September 15, 2005.

Performance Learning Systems, Inc. granted permission to a perpetual, non-exclusive license to reproduce, distribute, perform, and display throughout the world and in all languages the following excerpts from the evaluation instruments for teachers found in Shaha, S. H., Lewis, V.K. and D. H. Brown (2004). Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students. *The Journal of Research in Professional Learning* (September 2004), 1-18.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DESIGN	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Research Problem	2
Purpose.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Definitions	6
Research Method	8
Research Participants and Data Collection.....	9
Study Limitations and Delimitations	12
Theoretical Framework.....	13
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	16
Professional Development, Coaching, and Instructional Support	16
Reading Practices and Teachers’ Attitudes, and Perceptions	24
Early Reading Practices	27
Skilled Reading Practices	31
Balanced and Integrated Practices	33
Interventions for Struggling Readers.....	34
Reforms, Research, Policy, and Federal Funding in Reading	37

Summary of the Literature Review.....	41
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	43
Introduction.....	43
Research Participants.....	43
Data Collection	44
Instrumentation	46
Instrument Reliability and Validity	47
Summary of Research Design and Analysis.....	50
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	55
Introduction.....	55
Population and School Demographics	59
Primary Question	62
Secondary Questions.....	69
Experience Levels.....	70
School Demographics	76
Grade Level Designation	80
Other Findings	84
Teachers’ Years of Experience	84
Other Professional Development	87
Materials	88
Open-Ended Responses	88
Summary of the Data Analysis	91
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	97

Introduction.....	97
Summary of the Study	98
Conclusions and Implications for Further Study	98
Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions.....	99
Early Reading Practices	103
Skilled Reading Practices	106
Balanced and Integrated Reading Practices.....	108
Interventions	111
Additional Findings	114
Summary of Findings and Recommendations	122
Recommendations for Future Research.....	127
APPENDIX A READING INSTRUCTION SURVEY	130
APPENDIX B PRINCIPAL LETTER.....	139
APPENDIX C EDUCATOR LETTER	142
APPENDIX D PRINCIPAL’S INSTRUCTIONS.....	145
APPENDIX E UCF IRB APPROVAL.....	142
APPENDIX F COLLIER IRB APPROVAL.....	143
APPENDIX G NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL.....	144
APPENDIX H PERFORMANCE LEARNING SYSTEMS APPROVAL.....	145
LIST OF REFERENCES	155

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Scatterplot – The response to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues and I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies*.....72
- Figure 2: Scatterplot – The response to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions and Students are instructed to use the ways words sound in text for accuracy and fluency*.....74
- Figure 3: Scatterplot – Group four responses to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues and I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies*.....75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Mode of Coaching Responses.....	51
Table 2 Highest and Lowest Cross-Correlations of Coaching Items.....	57
Table 3 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 1.....	64
Table 4 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 2.....	65
Table 5 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 3.....	66
Table 6 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 4.....	67
Table 7 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 5.....	68
Table 8 Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 6.....	69
Table 9 New Correlations Related to <i>Up to 3 Years</i> Experience.	71
Table 10 Increased Magnitude of Correlations Related to <i>4 – 7Years</i> Experience.....	73
Table 11 Negative Correlations Related to <i>8-15 Years</i> Experience	73
Table 12 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT SSS) Grades 3-5 Reading Percent Scoring at Level 3 or Higher for Years 2005 (FY 05) and 2006 (FY 06).....	79
Table 13 Comparison of Relationships of Survey Items with Intervening Variables Considered.....	82
Table 14 School #201 -Years Teaching.....	84
Table 15 School # 351 -Years Teaching.....	85
Table 16 School # 441 -Years Teaching.....	85
Table 17 School # 551 -Years Teaching.....	86
Table 18 School # 131 -Years Teaching.....	86
Table 19 Professional Development Attendance.....	87

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AIP: Academic Improvement Plans

AISR: Annenberg Institute for School Reform

ARP: Acquire Reading Power

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

FCAT: Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

IRA: International Reading Association

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

NCES: National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act

NRP: National Reading Panel

RRSG: Rand Reading Study Group: Office of Education Research and Improvement

NSDC: National Staff Development Council

SES: Socio-economic status

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DESIGN

Introduction

Educators are seeking answers to high numbers of school-age students who are performing below expectations at their grade levels in reading. Rigorous efforts have already been made, but new solutions to the problems must be sought out and implemented. Professional development for teachers of struggling readers is believed to be one way of solving the problem of inadequate reading skills for today's information-based society (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Coaching is a form of professional development used in many schools around the country to assist teachers in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to improve students reading performance, in elementary through secondary grades. Although up to this point there has been no systematic body of research that has examined the role of reading coaches on students' achievement, schools employing coaches have shown remarkable gains in student performance (International Reading Association (IRA), 2005).

The main goal of professional development is to facilitate change that will result in improved outcomes for students (Guskey, 2002). Reading coaches work on-site to assist teachers with assessing students' progress in reading and making decisions about the best research-based practices to use for initial instruction and interventions for struggling readers. In addition to helping teachers identify how they can effectively use instructional practices to reach all students, coaching as professional development needs to affect teachers' attitudes about teaching and their belief that they have the knowledge and skills to make a difference for the most difficult students (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Teachers who have the closest proximity and accountability for the students can impact the problem directly, but this often requires change in their instructional practice.

It is a premise of this study that an investment in extensive coaching, by providing school-based professional development, is needed to help teachers improve instruction in reading and to reduce the number of struggling readers. There is merit in investigating whether research-based professional support through coaching results in better attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices, and thus, impacts how teachers think, feel, and motivate themselves to apply their existing knowledge. Motivation is cognitively generated; attitudes, perceptions, and the execution of practices are closely tied together. People guide their actions by forethought; attitudes and perceptions contribute to teachers' expectancy regarding what their instruction will result in for their students. The stronger the sense of control over outcomes, the greater the action towards meeting that end (Bandura, 1994).

Statement of the Research Problem

Since the *No Child Left Behind Act* went into effect in 2001, a large investment of federal, state, and local resources have gone into school-based reading coaches as a system of professional development intended to improve instruction in reading. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) research synthesis informed us that professional development related to teachers' instructional needs, and targeted on student achievement, is worth the time and investment. In 15 studies that reported significant teacher outcomes, 13 also showed improvements in student achievement. Studies also revealed that professional development changed teachers' attitudes about their practice

that in turn resulted in improvements for students.

Researchers discovered that the experience of successful implementation of new practices resulted in changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs that were clearly linked to improvement in learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 1986). However, questions specific to the effectiveness of reading coaches still need to be asked and supported through research. Additional research is needed to determine the impact of reading coaches, as on-site professional development, in helping teachers meet the instructional needs of struggling readers. One step in that direction is to determine whether reading coaches are related to teachers' self-assessments of research-based instructional practices, attitudes, and perceptions about teaching reading.

Teachers of reading need the knowledge and skills to exercise effective practices and a belief that they can achieve this challenge. An exploration of teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices through self-reports provided some information about how teachers' perceive their knowledge and skills intended to improve the reading performance of students. Perceptions about one's ability to perform a task can lead to greater success and motivation (Bong & Clark, 1999). If positive responses to questions regarding the research-based practices, attitudes, and perceptions about teaching reading were positively correlated to those who indicated they worked with a coach more extensively, then further exploration into the use of reading coaches would be warranted.

Literature and research contributed to a premise of this study that teachers can be supported to improve their instructional skills, develop positive attitudes, and perceive that they are capable of success through professional development (NRP, 2000). The resources from the federal, state, and local levels that contributed to the provision of

coaches as the method of professional development were examined in the review of literature. The purpose of the study was to provide information about how reading coaches intended to provide professional development in schools were related to teachers' knowledge, practices, attitudes, and perceptions about teaching reading.

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions contribute to their power to produce a desired effect through sustained practice(Guskey, 2002). According to Shaha, Lewis, O'Donnell and Brown (2004) in *Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students*, professional development was described as a means to "equip teachers with new or refined skills and techniques for achieving better results for their students, and for helping teachers themselves to be more confident, capable, and fulfilled." (p. 1) Therefore, teachers with positive attitudes and perceptions, along with refined skills and practices from working with a reading coach, may have the power to produce the desired effect of helping students overcome obstacles to reading achievement.

Professional development for teachers has been available in varying degrees and presentation types for many years. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) report explained that the type of professional development that was most successful at making lasting changes in reading instruction was accessible and ongoing. School-based reading coaches are intended to be accessible to teachers when they need them throughout the year. Research-based instructional practices are the skills that reading coaches are intended to help teachers develop and use. In addition, coaches may help develop positive attitudes and perceptions about teaching reading so that teachers feel capable, confident, and fulfilled in doing their job. However, it is likely that teachers have differing levels of

contact with a reading coach. Just because a coach is present in a school does not mean that all teachers have the opportunity to interact in a way that helps them make lasting changes that benefit students. When looking at effectiveness, it is important to explore the extent and quality of coaching that took place for the teachers involved.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was: a) to explore elementary teachers' ratings of the extent of work they did with a reading coach; b) examine teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and current practices in teaching reading; c) describe how teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of work they have done with a reading coach and, d) to determine whether teachers' ratings on the attitudes and practices scale are related to the following intervening variables: certification, years of experience, school demographics, and grade level. A survey of teachers' self-reports provided the data for the study.

Research Questions

This study was guided by five research questions. The primary question for this study was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices on the Reading Instruction Survey correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* Additionally, the following questions were explored:

1. Does the level of experience reported by the teacher relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices on the *Reading Instruction Survey* are correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?

2. Does the type of certification reported by the teacher relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices on the *Reading Instruction Survey* are correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?
3. Do school demographics relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices on the *Reading Instruction Survey* are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
4. Does the grade level designation of the teachers (i.e., K-3 or 4-5) relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?

Definitions

Terms that are used throughout this study are presented below for clarity and a common understanding.

Attitudes of teachers related to their reading instruction: A teacher's state of mind or feelings related to success or performance during reading instruction.

Coaching as professional development: School-based professional development delivered by a reading coach that is directly related to the needs of teachers and students. Teacher leaders, hired as reading coaches in this study, serve to facilitate and guide their colleagues in using the best instructional practices.

Grade Level Designation: For the purpose of this study, the grade level refers to one or multiple grade levels within a range of K-3 or 4-5.

Level of Experience: For the purpose of this study, the level of experience refers to the number of years a teacher has been working in the field of education.

Meta-linguistic knowledge: For the purpose of this study, meta-linguistic knowledge is an awareness of the pieces of language that are used in the identification and selection of the parts of language embedded in words, phrases, sentences, and text.

Perceptions of teachers related to reading instruction: Teachers' understanding and awareness of their own performance capabilities that result from their observations, experiences, discussions, and/or reflections.

Practices of teachers related to reading instruction: Instructional actions that teachers take as professional decision-makers. The work of a professional educator is informed by knowledge and skills related to how students learn and perform during reading instruction. The practices include the methods and content involved in the delivery of instruction.

Reading coaches: Professional developers who were hired to serve as facilitators of teachers' professional growth through the interpretation of assessment data and ongoing instructional practices in reading. For the purpose of this study, the terms reading coach and literacy coach are used interchangeably.

Reading First: Block grant funding provided to states for early reading reform through professional development in reading in kindergarten to third grades.

School demographics: Characteristics of the student population, teaching staff, and community that contribute to the social context of the school. The socio-economic status (SES) of the students that results in qualification for funding under *Title I* and *Reading First* is the primary demographic of interest for this study. The teachers' years of teaching experience are also of interest in this study.

Spearman rho: Correlations of a linear relationship used with rank order data.

Title I: Legislation that provides for continued investment in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 1965 through the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001. The legislation is intended to provide funds to schools with high percentages of students who demonstrate an economic need for assistance. Resources purchased with *Title I* funds are intended to provide assistance to students struggling in reading, math, and other core content areas.

Type of certification: For the purpose of this study, certification through a traditional education program provided by a university and certified by the State is differentiated from certification through an alternative route. Alternative certification teachers hold a college degree in a content or academic area, but did not earn a degree in the field of education. An alternative certification teacher may have worked in another professional field of study prior to teaching and received a teaching certificate by meeting state lateral entry requirements i.e., testing, condensed, comprehensive coursework, or others.

Research Method

Permission was granted by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and Performance Learning Systems (PLS), Inc. to use excerpts of their surveys containing questions related to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices in reading. The principal researcher, S.H. Shaha (personal communication, January 10, 2006), provided validity and reliability information regarding the questions, development, and testing of the surveys as they were originally developed and used in the study published by the NSDC. Two of the original six surveys were combined and adapted to target the

areas of interest in this study. Questions on the teacher attitude and perception section of the survey were important to this study because many of the questions were about what the teacher believed he or she was capable of as a teacher of reading. The final sections of the survey included the additional questions of value that were adapted for this study. These questions were related to teachers' self-assessment of their instructional practices. In this study, teachers' ratings of their instructional practices, perceptions, and attitudes were correlated to the extent of coaching they indicated they had received.

Teachers participated in self-assessments of the extent of coaching they had received and their perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding teaching reading that provided information about the relationship, if any. An analysis was done to determine whether teachers who had worked with a reading coach more extensively identified their research-based practices on these surveys differently than those without wide-ranging support through coaching. Teachers' self-assessments of their perceptions and attitudes were also analyzed to determine if they differed based on the extent of coaching they had received. An analysis of the ratings on the perceptions and attitudes and the practices sections of the survey, and the section on the extent of coaching they received, resulted in the identification of the level of correlation as it was reflected in the survey results.

Research Participants and Data Collection

Five public elementary schools in Collier County, Florida were selected for this study because of the presence of reading coaches in the schools, from the 2003-2004 school year to the time of the study coaches were available. The differences in the amount of coaching each school had available to them was taken into consideration in the

selection. A sixth school was selected but was unable to provide teachers the time to complete the survey as agreed upon, so they were not included in the study. Two of the schools selected for this study had full-time *Reading First* coaches available to them for the last three years; the two schools with *Reading First* coaches had additional Title I reading specialists that assisted with reading instruction and reading consultation in their schools. Three of the schools in this study did not have consistent coaching on a daily basis during the three-year period; however, they had been assigned a site-based coach for at least half of each month during the 2005-2006 school year. In addition, district literacy specialists and reading coaches were available to all schools for in-services and special needs for over five years.

The surveys were mailed to the five schools in boxes addressed to each of the principals. Of the surveys that were sent to the 172 teachers in the five participating schools, 147 were returned. Principals informed teachers at least one week in advance of the opportunity to participate in the *Reading Instruction Survey*. Teachers were given time during a meeting, prior to the arrival of students, on a regular school day to complete the survey. A member of the faculty, who was not involved in the completion of the survey and was not a member of the administration, introduced the survey (see Appendix D). Participation in the survey was described as optional and teachers were free to leave the meeting if they chose not to participate. Teachers were assured that anonymity would be protected, that the consent letter would be sent to the university, and the surveys would be returned by mail to the researcher. Return mail envelopes were provided for the consent letters and pre-addressed postage-paid boxes were part of the return packet for the surveys. The five schools returned surveys from 147 teachers.

The first section of the survey (see Appendix A) consisted of six statements in which teachers were asked to rate, 0 = *not at all* to 4 = *extensively*, the extent of coaching they participated in during the preceding three-year period. The next section of the survey contained thirteen statements that teachers were asked to rate, 0 = *completely disagree* to 4 = *completely agree*, on the basis of how they felt about their reading instruction and their perceptions about their performance; an open-ended question about a new approach that they use in their classroom that they perceive to be effective was also part of this section. The third section contained queries about other professional development they participated in and personal information related to their years of experience, professional degrees, and certification. The final sections contained 24 statements about approaches to instructional practices that teachers were asked to rate: 0 = *never*, 1 = *seldom*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *always*, to indicate their use of the practices. The practices were divided into the following subsections based on the level, approach, or purpose of the practice: a) early reading strategies, b) skilled reading strategies, c) balanced and integrated reading strategies, and d) interventions. In addition, three open-ended queries asked them to identify materials used most often and in five of the subsections they were asked to briefly describe an instructional approach.

Each of the rated survey items and the materials identified were entered into the variable view of the SPSS™ 11.0 computer software for Windows to develop the codebook for later entry of responses and statistical analysis. When the surveys were returned, the data were entered into SPSS™ and key words in the open-ended responses were compiled in a Microsoft Word table of responses under the section in which the query appeared. For the first research question, Spearman correlations were run on each

survey item on coaching in section one and each response related to attitudes and perceptions in section two and practices in sections four to seven. One-tailed results were accepted and reported at the $p \leq .05$ level of significance. The correlations were verified by scatter plot graphs and sample plots were included.

Disaggregated data on teachers, based on the number of years of teaching experience, were compared to the findings for all teachers and across levels to answer the secondary questions related to the teachers' experience level as an intervening variable. Alternative certification teachers' responses were correlated and analyzed in comparison to all teachers to answer the question related to alternative certification. The correlations of coaching to survey responses regarding attitudes, perceptions, and practices were disaggregated by schools to compare the differences and similarities related to the socio-economic status of the students' in the school. The analysis by schools was intended to answer the question related to the "relationships of school demographics" as an intervening variable. Since *Reading First* coaches have been present in two of the schools for three years, working with grades K-3 under the guidelines of the *Reading First* grant, data were also disaggregated into grade level groups to determine whether there were differences in the correlations. The teachers' responses were disaggregated by their grade level designations (i.e., K-3 and 4-5). A table of key word responses to the open-ended queries was used to find trends, patterns, and frequencies in the responses that were similar to, or different from, the correlations.

Study Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations in this study include the sample size and selection of teachers in the

five elementary schools that agreed to participate in the study in Collier County, Florida. The return rate from the teachers in the five elementary schools was 85%. The responses reflected the perceptions of teachers that were involved in professional development to varying degrees in these schools. The surveys of their self-assessments of instructional practices and perceptions and attitudes about teaching reading informed this study about the correlation between coaching and the teachers' responses. All kindergarten to fifth grade teachers in the five elementary schools had an equal chance of participating in the survey. Of the teachers that responded, 43% were from *Title I* and *Reading First* schools that had one or more reading coaches available to their teachers since the 2003-2004 school year. The other 57% were from three elementary schools that did not have coaches available to their teachers on a daily basis over the three-year period, but they have had district coaches available as resources for workshops and special needs. The survey included six questions related to the extent to which the teacher worked with a reading coach in the last three years to correlate to the ratings on the attitudes and practices surveys.

Theoretical Framework

Research has shown that teachers' attitudes and perceptions lead to the belief that they can successfully perform difficult tasks. The more positive teachers' attitudes and perceptions are, the greater the belief that working with struggling readers is a challenge that can be mastered through expert instruction (Pajares, 2003). The work that teachers must do to help students overcome the obstacles to reading proficiently through instructional practices is complex (Torgeson, 2004). If coaching has a role in teachers'

self-assessments of their attitudes, perceptions, and practices, it may also have a connection to their power to produce an effect for their students.

The psychosocial processes that are inherent in adult learning affect how teachers apply what they learn into the classroom setting. The interaction of thought, affect, and action can be enhanced through a relationship with a coach that builds confidence and a sense of competency (Pajares, 2003). When teachers sense they are part of a community of learners, they are likely to have more positive attitudes towards professional development. A school community that fosters mutual trust and respect provides teachers with a supportive context in which to learn (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 2002).

The content provided by reading coaches is what has been determined by researchers to be effective. The Executive Summary in NRP (2000) states, “reading instruction involves four interacting factors: students, tasks, materials, and teachers.” (Section 5, page1). The funding, policies, and curriculum decisions that come from the federal, state, and local levels influence teachers’ access to resources, methods, and assessments that constitute the “tasks and materials” and the content of professional development. Schools employ coaches as a means of improving: a) the delivery of the content and b) the interaction of teachers and students (IRA, 2005). Reading coaches are subject to funding, policies, and resources that come from the layers of support at the federal, state, and local levels.

In the literature review the multiple levels of support for coaching as professional development were examined. The research data informed us of correlations between coaching and teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and practices in the responses of a sample of teachers in schools where there was coaching as a system of professional development.

This study was intended to explore the relationship of coaching and teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices to determine whether the investment at the federal, state, and local levels is supported.

The following chapters reveal research studies and literature that demonstrate how the provision of reading coaches is sound practice in education today. The premise that reading coaches as school-based professional development are funded to bring about changes in the work of teachers in their classrooms supported the survey research in this study. Teachers from schools where there are school-based coaches were selected for this study. A relationship between ratings of more time spent with reading coaches and higher ratings by teachers' on attitudes and perceptions of the work they do with students, and on their use of research-based instructional practices, was established through the analysis of the data. The narrative self-reports of teachers' practices and the use of interventions to improve reading instruction supported the work of other researchers. Additional questions are also discussed in the conclusion of this study for future research considerations.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Professional Development, Coaching, and Instructional Support

We no longer have the luxury of viewing professional development as simply a practice of certification renewal. The NRP (2000) and *Rand Reading Study Group* (RRSG) (Snow, 2002) reports emphasized the need for sustained professional development to produce lasting changes in the instructional practices of teachers in today's classrooms. Ongoing professional development in reading must address the core areas of need demonstrated by the *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP), also referred to as the *Nation's Report Card*, State performance assessments, and assessments used for *Title I* and *Reading First* accountability. Teacher development through coaching was intended to address how to meet the needs of students during instruction to eliminate widespread underperformance in reading.

Descriptions of effective professional development as a source that contributes to sustained changes in teachers' practices are provided in this review of literature. Reading coaches are examined as a mechanism for bringing about change from within the school. Teacher development was described as a means of instructional support for students through improved delivery and content of reading instruction. The content that constitutes research-based practices and rationales for teacher development in these areas were also important parts of the review of literature.

Quality professional development is the result of a connection between the content and methods that teachers are trained on and the support that they receive to improve their daily practice (Guskey, 2000). In a study of 35 teachers, pre-kindergarten

through fifth grade, it was revealed that teachers with the highest continuous implementation of the practices of a reading professional development project were those who responded to questions about their use of the strategies as being: a) appropriate for their grade level, b) effective at improving their students' reading abilities, and c) matching their existing program and goals for their students (Klingner, Ahwee, Pilonieta, & Menendez, 2003). Coaches that connect content and methods to the classroom context are likely to see continuous implementation and sustained practice.

Ethnographic research, in the Bolster study (as cited in Guskey, 2002) of changes in teachers' ideas and principles about their teaching, demonstrated that teachers need to see actions that work before they will embrace new, sustained practices. Coaches who are readily available to introduce and reinforce practices in terms of student achievement and outcomes are more likely to bring about changes in teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices.

A large-scale professional development project by Bloom (as cited in Guskey, 1986) was intended to bring about change through mastery learning practices. The research of this project included pre and post-test data on measures of change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes. The results indicated a pattern of successful use of mastery learning practices that was reflected in improved student outcomes, higher responses to questions about teachers' personal responsibility for student learning, and positive attitudes about teaching. Another recent study in *Education Next* by Logerfo (2006) had similar results in an exploration of teachers' perception of their personal responsibility for first graders learning to read. Improved student achievement in learning to read was positively related to teachers' ratings of their personal responsibility, which could also mean a relationship

to teachers' positive attitudes. The coaches in this study used assessment data to track student achievement on a regular basis, which aided teachers in seeing how their practices were connected to achievement.

Five features of professional development were measured by the National Center for Education Statistics (2005) to determine if professional development throughout the nation in the year 1999-2000 was aligned with them. These features were identified as common in professional development previously correlated with teacher change: a) focus on content and methods, b) longer duration, c) format, d) collective participation, and e) alignment to district or state standards (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2005). The results of teacher and principal surveys indicated that methods development activities were most prevalent. Content also had a high representation, but it often was not connected to methods. Teachers with less than 3 years of experience had methods oriented professional development more often than content, and among all of the teachers surveyed, teachers in high poverty schools had the greatest amount of both content and methods; however, they were not necessarily connected.

Although teachers received professional development in content and/or methods, the vast majority of participants in the NCES study (2005) received 8 hours or less of professional development all together. The format used most often was a workshop or conference rather than activities that had greater duration and intensity, such as peer observation, mentoring, and coaching. Teachers with 3 years or less participated in peer-supported activities the most. Collaboration and alignment were found to be a part of regularly scheduled business meetings instead of separate growth activities (NCES, 2005). According to these results, professional development was not aligned with what

the NCES said was needed for teacher change.

The importance of the role of school and district administration in the provision of sustained quality professional development has been increasingly recognized in the literature. A nationwide study by Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Kwang (2002) on policy mechanisms and strategies used in Eisenhower funded projects answered questions about the management and implementation of professional development for teachers. Districts that relied on teachers' input were prevalent in the development of the Eisenhower funded projects. The results of the study indicated that teacher involvement in the planning was a positive factor in many aspects of these projects.

Another positive influence in the Eisenhower projects under *Title II* was participation by teachers in the evaluation of the professional development activities. In over 80% of the districts that participated, teachers participated in some form of self-evaluation or rating of the professional development that helped determine the effectiveness of the activities. A third important feature examined as part of high quality professional development was alignment and use of assessments to determine teacher performance and student achievement. However, the study found that only 18% of teachers in the 363 districts were held accountable for their professional development, as it related to students' progress (Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Kwang, 2002). If schools and districts do not have mechanisms of accountability for student improvement, they could be perpetuating less than effective professional development.

In order for schools and districts to offer professional development that is aligned with the needs of teachers and students, they must determine their purpose for offering it, what they wish to improve, and then assess whether the changes they sought had

occurred. When the needs of students are viewed in terms of helping them achieve what a good reader needs to know and be able to do, professional development is aligned to instructional goals and is more relevant to teachers in planning for instruction.

Assessment results, used to determine the effectiveness of professional development efforts, may lead to a greater urgency for change. When the call for change is related to daily practice and grounded in learning theory, it is more effective (Guskey, 2000).

In the *Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvements* by D. P. Crandall (as cited in Guskey, 2002) the commitment of teachers to sustaining 61 innovative practices learned in professional development in 146 districts nationwide was explored. The results indicated that despite the managers' efforts to stimulate commitment to the new practices, in most cases, the effectiveness was lost because teachers changed the practices beyond recognition. When teachers are involved in professional development activities intended to alter their performance in the classroom, adoption of the practices is directly related to the outcomes for students. Ongoing alignment to student performance can be the catalyst for the adoption of practices, if student success is demonstrated.

If professional development is intended to bring about the change we need throughout the educational system, it must move the system, teacher-by-teacher and school-by-school, in a positive direction. Recent research by the *Annenberg Institute for School Reform* (AISR) (2005) showed that instructional capacity in a school was impacted by: a) ongoing support for innovation and change, b) a context-specific orientation, c) alignment with other reform initiatives, and d) grounding in collaborative, inquiry-based approaches to learning. This type of change becomes part of the culture of

the school, and thus, is embedded in the activity and academic life of the school. A school that has a culture that fosters continued professional growth through informal interactions, and the pursuit of answers to problems as they arise, is a dynamic one (Guskey, 2000). This system is like growing organisms that thrive on solutions rather than being stuck in the status quo; professional sharing nourishes the teachers' growth and sustains the quest for new answers to age-old problems.

One of the goals of professional development is systemic change. Teacher knowledge and skills are key components of any effort to improve student learning. Sustained change, through new knowledge and skills, is dependent upon the system of support. The issues associated with improving the performance of underachieving students in reading are complex. It will take a systemic approach, with coordinated national, state, district, and school efforts, to bring about real and lasting reform in reading instruction that will impact student performance (Desimone et al., 2002).

There are multiple levels that contribute to change in the educational system for growth to be sustained through ongoing professional support and development. The levels are related to the governance and structure of the school and those people who develop curriculum and set the standards (Guskey, 2000). The funding stream that allows for adequate personnel and materials is also a part of that system. For professional development to be meaningful to teachers, it needs to be viewed as an integral part of the delivery of effective instruction and supported at both the school and district levels. Professional development that is tied to the state and district curriculum standards, based on accepted learning theory, grounded in the diverse needs of students, and supported by research is more likely to reach teachers as they work towards helping struggling readers

improve their reading (Desimone et al., 2002).

National reform initiatives, including the *Carnegie Corporation's Schools for a New Society* and the *School Communities that Work* task force, have shown us that an effective school-by-school strategy focuses on working within the school to develop the skills and systems that will support teachers, and therefore, brings about lasting improvements (Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR), 2005). Having coaches who are reading specialists available within schools is one way of providing assistance to teachers when they need the help.

The challenge for all reading coaches is to bring about data-driven changes that result in intentional practice of new and improved approaches to instruction. Targeted instruction often means planning and implementing practices in new ways. The years of research on teaching reading has shown that teachers tend to revert to the way that they were taught as students, rather than the way they were taught to teach in college preparation programs and in-services, if they are not supported in making change (NRP, 2000). Continuous support for learning new ways of reaching struggling readers is critical to making lasting and meaningful change in instruction for low performing populations of students. In addition, the regular presence of a coach can help teachers embrace the idea that being a teacher means being a lifelong learner (Guskey, 2000).

Coaching in the Boston Public Schools had the stated goal of supporting teachers to deepen their content knowledge and understanding of effective instruction (Curtis, 2001). The school's student performance data, student-learning goals, and the *Whole-School Improvement Plan* determined the specifics of what needed to be "coached". The process included four elements: a) the classroom experience as a lab

setting for new learning, b) reflective thinking that included meta-cognitive inquiry about the current practices and outcomes, c) feedback intended to help teachers refine instruction and plan next steps, and d) incorporation of recent research into effective practices. Reaching the goal of deepening teachers' knowledge and understanding through this process required that coaches use different approaches to support their teachers.

There are many roles that reading coaches take on as part of their professional development responsibilities. Joyce and Showers (2002), described five kinds of professional development experiences that coaches can engage teachers in: a) sharing the theory behind learning to read, b) demonstrating effective techniques, c) guiding teachers' practice as they implement new techniques, d) providing feedback to teachers regarding their attempts, and e) providing in-class coaching during lessons. In addition, the *Reading First* coaches, and others, take on the responsibility of aligning assessment results to feedback given to teachers about their instruction and students' learning. Coaches who are able to perform all of these functions provide teachers with well-rounded and thorough experiences that are real, relevant, and timely. These kinds of experiences are likely to win the confidence of teachers so that they will seek out help, as needed, for a variety of reasons. In order for this to work, coaches must be experts in the field of reading.

Effective reading coaches are knowledgeable about reading curriculum and the delivery of initial instruction, assessments, and effective reading interventions; they also know how to communicate these things to teachers so that they will listen and understand. Without the knowledge and competence to share, coaches lose credibility

with teachers because they are not able to articulate solutions teachers can understand. This necessitates that coaches have a good understanding of adult learning theory to be effective with teachers as learners (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Currently, there is a wide range of eligibility criteria for reading coaches in districts and schools throughout the country (IRA, 2004). The disparities in qualifications of reading coaches could lead to misinterpretations of the effectiveness of coaching as a system of professional development. Although many states and local districts address disparities through their own preparation of coaches, caution in the interpretation of results in this study was needed to reflect possible differences in coaches that may exist.

The role of reading coaches under *Reading First* and other state and local initiatives is to see that teachers have the content knowledge described in this study; the coaches in the schools that participated in this study had extensive training through *Just Read, Florida* and local professional development. The teachers who participated in the self-reporting for this study revealed their attitudes, perceptions, and practices related to the content knowledge shared by the coaches and described in the following sections. Differences in teachers self-reporting helped explain the correlations of teachers' responses to the extent of coaching they received.

Reading Practices and Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions

In order for teachers to solve students' reading problems, tools and resources for successful practice need to be readily available, supported, and understood (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The tools and resources are the content knowledge, materials, and assessments within students' proficiency levels; coaches are the support mechanism,

through in-school professional development, for using the tools and resources effectively. Coaches are intended to help teachers seek and use the most effective practices.

In a study of exemplary reading teachers' practices, it was found that the most effective teachers sought to instruct using authentic problem solving activities, in and around language, and that they motivated their students to read (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-Mc Donald, Block, & Morrow, 2001). Using language and print-rich activities with authentic engagement is more complex than other text directed approaches because it is responsive to the students and an ever-changing environment (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Coaches are the catalysts for helping teachers take on the complexity of teaching to diverse populations of students in dynamic classrooms.

The environment of the exemplary teacher's classroom is a microcosm of what research has shown us leads to reading proficiency for all: a) teachers with positive attitudes and self-perceptions, b) powerful initial instruction, and c) responsive intervention activities (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The responsibility for exemplary initial instruction, ongoing assessment, and diagnosis of students' needs is part of providing effective reading instruction in a supportive environment. Research has shown us that the environment students learn in contributes to success in their reading development. Teachers who inspire students to test and apply their growing knowledge of reading have higher student achievement (Pressley et al., 2001). Additionally, teachers with positive attitudes plan targeted instruction intended to accelerate students' learning. Activities that are geared towards the diverse needs of students and are prepared by teachers who have clear ends in mind are more likely to attain the goal of reaching all students (Guskey, 2000).

Although there are no prescriptions for the “ideal activities” for all students at any given point in the elementary grades, there are foundational practices that reflect sensitivity to the developmental aspects of learning to read and reading to learn. The International Reading Association’s (2003) position paper on reading professionals states that there is not one single method of teaching all students to read. Instead, teachers must be knowledgeable of a multitude of instructional practices that bring about success. Additionally, teachers must know the students in their care well enough to balance the methods to meet their needs.

Teachers prepare lessons with intentions of students learning specific content or skills; students learn what their predispositions and interactions facilitate. The more teachers understand possible outcomes and what causes variations, the better the matches between what is intended and what actually occurs. Teachers of reading need to know what reading is comprised of and what makes learning to read difficult for some students. They need to understand about the wide-ranging experiences that students come to school with and how these relate to varied preparations for learning to read (Snow et al., 1998). An understanding of how to differentiate instruction can help prevent reading difficulties in many students and serve as interventions to those who struggle. Coaches can be valuable resources to teachers as they work towards differentiated instruction and the use of assessment data to drive instruction.

The interaction of teachers and students around the content of reading is integral to making the knowledge, skills, and resources effective. The following sections on reading practices were included to provide an understanding of what was surveyed in this study, demonstrate the complexity of the dynamics of teacher-student interactions, and

explain the content of the professional development of coaches in improving these interactions.

Early Reading Practices

Teachers face many challenges in helping students be successful through early reading practices. The teachers in this study were asked to rate their use of a variety of early reading practices and to identify how they used explicit instruction to help young readers. The teachers' responses revealed how they felt about specific practices in relation to the others and whether teachers who worked with a coach more rated certain practices higher. The narrative responses gave information to the study about how teachers identified explicit instruction for young readers. The following descriptions in the literature review explore what some of the scholars and researchers have found to be most important in working with early readers through effective practices. This information is used in the interpretation of the results of the correlations of coaching to early reading practices.

Reading is a complex process of psychological, linguistic, and social communicative factors that change over time (Jones, 1994). Teachers' understanding of the role of language development in early reading practices is essential to getting students off to a good start. Students begin to use the tools of language and inner-speech, as social transformation, after observing and interacting with their teachers and other students in the reading instruction process (Cheyne & Tarulli, 1999). One example of effective practice is when teachers mediate students' use of language in reading by explicitly instructing them to use what they know about how words work in speech to interpret

messages (Dixon-Krauss, 2002). Differences in what students know about spoken language contribute to the intricacies of early reading practices; mediating instruction means being flexible to meet individual needs.

The style and quantity of prior verbal interactions of students entering school effects how teachers begin reading instruction. A longitudinal study of children and their families revealed differences in students past experiences that impacted their readiness for learning to read. The breadth, depth, and diversity of interactions were greater in families with professional parents; welfare families had the least interactions (Hart & Risley, 1995). This study revealed that children from families of poverty had fewer opportunities to develop word knowledge and communication awareness through language and thus, would need different initial instruction and interventions than other students.

Learning to read requires the construction of new knowledge from previous knowledge about how the parts relate to the whole of language (Clay, 1991). Helping students to develop auditory awareness of gross differences of sounds in words and sentences will help them listen for finer differences within words. Using manipulatives for the purpose of putting concrete objects or actions to the act of separating words in a spoken sentence, syllables within words, and segmenting and blending sounds within words, has been shown to be very effective practice for the development of phonemic awareness (NRP, 2000).

Key findings from research published in the NRP report have shown us that phonemic awareness is a significant predictor of success for early readers. Phonemic awareness is one of the “index skills” that can be taught and learned to eliminate later

reading difficulties. Phonemic awareness was assessed by *Reading First* and school teams within schools throughout Florida in the DIBELS assessments done four times a year (Just Read, 2003). The complexity of interpreting these assessments, and basing reading instruction on ongoing progress monitoring, makes the support that reading coaches offer a vital service to teachers.

Teachers instruct students on how sounds operate within print, help them develop recall to associate sounds with symbols, and teach them how to remember whole words. The process of decoding sounds to read, and encoding words to write, can be explicitly taught in one or more ways: a) synthetic phonics in which the sounds associated with the symbols are taught in isolation; b) analytical phonics where sounds are associated with words and taken apart to analyze the sound/symbol relationships; c) embedded phonics where words and sounds are within text and sound/symbol relationships are explored through reading and writing; and d) through analogies in which students recognize chunks or parts of known words to use analogous associations to new words (DeVries, 2004). Teachers need knowledge of early reading practices in isolated and embedded word work to support students in learning to read. These practices are part of the research-based instruction shown to improve students' achievement (NRP, 2000).

Teachers provide practice with sounds, in and out of text, that facilitates fluent recognition of words. The less energy readers have to put into the word recognition aspect of reading, the more they can devote to deeper understanding. Rapid recognition of words is an important skill that students need to develop for them to move from early reading to skilled reading; teachers need the knowledge of how to support students through systematic instruction to help them make this transition.

The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to bring students to in-depth understanding of text and the ability to communicate what they read. Teachers need to explicitly instruct students in how to use strategies that will lead to understanding text (Snow, 2002). Included in lessons on how to comprehend text are practices that involve understanding the words within the passage, or vocabulary instruction. According to the research data of the National Reading Panel (2000), comprehension studies revealed three dominant themes:

“1) Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that integrates complex skills and cannot be understood without examining the critical role of vocabulary learning and instruction and its development; 2) active interactive strategic processes are critically necessary to the development of reading comprehension; 3) the preparation of teachers to best equip them to facilitate these complex processes is critical and intimately tied to the development of reading comprehension.” (Section 4, page 1)

The interplay of language with the sub skills of reading necessitates proficiency with spoken language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary recognition in increasingly complex text to move students from early to skilled reading. In the description of early reading practices in this section of the literature review, the content of the survey was explored to help explain the findings of this study. The items on the survey and the open-ended query of this study provided teachers' self-reports of their use of early reading practices and how these were related to their work with a reading coach.

Skilled Reading Practices

The teachers that participated in this study rated their use of instructional practices in skilled reading. The items on the survey represented research-based strategies for developing increasingly more sophisticated skills needed for ease of reading and depth of understanding. This section explored the practices that were the focus of skilled reading instruction to help explain the content of the survey. The content was what the teachers and coaches in this study investigated to improve the reading proficiency of students. The content included word work, fluency practices, and comprehension strategies.

When teachers assist students in developing a pleasing sound to their reading through repeated readings and guided reading they enable students to become fluent readers of text; thus, enabling them to focus on understanding the message (NRP, 2000). Fluent readers engage in the automatic recall of words that frees them up for using the intonation, phrasing, and expression, which helps to convey the meaning of a passage. The teachers and coaches in this study used the DIBELS assessment to determine student proficiency levels, based on their fluency. This informed teachers and coaches about whether readers were automatic in their word recognition by giving a reading rate for each passage. This was used as one gauge of students' progress towards having the capacity to attend to text for comprehension.

Once students move beyond the conscious act of thinking about their own thinking, they develop ease and are likely to get more enjoyment out of the act of reading and to have better comprehension. According to the *National Reading Panel* report (2000), comprehension strategies are procedures that guide students' thinking to help them become aware of the meaning underlying the words on the page. Wide ranges of

strategies constitute the repertoires of good readers' cognitive approaches to the reading process. These strategies need to be affirmed and/or explicitly taught for all students to be successful at reading for meaning (Duke, 2004). Part of comprehension is developing the meta-cognitive awareness of thinking and problem solving in text (Snow, 2002).

Teachers of skilled readers need to recognize that deliberate instruction in how to think, and what to be aware of, are part of effective skilled reading instruction.

The ability to comprehend is influenced by skills inherent in phonetic decoding, reading fluency, and receptive and expressive vocabulary. Additionally, students' knowledge, cognitive strategies, ability to repair errors in text, reasoning and inferential skills, and motivation to learn all contribute to their successful performance (Duke, 2004). The level of comprehension proficiency of the students in the schools that participated in this study was assessed using the *Stanford Achievement Test*, Ninth Edition (SAT 9) and the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* (FCAT). The teachers in this study were asked to rate and describe comprehension strategy instruction.

Stumbling blocks to students developing fluency and comprehension are a lack of adequate oral language and vocabulary to apply to text. Vocabulary development is an important ongoing part of instruction in language skills. Instructional activities that are useful for developing vocabulary skills in students in all elementary grades are implicit and explicit methods (NRP, 2000).

As students progress through the elementary grades, the sophistication of word recognition and vocabulary strategies needed for comprehension increases. Vocabulary development is measured for *Reading First* accountability through the *Peabody Vocabulary Test*. Coaches help teachers in *Reading First* schools interpret the results of

the *Peabody Vocabulary Test* to determine appropriate strategies for language development (Just Read, 2003). Teachers' recognition of how the skills measured on the vocabulary test relate to their practices with students is an important part of their work with coaches. The survey in this study provided opportunities for the participating teachers to report on the role of vocabulary instruction in their skilled reading practices.

The skilled reading section of the literature review explored the research practices that were included on the survey used in this study. The practices included strategies for developing fluency, word accuracy and usage, constructing meaning, and relating known to unknown features of text. The survey also asked teachers to identify effective comprehension strategies they had used to teach skilled readers. The self-reports were compared to the research on best practices for skilled readers to interpret the results of this study.

Balanced and Integrated Practices

The NRP (2000) emphasized that systematic instruction in isolated skills should be integrated with other reading instruction to have a balanced reading program. The integration of reading and writing is used to further develop the skills of students who are beyond basic recall of words in text and ready for more difficult activities related to comprehension. The teachers in this study rated their use of strategies intended to balance and integrate reading and writing for content understanding and the exploration of literature. The items on the survey represented some of the ways teachers incorporated the curriculum standards through balanced and integrated instruction. Teachers were also given the opportunity to describe one way that they integrated reading and writing into a

content area.

In a study by Allington & Johnson (2002), evidence showed that the use of balanced and integrated approaches to reading enabled teachers to connect content areas and literature to students' writing and reading development. Students were provided opportunities to connect reading and writing by composing as a means of communicating their understanding and making connections with text. Integrating reading and writing was an integral part of the balanced literacy program; developing an awareness of the reciprocal nature of reading and writing allowed students to interact in a way that extended what was learned at home, or in another content area, to accelerate reading growth and learning. The relationship of words and ideas were explored through meaningful content. Also, students were given many opportunities to engage in independent reading for enjoyment and intellectual pursuit (Allington & Johnson, 2002).

The interpretation of the results of teachers' self-reports on the use of balanced and integrated practices in this study was compared to what research has shown to be effective. Particular attention was given to what the *National Reading Panel* (2002) research findings emphasized; isolated skills instruction should be integrated with other reading instruction to create a balanced approach to teaching reading. The relationship of coaching to teachers' reports of isolated skills instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics should also be related to other instructional practices.

Interventions for Struggling Readers

This section is important to understanding the items on the survey and the teachers' self-reports about how they carried out interventions for struggling readers.

Interventions are intended to circumvent the direction of struggling readers to bring about success through effective instructional practices. The first step is identification of students who need an intervention through screening assessments. The DIBELS, SAT 9, and the *Peabody Vocabulary Test* were the screening measures used by the coaches in this study to communicate the need for interventions to teachers.

Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read. Alternative practices in reading instruction, increased time, small group attention, or the use of specialized approaches that scaffold students' learning are often necessary to help struggling readers. Scaffolded instruction can be provided in small groups, or Tier II support, in which the teachers provide quality supplemental instruction (Torgeson, 2004). The interventions include additional time, programs, strategies, and procedures to supplement the core program of initial instruction.

According to Lyons (2003), interventions need to provide students with experiences in their "zone" of development so that teachers can challenge them to move from where they are performing to their level of potential. Vygotsky (as cited in Lyons) explained the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as the area that falls between what students can do independently and that which more capable peers or adults need to demonstrate or provide guidance to do successfully. The zone that provides opportunities for students to engage in approximating the actions of the more capable model is the area where growth can be accelerated. If growth is not accelerated to bring students closer to identified reading proficiency levels, additional investigation is needed.

After screening and interventions, follow-up and more diagnostic assessments may be necessary to explain students' lack of progress. Intervention plans are developed

that may include specific instructional practices, possible adjustments in time or schedules, and increased intensity of instruction by specially trained professionals. These plans must be followed as intended to determine whether they have been successful. This is part of what the teachers and coaches were expected to do in the schools that were a part of this study.

Instructional situations that necessitate even greater intensity, based on diagnostic assessments, are Tier III interventions (Torgeson, 2004). Tier III interventions include supplemental instruction by well-trained professionals and interventions delivered within or outside of the classroom for approximately 30 minutes in addition to Tier I & Tier II instruction. The additional time and intensity of targeted instruction may be one-on-one to one-on-three with frequent progress monitoring. The costs of “Tier III” interventions are substantial to local districts, especially one-to-one tutoring; however, the costs of failure are even greater.

Individualized intervention practices, targeted to the developmental needs of students, are needed to provide support for the dynamic nature of students’ development. Intervention plans that are developed from diagnostic assessment and ongoing intervention practices and used as recommended will ensure that students’ diverse needs are met. Coaches that are knowledgeable about how to put plans in place, monitor their success, implement effective reading practices, and assess ongoing needs in students can assist teachers in using the plans as they are recommended. Items related to teachers’ implementation of intervention screening, follow-up and diagnosis, and use of plans as they were intended are part of the survey used in this study. This is a required part of the coaches’ role in *Reading First* schools according to Just Read, Florida (2003). District

guidelines also require this for all of the schools that participated in this study.

The role of reading coaches explored in this study was largely defined by federal, state, and local requirements. The sections on reading practices in this literature review described the content, context, and delivery of effective reading instruction that was part of the definition of what coaches were to support in their schools. Reading coaches as professional development came about as part of reading reforms, research, policy, and the availability of funding. The following section of the literature review provides historical information about the federal, state, and local levels of involvement in professional development that resulted in the funding of reading coaches.

Reforms, Research, Policy, and Federal Funding in Reading

The fact that many children in this country do not read with fluency and clarity, has led to increased governmental policies and conditions on federal funding related to educational programs. Despite vigorous involvement by research agencies and governmental policies makers, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (as cited in McCardle & Chhabra, 2004), approximately one third of all students still struggle in today's classrooms. Included in this statistic was data that showed that the numbers of minority students who did not read as well as their proficient counterpart was twice as high as non-minorities. These statistics have prompted a review of past reforms and a refinement of research practices in education. Reading coaches came into the educational scene as a means of addressing reform in reading and the implementation of recent research into instructional practices that improve students' performance (NCLB, 2001).

The government investment in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) in 1965 was the impetus for research and development in the area of reading education. As early as the 1960s, the *Cooperative First Grade Studies* were commissioned by the U. S. Department of Education to determine effective early reading instruction. The findings resulted in recommendations for early reading instruction and the identification of characteristics of effective teachers (Bond & Dykstra, 1966). The findings included recommendations that at-risk students receive systematic phonics instruction, and that all students be engaged in continuous reading and writing practice. Follow-up studies were conducted in the 1970s to determine the progress we were making in improving reading instruction. The results on national assessments showed little change in student performance (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004).

In 1980, with the publication of *A Nation At Risk*, it was projected that the generation of students going through schools at that time would likely not surpass their parents in educational levels or attainment (Adams, 2000). The role of the government in local schools expanded due to the high number of students who were failing to learn at the rate expected of them. After 20 years of funding programs for low performing students and schools, government officials realized that the results were the same. It was recognized that more research was needed to determine what was causing the failure and how to remedy this situation (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004).

The *National Institute for Child Health and Human Development* (NICHD) became an active agent for the research and development determined to be necessary to understand the problems of these low performing schools and students. G. Reid Lyons led these efforts by lobbying for the funding and support of scientifically-based research

in education (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004). Lyons helped establish rigorous standards of replication and methods for reading practice, assessment, and interventions. In addition, he contributed to the formation of a collaborative network that set standards for reading research and reform.

In 1997, the U.S. Congress asked the director of the NICHD to create a national panel to study and assess the effectiveness of different practices in teaching reading. The new definition of research and review established by the NICHD resulted in the *National Reading Panel* (NRP) report of 2000 on effective practices in research and instruction in education. The result was the product of the collaborative effort, commissioned by Congress, and supported by the *National Science Foundation* and the *National Institute for Literacy*. The NRP report ended years of conflicting evidence and research on the essential components of instruction in reading. The results brought consensus among many more professionals in the field of reading regarding reading reform, the key components of instruction, and how to measure the effectiveness of programs designed to teach these skill areas (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004).

The Eisenhower Professional Development Program, authorized as part of *Title II* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, provided formula grants to districts to improve mathematics and science instruction. Extensive research on the characteristics of reform oriented professional development provided information for funding other types of reform programs (Desimone et al., 2002). *Reading First* is a separate part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which provided funding to states for early reading reform through professional development and scientifically-based instructional practices ("No Child Left Behind Act," 2001). The new legislation in NCLB put conditions on funding programs,

based on the findings of recent research related to reading instruction and professional development. The professional development that was put into policy was expected to match the findings of research that called for sustained professional development support, like coaching and on-site mentoring, and to focus on methods and content that were research-based.

States, including Florida, submitted grant applications to fund reading coaches in schools to work with kindergarten to third grade teachers. The accountability piece required in the grant application was tied to showing progress towards meeting the goal of improved student performance in the five essential components. States were required to identify assessments for these areas (NCLB, 2001).

Students in Florida are asked to demonstrate their ability to read and express their understanding by participating in the Scholastic Aptitude Test, ninth edition (SAT 9) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) beginning in third grade. These benchmark assessments determine students' proficiency for promotion, based on state standards; and schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), based on federal standards.

In Florida, the continuation of millions of dollars depends on the improvement of student outcomes in *Reading First* schools; they are tied to improved student outcomes over three to six year periods. If teachers are not using practices that improve student performance, coaches will no longer be funded in these schools (Just Read, 2003). More time is needed to determine whether the collaborative work of teachers and reading coaches leads to improvement in reading outcomes. In addition, it is yet to be determined whether the improvements reflected in the early assessments used by *Reading First* schools are sustained in later school years and reflected on the assessments used in

middle school and high school.

The research findings of studies commissioned by government agencies contributed to the language of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The act included specific language about practices that were “scientifically-based” and incorporated the five essential areas of reading. This inclusion of expectations for instructional practice and the ties to accountability as policy issues were more far reaching than previous *Title I* legislation (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004). In addition, the stakes for using coaches to achieve successful implementation of ongoing assessment and results-driven instruction are higher than other reform initiatives in the past. Teachers’ self-reports on coaching and scientifically-based practices identified on the survey in this study provided some information about whether there was a relationship between the use of coaches and teachers’ instruction.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review provided research on: a) effective professional development; b) how coaching as a system of professional development is intended to meet teachers needs; c) the characteristics of teacher development that are likely to bring about sustained changes to instructional practices in reading through improvements in teachers’ attitudes and perceptions; d) the reading practices that recognize diversity and are described as research-based instruction; and e) a description of the investment in reading education through federal, state, and local reading funding and programs. Currently, a large investment is directed towards school-based coaches. Reading coaches must make a difference to continue to be funded.

Research-based instructional practices in early reading were described as addressing the diversity of needs of young students. The challenges to teachers are part of the language and cultural differences that leave some of the youngest students poorly prepared for the work of decoding and constructing meaning when they enter school. Professional development that strengthened teachers' methods and skills was explained as assisting them in meeting the complex needs of students.

This section of the literature review included description of the components of reading instruction that readers are taught in order to develop language proficiency, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The early reading strategies included the sub skills of phonemic awareness and phonics, along with the role of language in comprehension and fluency; the skilled reading strategies included a greater emphasis word study, fluency, comprehension, and the integration of reading and writing to meet increased demands for performance that combine these skills. Interventions were described in the literature as ways of reaching all students that included practices, increased time, intensity, and scaffolding. The use of assessments to develop intervention plans, track changes, and monitor progress were recognized as important parts of the work that coaches do with classroom teachers in elementary schools.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore through survey research: a) teachers' self-reporting of the extent of work they had done with a reading coach; b) teachers' self-reporting of their attitudes, perceptions, and current practices in teaching reading; c) how teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices were correlated with the amount of work they had done with a reading coach; and, d) the relationship that teachers' certification, years of experience, school demographics, and grade level had on the correlations. It was a premise of this study that teachers in the same district spent varying amounts of time and intensity with reading coaches, so the extent of each teacher's involvement with a coach needed to be established to determine the correlations.

The first step in this study was to determine how extensive teachers' work with a coach had been by including six questions related to the amount of work the teacher perceived they had done with a coach in the last three years. In order to ascertain the correlation between coaching and teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices, the ratings were correlated to the responses on the survey. An analysis of the responses to the *Reading Instruction Survey* (see Appendix A) determined whether they were correlated to the independent variable: coaching; and the intervening variables: a) experience, b) certification, c) school demographics, and d) instructional grade level.

Research Participants

In Collier County, Florida, elementary school teachers had reading coaches

available to them as school-based professional development. Five schools were selected for this study because of the differences in the amount of coaching their teachers had available to them. Two of the schools selected for this study had full-time *Reading First* coaches available to them for the last three years; these schools also had additional Title I reading specialists that assisted with reading instruction and professional development in their schools. Three of the schools in this study did not have consistent coaching on a daily basis during the three-year period; however, there was a site-based coach for at least half of each month during the 2005-2006 school year. District reading coaches were available to all schools for in-services and special needs for the last three years.

Data Collection

Principals of ten elementary schools in Collier County, Florida were contacted by e-mail for permission to survey their teachers. The schools were selected because they were in the same district and used the same district curriculum and materials for reading; half of the selected schools had reading coaches available to their teachers on a daily basis and the other half have coaches available intermittently with much less time allocated to working directly with the teachers. Of the ten schools, five principals responded that they would like to participate; a sixth principal considered participating, but was unable to meet the requirements for distribution so was not included in the study. Each of the five principals was sent a formal letter requesting approval (see Appendix B). The letter confirmed that they agreed to hold faculty meetings during non-instructional time and ensured that the surveys were hand distributed. The same method was agreed upon by all of the principals who participated in this study. The surveys were sent by

U.S. mail to the principals of the five schools and hand distributed by a staff member, who was not participating in the survey (see Appendix D). All of the teachers were given an equal chance of voluntarily participating in the survey during a time when they were not responsible for students.

The teachers in the five elementary schools in Collier County, Florida were informed that a survey was coming at least one week ahead of time. The notification was sent to the principals, with a copy of the district consent to conduct research (see Appendix F), and instructions for how all kindergarten to fifth grade (K-5) teachers in the school should respond and return the surveys (see Appendix D). About one week later, all K-5 teachers received the consent form (see Appendix C) and a copy of the survey (see Appendix A), if they chose to participate. All of the teachers in the five schools were given an equal chance of participating in the survey because time was allotted during a faculty meeting, outside of the instructional time.

The principal's designee distributed and collected the consent forms and the surveys. The consent forms were sent to the university representative and the surveys were returned to the principal investigator for input and analysis of the data.

From the five participating schools in Collier County, Florida, one hundred and seventy-two teachers were given an opportunity to respond to the survey; they were assured that anonymity would be protected. The responses to the six questions related to the extent of work they did with a coach were correlated to the responses on the attitudes, perceptions, and practices survey. The teachers were asked to rate the extent that they worked with a coach in the last three years, complete personal demographic information, and rate their response to statements on the survey regarding their attitudes, perceptions,

and practices related to teaching reading. Surveys were returned for 147 teachers, (85%), from the five schools.

Instrumentation

The *Reading Instruction Survey* (see Appendix A) was given to teachers in the five elementary schools in Collier County, Florida. The survey included six questions that were developed by the researcher and added to the original survey in *Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students*, Shaha et al. (2004). The additional questions dealt with the degree of work the participant did with a reading coach and was correlated to the attitudes and practices ratings. In the first section of the survey, a scale of 0-4 was used for teachers to rate their work with a reading coach on a continuum: 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Extensively*. The individual item responses to all six items were correlated to the other items on the survey. A joint distribution of scores was developed to see what the general pattern of responses was in the correlations.

The responses on the survey items were correlated with the extent of work with a coach. In addition, open-ended questions related to materials and practices were included and compared to determine additional patterns in the teachers' responses. This analysis was intended to help explain how teachers describe their current practices. Themes were explored in the open-ended responses and related to the survey results, other professional development opportunities available in the schools, and school demographics. Positive correlations on ratings of instructional practices, and attitudes and perceptions, to the extent of work with a reading coach, would lend support to coaching as professional

development and additional research in the area.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

Descriptions of the validity and reliability from the previous use of these surveys were provided in a personal communication with the primary researcher. A comparison of the sample frame, design, and use provided information about the applicability of questions to this study. The comparison included an analysis of the results of the survey used in the original study, and this current study, as part of the validity and reliability check. An inductive approach was used to generalize the results of the survey in the original study to this one. This was reasonable because identification of the use in the first study was explained in this subsequent one (Henson, Kogan, & Vacha-Haase, 2001).

A correlation of responses to items regarding the amount of time spent with a reading coach in the first section was used to determine whether they were related to each other. Additionally, the correlation of items in the sections related to attitudes and perceptions, early reading practices, skilled reading strategies, integrated and balanced approaches, and interventions informed us about the relationship of the item responses within sections to each other and to coaching.

The content validity of the survey instrument for use in the original study was described by S. H. Shaha (personal communication, January 10, 2006) as ensured by a “one to one relationship to the behavioral and learning objectives of two separate established and proven professional development offerings designed for maximizing educator capabilities for teaching reading.” (p. 1) The items were designed to match the skills and domain knowledge appropriate for teaching reading following current best

practices. The survey content was matched to what reading coaches in Florida were expected to provide teachers (Just Read, 2003). The *Reading First* and district coaches in Florida received training from the *Just Read, Florida* professional developers following the research revealed in the NRP report (2000) and best practices in recent reading research. The researcher in this study was one of the professional developers for *Just Read, Florida* during the development of the project. The content that was delivered to the reading coaches and classroom teachers during the *Reading Academies*, and through school-based coaching, was also intended to maximize educator capabilities in the research-based reading practices that were the content of this survey.

The content validity for determining teachers' attitudes and perceptions depended on asking the right questions that revealed how teachers perceived their capabilities in relation to teaching reading. The questions on the *Reading Instruction Survey* (see Appendix A) dealt with what teachers perceived they were capable of and how confident they felt about teaching reading. Examples of questions in the survey that related to teachers' sense of confidence about performing tasks that required specific knowledge and skills included: a) "I feel confident about teaching reading," b) "My teaching of reading improves my students' reading," and c) "I understand better how to teach reading because of what I have learned this year." A correlation of the items within this section was used to support the original assurances of content validity.

To establish concurrent validity, Shaha et al. (2004) performed the following tests:

- a) "A validated instrument designed for assessing the knowledge and learning impacts of two established professional development offerings was used for

cross-validation purposes. Aggregate scores from six shared sub-scales from each instrument (50 items on this instrument versus 58 items on the validating instrument) were correlated for 53 teachers participating anonymously. The resulting Spearman 's Correlation Coefficient for the two tests was $r = .86$ ($p < .001$).

- b) Cumulative pre and posttest performance scores on the instrument were correlated with cumulative scores on an established State "Test for Educator Licensure" for 25 teachers who voluntarily and anonymously participated in both. The Spearman 's Correlation Coefficient for the cumulative performance scores was $r = .91$ ($p < .001$).” (p. 1)

The validation of the sub-scales for professional development offerings supported the retention of the items that related to what was provided by the reading coaches in Collier County for this study. The reading coaches in Collier were either hired with Reading Certification on their license, or they were provided college level coursework to acquire the Florida Reading Endorsement, to ensure that they had the content to pass on to the teachers. The authors' pretest established the clarity and readability of the items on the survey. Items that included jargon that may not have been familiar to the teachers in Collier were eliminated for this study.

Open-ended questions were included to allow teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of areas that may otherwise be unsubstantiated for response validity or questioned as unfamiliar to the teachers (Bandura, 2001). In addition, the survey responses were reduced from a scale of 0–10 on the attitudes and perceptions section to a scale of 0-4 to minimize the effect of diffusion. The practices scale was increased from the original 1 (low implementation) to 3 (high implementation) to: 0 = not at all, 1 = seldom, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always. The researcher of this study relied on the

work of Shaha et. al (2006) as having established the reliability. Shaha (2006), communicated the procedure for determining the reliability as follows:

“Reliability was established through Test-Retest Reliability. The entire 54-item instrument was completed by 126 teachers in its “correct” item sequence, then repeated in randomized sequence. The correlation in performance resulted in a Spearman ’s Correlation Coefficient of $r = .87$ ($p < .001$).” (p. 1)

The sequence of items in the domains used for this study remained similar to the original survey, with the exception of the addition of the open-ended questions. The original surveys were shown to be reliable in any sequence, so the additional questions would not likely affect the dependability. The format of the survey responses for the attitudes section was continuums of *absolutely disagree* to *absolutely agree*. The agree-disagree form is commonly used in surveys that deal with ideas, policies, or beliefs (Fowler, 1995).

Summary of Research Design and Analysis

This research study was intended to show whether the relationship of coaching to teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and practices varied among teachers who rated their work with a coach on a continuum of 0 to 4: 0 = none, 1-3 = somewhat, or 4 = extensively. The participation of teachers in elementary schools that had one to two coaches available to them, and others that had only intermittent coaches, helped to ensure that the sample for this study had teachers with varying amounts of coaching (see Table 1). The design of the study entailed the distribution of surveys to teachers in their schools and ensured that all teachers had an equal opportunity to participate in the survey. In each of the schools, the survey results showed that there were teachers who worked extensively and others who

indicated little direct contact with a coach. Each item related to coaching was correlated with items on the survey regarding the teacher’s attitudes, perceptions, and practices in reading. The mode of the responses to each of the coaching items revealed that higher values occurred most often in the items regarding working with a coach on assessments, new instructional techniques, and needs and interests in reading.

Table 1

The Mode of Coaching Responses

	Coaching Items					
	I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues	I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading	I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions	I worked with a reading coach on learning new ways to provide interventions for struggling readers	A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom	A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading
N	147	147	147	146	146	147
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	0
Mode	2	2	0	0	0	3

Note. The participants’ responses were made on 5-point scales (0 = not at all; 2 = somewhat; 4 = extensively) to items about the amount of work they had done with a reading coach.

In Collier County, Florida where the research was conducted, reading coaches have had an increasing presence in all elementary schools. The district received funding to place *Reading First* coaches in the Title I schools in the 2003-2004 school year. In addition, *Title I* and other federal, state, and district funds were used to pay for reading

coaches as professional developers within schools. By the 2005 - 2006 school year, all of the elementary schools had a coach for half of each month. Most of the teachers in the district participated in workshops with a coach at some time due to district and school related professional development activities. The content of the professional development was determined by reading staff of *Just Read, Florida* and the State professional developers with *Reading First*. In addition, progress monitoring results for individual students, teachers, and schools on the *DIBELS*, *SAT 9*, *Peabody Vocabulary*, and the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)* were used as ongoing discussion and planning for instruction and interventions between coaches and teachers. The survey was selected because the practices surveyed matched the content provided to the coaches in their professional development by State reading specialists and the content covered in these State assessments.

The primary question for this study was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes and instructional practices correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* Additionally, the following questions were explored:

- 1) Does the level of experience reported by the teacher relate to how the attitudes and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching they indicate they have received?
- 2) Does the type of certification reported by the teacher relate to how the attitudes and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching they indicate they have received?
- 3) Do school demographics relate to how the attitudes and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicate they have received?

- 4) Does the grade level designation of the teachers (i.e., K-3 or 4-5) relate to how the attitudes and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicate they have received?

The fourth question was added to the study because of the results of the survey analysis that showed differences in the correlations of early reading practices to coaching and skilled reading practices to coaching. The results of the survey were analyzed to determine whether there were positive correlations of coaching to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices and whether they were aligned with the content delivered by the coaches. The correlations were connected to the research on teacher practices and used to suggest areas for additional research in the future.

Other factors that were analyzed for their contribution to the differences in teachers' attitudes and practices in reading are the number of years in the profession, method of certification, school demographics, and teachers' grade level designations. These were looked at as intervening variables and described in the analysis. The determination of whether the correlations of teachers who had more experience and knowledge to handle students' diverse needs were different than those of less experienced teachers was part of the analysis. It was assumed that experienced teachers had more professional development on teaching reading that may have contributed to their attitudes, perceptions, and practices.

Teachers who came into the profession through an alternative route may have had different attitudes and perceptions about teaching reading and the practices associated with instruction. Teachers who work in schools with high poverty and lower test scores may also have different attitudes, perceptions, and practices due to the perceived needs of

their students. A correlation of the ratings of teachers by their levels of experience, certification, and types of student populations was analyzed to determine whether there are differences that exist as intervening variables in this study. The correlation of ratings by teachers in grades K-3 was disaggregated from teachers in grades 4-5 for analysis of similarities and differences. The correlation results showed that responses on the early reading section differed from those in the skilled reading section. These differences were explored in the analysis of results.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This study was undertaken to examine teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and practices in teaching reading in relation to the amount of coaching they indicated they had received in the last three years. The purpose of the study was to contribute to the knowledge of coaching and teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices. The primary question for this study was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices on the Reading Instruction Survey correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?*

Additionally, the following questions were explored:

1. Does experience relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
2. Does certification relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
3. Do school demographics relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
4. Does the grade level designation (i.e., K-3 or 4-5) relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?

A correlation of responses to items regarding: a) the amount of time spent with a reading coach in the first section; b) attitudes and perceptions in the second section; c) early

reading strategies in the fourth section; d) skilled reading strategies in the fifth section; e) balanced and integrated reading strategies in the sixth section; and f) interventions in the final section, were used to determine whether the items within each section were related to each other. Spearman rho correlation numerical values for r were interpreted such that ($r = .1 - .29$) was a small correlation; ($r = .3 - .49$) was a medium correlation; ($r = .5 - .69$) was large; and ($r = .7 - .99$) was a much larger than typical. One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$.

The predominance of significance in the correlations of items within sections demonstrated the strength of the survey design. The following descriptions are intended to demonstrate that the items on the survey were valid for measuring what they were intended to measure: All of the six items in the section on the amount of professional development work done with a reading coach had positive, significant correlations to the other items regarding teachers' work with a reading coach. A Spearman correlation revealed: *A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom* had the lowest magnitude correlations with large correlations to the items in the coaching section (see Table 2). All of the other items had large to much larger than typical correlations to each other.

Table 2

Highest and Lowest Cross-Correlations of Coaching Items

The following items had the highest correlation: (r = .92, p = .00)

<i>I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions</i>	<i>I worked with a reading coach on learning new ways to provide interventions for struggling readers</i>
---	---

The following items had the lowest correlation: (r = .50, p = .00)

<i>I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues</i>	<i>A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom</i>
---	--

Note: Each of the six coaching items represents established practices of the coaches in Collier County, Florida, based on the content of the State professional development, and the assessment and intervention model that supports the delivery of the professional development.

The descriptions of the correlations of items in the attitudes and perceptions section revealed the way these varied together. Most of the items in the attitudes and perceptions section were positively correlated to each other; the items had small to much larger than typical, significant correlations. The items that were not significantly correlated to all other items were: *I have reassessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction* and *I have changed the way I teach reading this year for the better*. Since coaches have been in the schools for three years or more, and other factors contribute to teachers' changes in a given year, the lack of significance on these items may be due to the reference to "this year."

The correlations of items in the *Early Reading Strategies* section was determined to show how teachers rated them in relation to each other; it was determined that most of the items were positively correlated to each other. Most of the items had small to much

larger than typical, significant correlations. The items that were not significantly correlated to each other were: *Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities* and *Students are taught to construct the meaning of what they read* ($r = .06$). Phonemic awareness is the ability to focus on and manipulate sounds in spoken words; it is likely that teachers considered phonemic awareness practices and teaching the construction of meaning during reading in different ways and therefore, rated their use of them differently.

The correlations of items in the *Skilled Reading Strategies* section were run to determine the relationships. All of the items in the *Skilled Reading Strategies* section had medium to much larger than typical, significant correlations.

To determine relationships in the balanced and integrated practices, correlations were run on these items. It was found that most of the items in the *Balanced and Integrated Reading Strategies* section were positively correlated to each other; they had small to large, significant correlations. Two items were not positively correlated to each other: *Students have incentives and time for independent reading* and *explicit instruction is provided in decoding and comprehending simultaneously*. Teachers may have responded differently to the use of time when considering students who are still in need of explicit instruction in decoding and comprehending simultaneously.

The intervention items were correlated to each other to determine a relationship. All of the items in the *Interventions* section were positively correlated to each other; all of the items had large to much larger than typical correlations that were significant.

The items were examined across sections for correlations to each of the coaching items. The results showed patterns of responses that were examined in this study. The

number of correlations and the strength of the relationships across sections were taken into consideration in the analysis. In addition, the patterns of responses to the queries about the following were considered in the analysis: a) levels of experience of the teachers within schools, b) other professional development provided to the teachers, c) the types of materials used by the teachers, and d) the responses to the open-ended inquiries about their instructional practices. For each of these, percentages, frequencies, and/or themes were explored and related to the survey results.

Population and School Demographics

The population of interest in this study was the teachers in five schools in Collier County, Florida during the 2005-2006 school year. The survey population consisted of 172 teachers from five public elementary schools. All of the kindergarten to fifth grade teachers were given an equal opportunity to participate in the voluntary survey during faculty meetings. The response rate was 85%, (N = 147), for all five schools. The participation rate varied in individual schools from a high of 100% in one school to a low of 65% in another. The *Title I* schools had some of the highest percentages of teacher participation, 100% and 87%. These two schools had *Reading First* coaches available to their teachers in grades K-3 on a daily basis and an intermediate level district coach intermittently. The *non-Title I* schools had 87%, 80%, and 65% of their teachers participating in the study. These schools had district coaches available to them less frequently.

The demographic information for each of the schools was gathered from the district web site. At the time of the initiation of the study, the following demographic

information was retrieved for each participating school:

1. School # 351 was a *Title I* school with over 81% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In 2005, 56% of the students in grade 3; 52% of 4th graders; and 64% of 5th graders; were considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced in reading, they scored level 3 or above on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
2. School # 201 was a *Title I* school with over 80% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In 2005, 49% of the students in grade 3; 60% of 4th graders; and 45% of 5th graders; were considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced in reading, they scored level 3 or above on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
3. School # 511 was a *non-Title I* school with over 51% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In 2005, 57% of the students in grade 3; 58% of 4th graders; and 60% of 5th graders; were considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced in reading, they scored level 3 or above on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
4. School # 441 was a *non-Title I* school with over 26% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In 2005, 85% of the students in grade 3; 80% of 4th graders; and 81% of 5th graders; were considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced in reading, they scored level 3 or above on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
5. School # 131 was a *non-Title I* school with over 22% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In 2005, 85% of the students in grade 3;

79% of 4th graders; and 84% of 5th graders; were considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced, they scored level 3 or above on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

The amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received varied. The following are examples of how teachers responded in the schools with the lowest and highest percentages of coaching:

1. School # 351, a *Title I* school, had the lowest percentage of *not at all* responses across the coaching items: the responses ranged from 2% to 27% that had not worked with a coach. The item with the highest percentage *not at all* responses was *A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom*. The range of teachers that indicated they had worked with a coach *extensively* on one of the items in the coaching section was 15% to 27%. The item with the highest percentage of *extensively* responses was *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading*. This school had a *Reading First* coach and had a district coach intermittently. In addition, as a Title I school they had additional reading support available to teachers and students.
2. School # 131, a *non-Title I* school, had the highest percentage of *not at all* responses across the coaching items: the responses to the coaching items on the survey ranged from 33% to 63% that had not worked with a coach. The item with the highest percentage *not at all* responses was: *A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom*. The range of responses to the coaching items on the survey that indicated teachers had worked with a

coach *extensively* was 4% to 11%. The item with the highest percentage of *extensively* responses was: *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading.* This school did not have a *Reading First* coach and only had a district coach intermittently.

The percentage of responses provided an idea about the work the coaches were doing in these schools. The responses from the teachers in all schools showed that the coaches held grade level meetings and study groups to meet with the teachers about interests and needs in reading instruction more than any other approach. Coaches modeled instruction in classrooms less often than any other approach. The differences in approaches to providing professional development to teachers may, in part, be a factor of time since the number of K – 5 teachers reported on the district web site for these schools ranged from (n=31) to (n=46).

Primary Research Question

The primary research question for this study was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes and instructional practices correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* Each of the rated survey items was entered into SPSS™ 11.0-computer software for Windows. Spearman rho correlations were run for each of the ranked survey items. The correlations were run for each survey item on coaching in section one, to each response related to attitudes and perceptions in section two, and instructional practices in sections four through seven. Spearman rho correlation numerical values for *r* were interpreted such that ($r = .1 - .29$) was a small correlation; ($r = .3 - .49$) was a medium correlation; ($r = .5 - .69$) was large; and ($r = .7 - .99$) was

much larger than typical. The relationships were verified by scatter plot graphs with outliers considered. One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$.

The first coaching item was correlated to the items in the rest of the sections of the survey. *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues* had small, significant correlations to four items in the teachers' attitudes and perceptions section. It also had small to medium, significant correlations to four items in the teachers' early reading practices section. It was not significantly correlated to any of the items in the sections on skilled reading or balanced and integrated reading practices. This item had small significant correlations to all items in the interventions section (see Table 3).

Table 3

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 1

I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .21, p = .01)
2. <i>My reading instruction improves my students' performance</i>	(r = .20, p = .02)
3. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .21, p = .01)
4. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .21, p = .01)
5. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .37, p = .00)
6. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .27, p = .00)
7. <i>Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)
8. <i>Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text</i>	(r = .18, p = .04)
9. <i>Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read</i>	(r = .28, p = .00)
10. <i>Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers</i>	(r = .27, p = .00)
11. <i>Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed</i>	(r = .26, p = .00)

The second item in the coaching section was also correlated to the items in all other sections of the survey. *I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading*, had small to medium, significant correlations to four items in the attitudes and perceptions section; small, significant correlations to two items in the early reading section; and small, significant correlations to all of the items in the interventions section. It did not have any significant correlations to any of the items in the sections on skilled reading strategies or balanced and integrated strategies (see Table 4).

Table 4

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 2

I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .33, p = .00)
2. <i>My reading instruction improves my students' performance</i>	(r = .20, p = .01)
3. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .30, p = .00)
4. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .24, p = .00)
5. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .29, p = .00)
6. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .25, p = .00)
7. <i>Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read</i>	(r = .22, p = .01)
8. <i>Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers</i>	(r = .22, p = .01)
9. <i>Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)

The third item in the coaching section was also correlated to the items in all of the other sections. *I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions* had small, significant correlations to four items in the attitudes and perceptions section, five small to medium correlations to items in the early reading practices section, and small correlations to two out of three of items in the intervention section. There were not any correlations in the sections on skilled reading or balanced and integrated instruction (see Table 5).

Table 5

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 3

I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .26, p = .00)
2. <i>My reading instruction improves my students' performance</i>	(r = .18, p = .03)
3. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .24, p = .00)
4. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
5. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .36, p = .00)
6. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .34, p = .00)
7. <i>Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used</i>	(r = .24, p = .00)
8. <i>Students are instructed to listen to the pronunciation of sounds and words in text to check their accuracy</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
9. <i>Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text</i>	(r = .23, p = .01)
10. <i>Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
11. <i>Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers</i>	(r = .23, p = .01)

The fourth item in the coaching section was correlated to all of the items in the other sections on the survey. *I worked with a reading coach on learning new ways to provide interventions for struggling readers* had small to medium, significant correlations to five items in the attitudes and perceptions section, six items in the early reading section, and all of the items in the intervention section. There were not any significant correlations of this coaching item to items in the skilled reading or balanced and integrated instruction sections (see Table 6).

Table 6

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 4

I worked with a reading coach on learning new ways to provide interventions for struggling readers

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .26, p = .00)
2. <i>My reading instruction improves my students' performance</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
3. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .29, p = .00)
4. <i>I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies</i>	(r = .18, p = .03)
5. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .20, p = .18)
6. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .32, p = .00)
7. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .29, p = .00)
8. <i>Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
9. <i>Students are instructed to listen to the pronunciation of sounds and words in text to check their accuracy</i>	(r = .20, p = .02)
10. <i>Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text</i>	(r = .24, p = .00)
11. <i>Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read</i>	(r = .22, p = .01)
12. <i>Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers</i>	(r = .20, p = .19)
13. <i>Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed</i>	(r = .19, p = .03)

The fifth item in the coaching section was also correlated to each of the items in the other sections of the survey, *A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom* had small, significant correlations to three items in the attitudes and perceptions section, and three items in the early reading practices section. The item did not have any significant relationships with items in the skilled reading, balanced and integrated instruction, or any of the items in the intervention section (see Table 7).

Table 7

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 5

A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .25, p = .00)
2. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .25, p = .00)
3. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .26, p = .00)
4. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .22, p = .01)
5. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .22, p = .01)
6. <i>Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)

The final item in the coaching section was correlated to all of the items in the other sections of the survey. *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading* had small to medium, significant correlations to four items in the attitudes and perceptions section. The item also had small to medium, significant correlations to five items in the early reading practices section and with all of the items in the intervention section. It did not have any significant relationships with items in the sections on skilled reading or balanced and integrated instruction (see Table 8).

Table 8

Significant Correlations to Coaching Item # 6

A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading

1. <i>I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year</i>	(r = .23, p = .00)
2. <i>My reading instruction improves my students' performance</i>	(r = .19, p = .02)
3. <i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .16, p = .04)
4. <i>I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)
5. <i>Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities</i>	(r = .33, p = .00)
6. <i>Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used</i>	(r = .33, p = .00)
7. <i>Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used</i>	(r = .25, p = .00)
8. <i>Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)
9. <i>Students are instructed to listen to the pronunciation of sounds and words in text to check their accuracy</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)
10. <i>Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read</i>	(r = .20, p = .01)
11. <i>Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers</i>	(r = .17, p = .04)
12. <i>Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed</i>	(r = .22, p = .00)

Secondary Research Questions

The following secondary research questions explored in this study:

1. Does experience relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
2. Does certification relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?
3. Do school demographics relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are

correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?

4. Does the grade level designation (i.e., K-3 or 4-5) relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?

Experience Levels

The correlations from the first question, *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices on the Reading Instruction Survey correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received*, were compared to the correlations of data disaggregated by experience levels. One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$. For the question about teachers' experience levels and how that related to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices, the teachers were placed into groups by the number of years they said they had taught. Group one teachers ($n = 35$) had *up to three years of experience*; group two teachers ($n = 31$) had *four to seven years of experience*; group three teachers ($n = 40$) had *eight to fifteen years of experience*; group four teachers ($n = 42$) had *sixteen to more than twenty years of experience*. Levels of experience ranges represented on the survey were combined to have a minimum of thirty teachers in each group.

Group One - *up to three years of experience*: This group had few correlations in the teachers' attitudes and perceptions section to individual coaching items. One item had a medium correlation that was not present in the aggregated data (see Table 9). One item had correlations of greater magnitude, from small to medium, in the early reading practices section: *Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities*. The strength

of the relationships ranged from small to medium on items in the early reading practices section; the items that had similar increases from small correlations to medium correlations were decoding and phonics instructional practices. Additional items in the skilled reading and the balanced and integrated sections showed correlations to coaching items that had not shown up in the aggregated data (see Table 9). There were not any significant correlations to the items in the intervention section for this group of teachers.

Table 9

New Correlations Related to *Up to 3 Years Experience Level*

Group one teachers (n = 35): *up to three years of experience*

Attitudes and Perceptions	Correlations
<i>I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues:</i>	
1. <i>I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies.</i>	(r = .36, p = .04)
Practices	Correlations
<i>I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading</i>	
1. <i>Instruction is provided in decoding and comprehending simultaneously.</i>	(r = .48, p = .00)
2. <i>Opportunities for students to develop meaningful ideas from groups of words are used</i>	(r = .36, p = .04)
3. <i>Decoding and comprehension strategies are taught from the start of reading instruction.</i>	(r = .48, p = .04)

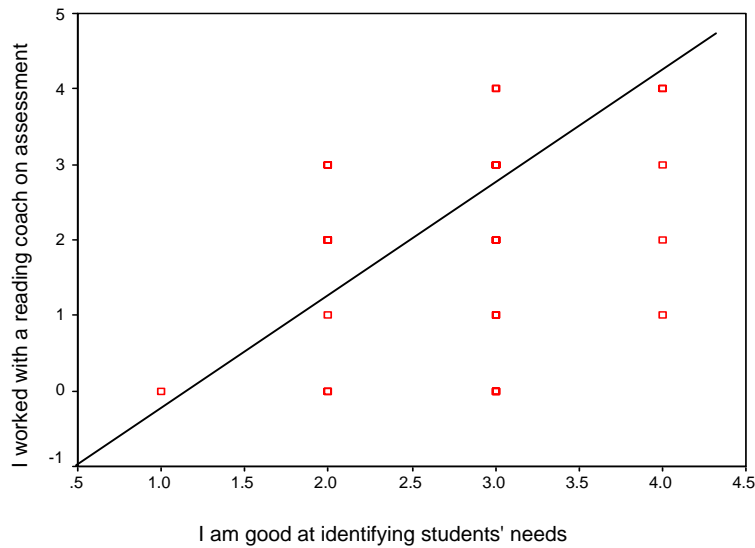


Figure 1: Scatterplot – Group one responses to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues* and *I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies*

Figure 1 shows the relationship of the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues* and *I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies*. The regression line (line of best fit) was diagonal with a positive slope reflecting the Spearman correlation ($r = .36$). The moderate magnitude correlation was evident, although the points did not cluster closely to the line. This scatter plot was typical for the items that had medium correlations between coaching items and other items on the survey.

Group Two - *four to seven years of experience*: The items on the coaching section of the survey were correlated to more items than the *Up to three years of experience* group, but less than the number of correlations in the aggregated data. One set of correlations was stronger than the ones in the aggregated data (see Table 10).

Table 10

Increased Magnitude of Correlations Related to 4 – 7 Years Experience

Group two teachers (n = 31) had *four to seven years of experience*

Attitudes and Perceptions	Range of Correlations to Coaching Items
<i>I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction</i>	(r = .42) to (r = .49)

Group Three - *eight to fifteen years of experience*: The items on the coaching section were shown to have positive and negative relationships, but fewer with significance, to the items in all other sections on the survey; items with significance were small correlations that resembled the items on the aggregated data. Although this study was looking for positive correlations, it is a noteworthy difference that negative correlations of all coaching items to one item in the early reading practices section were strong for this experience group (see Table 11).

Table 11

Negative Correlations Related to 8-15 Years Experience Level

Group three teachers (n = 40) had *eight to fifteen years of experience*

Practices	Range of Negative Correlations (p ≤ .05)
<i>Students are instructed to use the ways words sound in text for accuracy and fluency</i>	(r = -.08) to (r = -.35)

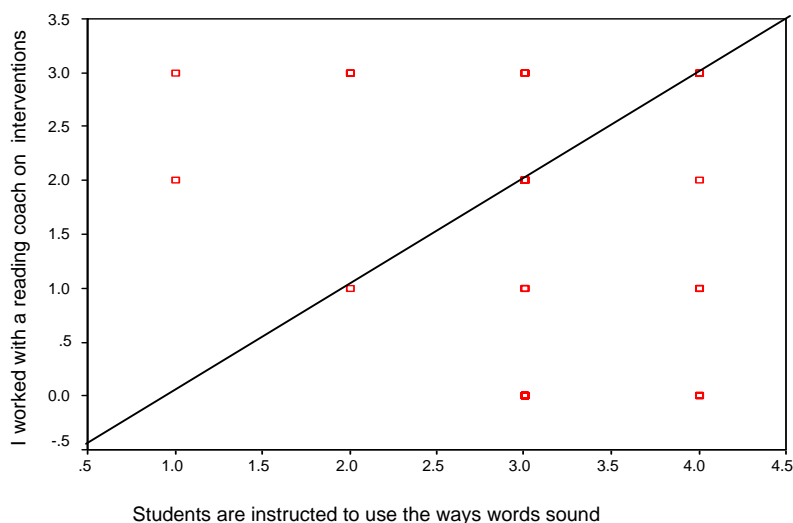


Figure 2: Scatterplot – The responses to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions* and *Students are instructed to use the ways words sound in text for accuracy and fluency*

Figure 2 shows the relationship of the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions* and *Students are instructed to use the ways words sound in text for accuracy and fluency* for the group of teachers with *eight to fifteen years* of experience. The regression line (line of best fit) cannot be said to have a positive slope ($r = -.35$). The points are not clustered around a line. Points that are not clustered were typical of the negatively related items in groups three and four.

Group Four - *sixteen to more than twenty years of experience*: The items on the coaching section of the survey were negatively correlated to more items on the attitudes, perceptions, and practices sections of the survey than any other group.

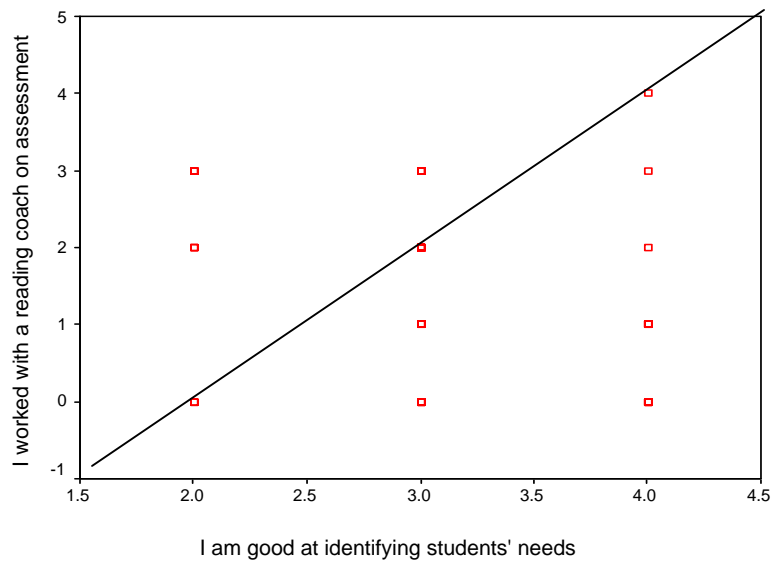


Figure 3: Scatterplot – Group four responses to the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues* and *I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies*

Figure 3 shows the relationship of the coaching item *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues* and *I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies* for group four that has *sixteen to more than twenty years* of experience. The regression line (line of best fit) cannot be said to have a positive slope reflected in the Spearman correlation ($r = -.22$). The negative correlation was represented in the points that were spread out at both ends of the item regarding work with a coach. Although most of the items had negative correlations to coaching, one item in the early reading practices section showed a medium, positive correlation that was significant and one item in the interventions section also showed a medium, significant correlation.

Alternative Certification

The next question in the analysis was: *Does the type of certification reported by the teacher relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* The data on the responses of the alternative certification teachers (n = 19) were disaggregated from the other teachers. One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$. Only one coaching item had a medium correlation to an item in the attitudes and perceptions section. There were no other items that were significantly correlated to each other in any of the sections. However, the low number of teachers in this group may account for some of the differences.

School Demographics

The school data were disaggregated into separate files to answer the question: *Do school demographics relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?* One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$. The results were examined and the correlations of items on the coaching section to all other sections were determined. The results by school are as follows:

School # 201 was a *Title I* school with over 80% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. According to the numbers posted on the web site, all of the K – 5 teachers participated in the survey. This school had a *Reading First* coach daily for the last three years, district support for at least three years, and an additional intermittent district coach during the 2005 – 2006 school year. One item in the attitudes and

perceptions section had small to medium, significant correlations to coaching items. There were not any items in the early reading strategies, skilled strategies, or balanced and integrated reading sections that had positive, significant correlations to coaching items. Two out of three of the items in the intervention section had medium, significant correlations to coaching items.

School # 351 was a *Title I* school with over 81% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. They had a *Reading First* coach for the last three years; additionally, *Title I* reading specialists, and district coaches were available to them intermittently. The teachers at this school had the highest percentage of *extensive* and the smallest percentage of *not at all* responses on the survey questions related to coaching. This school had a high percentage, 87%, of K – 5 teachers (n = 40) that participated in the survey. Coaching items had medium significant correlations to items in the attitudes and perceptions section. There were small to large, significant correlations to coaching items in all of the practices sections. This school had more medium correlations of coaching to attitudes and perceptions and practices than the aggregated data and to some of the other schools. There were no items correlated to coaching from the intervention section for this school.

School # 441 was a *non-Title I* school with over 26% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The participation rate for the teachers was 80%. This school did not have a *Reading First* coach, but had district support for three years and an intermittent coach for the 2005 – 2006 school year. There were coaching items that were significantly correlated to several items in the attitudes and perceptions sections, early reading strategies, skilled reading strategies, balanced and integrated, and interventions

sections. The correlations for this school were stronger than the correlations for all of the others. The aggregated data did not have any correlations in the skilled reading practices and balanced and integrated sections, but this school did.

School # 511 was a *non-Title I* school with over 51% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. They had an on-site intermittent coach and district support for the last two school years since they opened in the fall of 2004. This school had the lowest participation in the survey (n = 20), which was 65% of the K-5 teachers. Coaching items had medium significant correlations to one of the items in the attitudes and perceptions section. There were no other significant correlations to coaching from the early, skilled, integrated and balanced reading practices, or the interventions sections. The small number of respondents may have contributed to fewer correlations than the aggregate and other schools.

School # 131 was a *non-Title I* school with over 22% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. They had an on-site intermittent coach and/or district support for the last three years. The teachers at this school indicated the lowest percentage of *extensive* coaching and the highest percentage of *not at all* on the survey items related to coaching. This school had a high percentage, 87%, of K – 5 teachers (n = 27) participating in the survey. Coaching items had medium, significant correlations to items in the attitudes and perceptions section; there were none in the interventions section.

Although student data were not considered in the findings of this study, the data on the FCAT assessment in grades 3-5 for the participating schools (see Table 20), for the last two years (FY 05) and (FY 06), are noted (Janssen, 2006).

Table 12

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT SSS) Grades 3-5 Reading Percent Scoring at Level 3 or Higher for Years 2005 (FY 05) and 2006 (FY 06)

School	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
	FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06
201 (Title I – 80%)	49	59	60	54	45	58
351 (Title I - 81%)	56	71	52	48	64	52
441 (Non-Title I - 26%)	85	90	80	75	81	83
511 (Non-Title I - 51%)	57	68	58	64	60	61
131 (Non-Title I - 22%)	85	87	79	82	84	76

Note. Although student achievement was not used in the analysis of data, it was reported here because of the high stakes that student achievement plays in the continuation of the funding of coaches. Schools are identified as *Title I* or *Non-Title I* and the percentage of free and reduced lunch was noted in parenthesis.

All of the elementary schools participating in this study had larger percentages of students proficient at level 3 or above from 2005 to 2006 FCAT in grade 3; 3 out of 5 of the schools had smaller percentages in grade 4 of students proficient at level 3 or above from 2005 to 2006; and 3 out of 5 had higher percentages in grade 5. It was recognized that the percentage of students who are proficient at level 3 or above on the FCAT tends to be higher in the schools that have lower percentages of students on free and reduced lunch - the poverty index for this study. The *Title I* schools increased the percentage of students proficient at level 3 or above in the 3rd grade more than any other grade level. It was noted that the *Reading First* coaches were available in these schools to work with teachers of grades K-3 for three years. Early reading items on the survey had the greatest number and magnitude of correlations in the aggregated and disaggregated data.

Grade Level Designation

The results of the aggregated survey data showed more items that were correlated to the coaching items in the early reading practices section and the intervention sections than the skilled reading and balanced and integrated sections. The following question was added to help explain the differences: *Does the grade level designation of the teachers, K-3 or 4-5, relate to how the attitudes, perceptions, and practices are correlated with the amount of coaching teachers indicated they had received?* One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$. The K – 3 teachers were separated because the *Reading First* coaches focused on those grade levels. The 4 – 5 teachers had the support of district coaches. Teachers, who indicated they worked in grades that included both grade ranges, were not included in this part of the analysis.

The teachers in grades K – 3, ($n = 88$), had small to medium, significant correlations of coaching items to the attitudes and perceptions section, small to medium, significant correlations of coaching items to the practices and interventions. The teachers in grades 4 – 5, ($n = 35$), had fewer correlations in the attitudes and perceptions section to the coaching items and the only significant correlation was a medium one. However, many small to medium, significant correlations in the early reading section were correlated to coaching items. The results may indicate that the focus of the work with the coach was different at different grade levels. The 4th – 5th grade teachers may have done more work with a coach on early reading practices than the skilled, balanced and integrated, or interventions, as indicated in the correlations to early items. The need to help struggling readers in the upper elementary may have necessitated using early reading practices with these students.

The disaggregated data was compared to the aggregated to show the relationship of intervening variables to the overall correlations. The comparison of the number of total correlations of all other items to the coaching items gives a summary of the results. This summary shows the differences in number, but does not reflect the magnitude of the correlations. Differences in magnitude were explained earlier in the chapter in the sections on the disaggregated data. Most of the correlations in this study fell into the small to medium significance level of magnitude, so the number of correlations was a good measure of differences (see Table 13).

Table 13

 Comparison of Relationships of Survey Items with Intervening Variables Considered

Group Name	Number in Group	Number of Positive, Significant Correlations
Teachers from All Five Elementary Schools	N = 147	62
Teachers with Up to Three Years of Experience	n = 34	51
Teachers with Four to Seven Years of Experience	n = 31	55
Teachers with Eight to Fifteen Years of Experience	n = 40	12
Teachers with Sixteen to More Than Twenty Years of Experience	n = 42	2
School # 201: <i>Title I</i>	n = 31	7
School # 351: <i>Title I</i>	n = 40	33
School # 441: <i>Non-Title I</i>	n = 29	51
School # 511: <i>Non-Title I</i>	n = 20	6
School # 131: <i>Non-Title I</i>	n = 27	14
Alternative Certification Teachers	n = 19	3
Teachers in Grades K- 3	n = 88	18
Teachers in Grades 4-5	n = 35	14
Teachers in Grades K-5, Resource, or Multi-age Classes	n = 24	Not included

Note: It was recognized that group size was a factor in the numbers of significant correlations.

The group size was taken into consideration when the differences in the aggregated data and the disaggregated data were analyzed. The patterns of correlations that showed differences between groups of similar size revealed how the characteristics of the group contributed to the relationships. The whole group (N = 147) had the largest number, 62 correlations. These correlations ranged from small to medium. The other groups with *Up to Three Years of Experience* (n = 35) had a large number, 51, correlations and *Four to Seven Years of Experience* (n=31) also had a large number, 55, correlations of items on the survey to the coaching items.

Differences in the number of items that were correlated to coaching were evident by school. A *Non-Title I* school (n = 29) had the largest number with 51 correlations; the next highest was a *Title I* school (n = 40) with 33 correlations. The other schools had many fewer correlations, which could indicate that there were differences in the schools. The intervening variable of interest in this study was demographics, especially *Title I* and *Non-Title I*. There was not evidence that the designation of *Title I* contributed to the pattern of responses in the correlations revealed in this study.

The disaggregated data by grade level showed that the results for both groups, K – 3 and 4 – 5, had similar numbers of correlations. Grade level did not represent differences in the total number of correlations; it did represent differences in the types of items that were correlated to coaching items. The grades K – 3 teachers had items correlated to coaching in most of the survey sections; the grades 4 – 5 teachers' correlations were primarily in the section on early reading practices. As stated in the disaggregated data section, more research is needed to explain the differences in the magnitude of the correlations.

Other Findings

The teacher demographic information, other professional development received, materials identified for each category, and the responses to the open-ended inquiries were examined for the frequencies, percentages, and themes. All of the data were inputted into the SPSS™ file or a Word file. The key words in the open-ended responses were compiled in the Microsoft Word table of responses by the survey section the prompt appeared in. This data provided additional information explored in the findings.

Teachers' Years of Experience

The teachers' demographic information reflected differences and similarities in the experience levels of teachers in each school. The following tables and descriptions help to explain the schools' demographic data:

Table 14

School #201 -Years Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to 1 year	2	6.5	6.5	6.5
1-3 years	4	12.9	12.9	19.4
4-7 years	8	25.8	25.8	45.2
8-10 years	4	12.9	12.9	58.1
11-15 years	6	19.4	19.4	77.4
16-20 years	4	12.9	12.9	90.3
More than 20	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

School # 201 was a *Title I* school with over 80% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. There was a balanced distribution of years of teaching experience in this school.

Table 15

School # 351 -Years Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to 1 year	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
1-3 years	11	27.5	27.5	40.0
4-7 years	12	30.0	30.0	70.0
8-10 years	3	7.5	7.5	77.5
11-15 years	4	10.0	10.0	87.5
16-20 years	3	7.5	7.5	95.0
More than 20	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

School # 351 was a *Title I* school with over 81% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The distribution of teachers at this school was higher at the low end: 40% of the teachers have 3 years or less.

Table 16

School # 441 -Years Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to 1 year	3	10.3	10.3	10.3
1-3 years	1	3.4	3.4	13.8
4-7 years	4	13.8	13.8	27.6
8-10 years	3	10.3	10.3	37.9
11-15 years	10	34.5	34.5	72.4
16-20 years	6	20.7	20.7	93.1
More than 20	2	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

School # 441 was a *non-Title I* school with over 26% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The greatest percentage of years of teaching experience, 34%, was in the 11 to 15 years range in this school.

Table 17

School # 511 -Years Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to 1 year	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
1-3 years	3	15.0	15.0	25.0
4-7 years	4	20.0	20.0	45.0
8-10 years	2	10.0	10.0	55.0
11-15 years	2	10.0	10.0	65.0
16-20 years	3	15.0	15.0	80.0
More than 20	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

School # 511 was a *non-Title I* school with over 51% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. This school opened in the fall of 2004. It had the lowest percentage, 65%, of teachers' participating in the survey. The years of experience indicated on the survey has a balanced distribution for this group of teachers.

Table 18

School # 131 -Years Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-3 years	2	7.4	7.7	7.7
4-7 years	3	11.1	11.5	19.2
8-10 years	4	14.8	15.4	34.6
11-15 years	2	7.4	7.7	42.3
16-20 years	5	18.5	19.2	61.5
More than 20	10	37.0	38.5	100.0
Total	26	96.3	100.0	
Missing	1	3.7		
Total	27	100.0		

School # 131 was a *non-Title I* school with over 22% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. This school had a high percentage of teachers at the high end of experience: 37% indicated they had 20 years or more of teaching experience.

Other Professional Development

Each of the schools participating in the survey had multiple opportunities for teachers to engage in other types of professional development. The *Reading First Academy* was required for K – 3 teachers in *Reading First* schools, as part of the grant objectives for schools that received the grant funds, for the last three years. Two schools were both *Title I* and *Reading First* schools; high percentages of teachers attended the professional development from these schools. Teachers from the three other schools also indicated they had attended a *Reading First Academy* (see Table 19). Other types of professional development that had high frequencies of responses were: *Spalding Phonics*, *Guided Reading*, and *The 100 Book Challenge*.

Table 19

Professional Development Attendance

<i>Reading First Academy</i>			
<i>Title I</i> Schools		<i>Non-Title I</i> Schools	
# 201	(n=17) 55%	# 441	(n=6) 21%
# 351	(n=30) 75%	# 551	(n= 12) 60%
		# 131	(n=3) 11%

School # 351 had the largest number of teachers (n=30) that responded that they had attended another 1 -3 day workshop.	School # 131 had the lowest number of teachers (n=5) that responded that they had attended another 1 -3 day workshop.
---	---

Materials

For all schools, a variety of materials were identified under each section. The most frequent answer identified was *2 or more* types of materials were used to meet the needs of early readers, skilled readers, and intervention. The materials that were mentioned most often were: chapter books, leveled texts, Spalding Phonics, and the core reading program.

Open-Ended Responses

The open-ended responses to the requests to describe practices in each section of the survey were listed by key words and then sorted into themes. The frequency of responses was analyzed by themes. The following is a description of the themes revealed in the brief responses to queries in each of the sections:

Briefly describe an effective new approach to reading that you are using in your classroom had a total of (N = 99) responses that were separated into themes on the basis of the approach identified:

1. Isolated skills instruction with targeted practice (n = 44), which was divided into seven subcategories based on the skill:
 - a. phonics (n = 20),
 - b. fluency (n=7),
 - c. phonemic awareness (n=6),
 - d. graphic organizers for comprehension (n=4),
 - e. during and after reading skills for comprehension (n=3),
 - f. vocabulary (n=3),

- g. pre-reading for comprehension (n=1);
2. Approaches related to the use of whole text to teach the reading process or to provide embedded skills practice (n = 38);
3. Use of State standards, test preparation, and/or use of the required curriculum or materials (n=5);
4. Classroom management or organization (n=4);
5. Balanced or integrated instruction that incorporated reading and writing across the curriculum (n=4);
6. Intervention techniques or programs (n=4).

Briefly describe a lesson where you use explicit instruction to help students develop early reading strategies had a total of (N=30) responses. The responses were matched to the themes in the early reading practices section, and additional themes that were revealed, as follows:

1. Techniques used to teach reading as a process in whole text (n=13);
2. Practices intended to build knowledge and skills in phonics (n=9);
3. Practices intended to assist students with applying strategies and skills to comprehend text (n=2);
4. Integrating reading and emerging writing skills (n=2);
5. Intervention approaches (n=2);
6. Practices intended to build phonemic awareness (n=1);
7. Practices intended to support proficiency on State Standards (n=1).

Briefly describe one comprehension strategy you have taught your students had a total of (N=75) responses. The responses were matched to the themes in the skilled

reading practices section, and additional themes that were revealed, as follows:

1. Strategies used during reading to promote thinking that leads to comprehension (n=36);
2. Thinking strategies used after reading (n=15);
3. Instruction in skills used in comprehension (n=14);
4. Thinking strategies applied to higher level questioning including inferences and author's viewpoint (n=4);
5. Connecting reading and writing to tell a story, inform, describe, innovate or explain (n=2);
6. Practices intended to support proficiency on State standards (n =2);
7. Practices intended to improve fluency (n=1);
8. Before reading strategies intended to increase comprehension (n=1).

Briefly describe one way that you integrate reading and writing into a content area had a total of (N=71) responses. The responses were matched to the themes in the balanced and integrated reading practices section, and additional themes that were revealed, as follows:

1. Connecting reading and writing (n=40);
2. Instruction in skills (n=7);
3. Using thematic units (n=7);
4. Organizing information (n=7);
5. Using questioning techniques (n=5);
6. Management of materials or activities (n=3);
7. Using the State standards and/or preparation for tests (n=2).

Briefly describe an instructional approach you use as an intervention for a struggling reader had (N=52) responses. The responses were matched to the themes in the intervention section, and additional themes that were revealed, as follows:

1. Instructional techniques that are intended to provide specialized delivery, intensity, or additional time (n=20);
2. Additional or targeted instruction in reading skills (n=14);
3. Grouping for instruction (n=8);
4. Use of materials that are on the students' instructional level or meet required accommodations (n=4);
5. Utilization of diagnostic test information (n=3);
6. Technology software intended for skills practice (n=2);
7. Volunteer or support person (n=1).

Summary of the Data Analysis

Data received from the *Reading Instruction Survey* were reported in Chapter four. Data analyses for the primary question and the four secondary questions were the focus of this chapter. The results of the statistical analyses and the investigation of themes were reported along with narrative explanations. The results showed differences between schools that may be attributed to coaches or other support that was available. Although most correlations were small, there were 62 positively, significant correlations of coaching items to attitudes, perceptions, and practices items on the survey. This finding supports further research into the role of coaches and the impact on teachers that was intended to improve instruction for all students.

The primary research question was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes and instructional practices correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* The results showed that there were many items in the attitudes and perceptions section that were significantly, positively correlated to work with a coach at the one-tailed level: ($r = .16$) to ($r = .33$); early reading practices items had small to medium, significant correlations: ($r = .17$) to ($r = .36$); and intervention practices items had small correlations: ($r = .17$) to ($r = .27$). There were not any items in the skilled reading strategies or balanced and integrated reading strategies that were significantly correlated. The strongest correlations were to the coaching items: *I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading* and *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues*.

The secondary questions explored the relationships of levels of experience, alternative certification, school demographics, and grade level designation on the findings to the primary question. The correlations based on disaggregated data for the groups by *levels of experience* showed the greatest number of correlations, and increased magnitudes of the correlations, among the groups that had *up to three years* and *four to seven years* of experience. The group that had *eight to fifteen years* of experience had fewer significant correlations, but the ones that were present resembled the aggregated data with small correlations. This group also had some significant, negative correlations. The group with *sixteen to more than twenty years* of experience had the least significant correlations with only two items that had a positive, significant correlation and many negative correlations to attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practice items. Years of experience appeared to relate to the results of this study. It was a key finding of this study

that teachers with the most years of experience were less likely to relate more coaching to positive attitudes, perceptions, or practices.

The alternative certification group had many fewer correlations than the aggregated data revealed. The only items that had significant correlations dealt with satisfaction with their work and having met with a coach and colleagues on interest and needs in reading. This group was small (n=19), so the results may not inform us of whether these results were typical.

The disaggregated data by schools showed that there were differences in the schools. The two schools with the greatest number of correlations, and the highest magnitude correlations, were very different in their demographics. School # 441 was a *non-Title I* school with over 26% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. This school had medium to larger than typical correlations to many items throughout the survey. Every section had significant correlations and most had a higher magnitude than the aggregated or any other school group. School # 351 was a *Title I* school with over 81% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. It had many items in all sections, except the intervention section, that were significantly correlated with the coaching items. Further study is needed to determine why these differences are so pronounced and what they can be attributed to.

School # 131 was a *non-Title I* school with over 22% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. This school had the least correlations. It had a few medium, significant correlations in the attitudes and perceptions section, but no significant correlations in any of the practices or intervention sections. The results do not support the idea that percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch was a strong

intervening variable in this study.

The grade level designation showed differences in the groups of K-3 teachers' responses and the 4-5 teachers' responses and how they related to the amount of coaching they indicated they had received. The K-3 teachers' coaching responses had more small to medium, significant correlations spread across the sections on attitudes, early reading, skilled reading strategies, and interventions. The 4-5 teachers' coaching responses had fewer correlations to the attitudes and perceptions items and had significant correlations to the practices in the early reading practices section, but they did not have the spread across sections that the K – 3 teachers correlations had. The results indicated that grade level might be operating as an intervening variable in this study. More study is needed to determine whether the content and approach to coaching is different at the upper grades than the lower grades.

Additional information that was explored in this study was: the teachers' years of experience disaggregated by schools; other professional development teachers said they participated in this school year; the materials used with early, skilled, and intervention students; and the teachers' responses to the open-ended queries on the survey. These were examined to determine percentages, frequencies, and themes to the responses.

The experience comparison showed that one of the *Title I* schools had a high percentage, 40%, of teachers with three years or less of experience. The other *Title I* school had 19% of their teachers with three years of experience or less. The *non-Title I* schools had the following percentage of teachers with three years of experience or less: 25% (this school opened in the fall of 2004), 14%, and 7%. One of the *non-Title I* schools had 37% of their teachers with more than 20 years of experience; the other two had 20%

and 7%. The two *Title I* schools had 5% and 10% of the teachers who had over 20 years of experience.

Many teachers attended other professional development provided by the district or State. The *Title I* school with the highest percentage of teachers with *up to three years* of experience had the greatest percentage that attended a *Reading First Academy* and the highest frequency of responses to other professional development attended. A *non-Title I* school with the highest percentage of teachers with *sixteen years of experience to over twenty* had the smallest percentage of teachers who attended a *Reading First Academy* and the fewest who attended other workshops. The differences in learning opportunities between the groups, based on the years of experience of the teaching staff, may reflect the needs and goals of the teachers. More research is needed to determine whether these differences are typical for years of service.

Most of the teachers who responded to the queries about materials used for early readers, skilled readers, and intervention responded with *more than two* types of materials. The responses to the open-ended queries on the survey and the materials had some similarities. There were themes or common practices emphasized; there were also varied responses to materials and approaches within the themes for each section of the survey. The highest response rate for new effective approaches to reading instruction was for isolated skills lessons. The identification of isolated skills practices also had the greatest number and magnitude of correlations in the aggregated and disaggregated data. Specifically, isolated skills practices in phonics and phonemic awareness were most common in both types of responses, which showed a trend towards this type of instruction. This was also present in the professional development and materials

identified in the open-ended queries.

Across the items, there were many responses that indicated that teachers used approaches in whole text related to teaching reading as a process and providing embedded strategies and skills practice. The new approaches reflected the other professional development attended and resembled many of the correlations of items in the practice sections to the coaching items. Overall, the responses indicated a variety of approaches are used and that professional development on an assortment of methods is offered through workshops in the district. Some of the items that did not show up in the correlations were described in the open-ended responses and identified as part of the professional development teachers' attended. This indicated that the correlations did not describe the whole picture of what was happening in these schools or the district.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and practices in teaching reading in relation to the amount of coaching they indicated they had received in the last three years were the major outcomes of this study. The results of this study indicated that coaching made a difference for these teachers. The findings contributed to the knowledge of coaching and teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices. The results also answered questions about the relationships of the intervening variables examined in this study: teachers' levels of experience, alternative certification, school demographics, and grade level designations. A set of open-ended questions further explained the teachers' use of practices and professional development in early reading strategies, skilled reading strategies, balanced and integrated approaches, and interventions in reading.

The population for this study consisted of 147 teachers from five elementary schools in Collier County, Florida who had worked with reading coaches to different extents over the last three years. The results were analyzed in this chapter in terms of the review of literature on coaching as professional development intended to improve reading instruction, especially as it was delivered to struggling readers. Further research recommendations were considered to provide more information about the findings, generalize to other populations, and to continue research in the field on coaching as professional development and impacts on reading achievement.

Summary of the Study

Elementary principals from five schools in Collier County, Florida granted permission to conduct research with their teachers and agreed to set aside time during faculty meetings for participants to voluntarily complete the *Reading Instruction Survey* (see Appendix B). The *Collier County Institutional Review Board* approved the survey research design and implementation. Principals were notified that the consent letters and surveys were to be mailed and they gave notification of the impending arrival at least one week in advance. Instructions for the distribution and return of the surveys were sent in the boxes of surveys (see Appendix D). Between March 30, 2006 and April 12, 2006, all of the teachers in the five elementary schools were given an equal opportunity to participate in this survey research (see Appendix C). The consent letters were mailed to the University of Central Florida and the completed surveys were sent to the researcher in this study. The quantitative results were entered into the SPSS™ software and multiple bivariate correlations were run and analyzed. Responses to the open-ended questions were organized by key phrases and sorted by themes. The frequency of the responses within themes was analyzed and compared to the results of other parts of the survey.

Conclusions and Implications for Further Study

The primary question in this study was explored through correlations to items on the *Reading Instruction Survey*. The primary question was: *Are teachers' self-reports of their attitudes and instructional practices correlated with the amount of coaching they indicated they had received?* The secondary questions were explored as intervening variables in this study. The relationships of these factors on the results of the primary

question were investigated. The secondary questions were explored by disaggregating the data into groups by levels of experience, alternative certification, school demographics, and grade level designations.

The results of the analysis of the aggregated data indicated that there were 62 small to medium, significant correlations between items on the coaching section of the survey in three out of five of the sections explored. The large number of correlations indicated that coaching made a difference for these teachers. The disaggregated data showed similar relationships to the correlations, in varying number and magnitude, for the intervening variables. The differences in results ranged from the loss of significant correlations to the strengthening of the magnitude and additional correlations, based on the grouping criteria. The items and sections were analyzed for trends and future research implications. Spearman rho correlation numerical values for r were interpreted such that ($r = .1 - .29$) was a small correlation; ($r = .3 - .49$) was a medium correlation; ($r = .5 - .69$) was large; and ($r = .7 - .99$) were much larger than typical. One-tailed, positive correlations were considered significant at $p \leq .05$. The relationships were verified by scatter plot graphs and sample plots were included.

Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions

The six items in the coaching section were correlated individually to all of the rated items in the attitudes and perceptions section of the survey. This section had 14 items that teachers were asked to rate from 0 = *Completely Disagree* to 4 = *Completely Agree*. Of the 14 items, 4 items stood out as having small significant correlations at the one-tailed levels with most of the coaching items. The items that were positively related

across the coaching items were:

1. *I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading this year;*
2. *My reading instruction improves my students' performance;*
3. *I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction;*
4. *I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.*

The correlations indicated that coaching was related to how the teachers in this study perceived their work with students, effective practices, student performance, the implementation of new instructional techniques, and reassessing their instruction. These perceptions about their work with students indicated the teachers responded to more coaching as related to more positive perceptions; the literature review explained the importance of professional development as a mechanism for enhancing teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Even small correlations of positive attitudes and perceptions to the work of coaches in the aggregated data are important findings in this study.

The items in the attitudes and perceptions section that were significantly correlated to the aggregate had increased magnitudes from small to medium in the disaggregated data of the teachers with *up to three years* of experience. The increased magnitude revealed teachers with less experience got a boost in how they related more coaching to their perceptions and attitudes about teaching. The additional significantly correlated items, revealed in the group with the least experience, are listed below:

1. *I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies;*
and
2. *I am confident in discussing reading related issues with my peers.*

Teachers with *four to seven years* had few correlations in the attitudes and practices section. An item that was correlated to more than one coaching item had a stronger magnitude: *I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction*. The groups of teachers with *eight to fifteen years* of experience and *sixteen to over twenty years* had more negative correlations and they had few significantly positive correlations of coaching items to the attitudes and perceptions items.

The review of literature revealed that teachers who have positive attitudes and perceptions are more likely to use the knowledge and skills they have to reach the students in their care; and they are also more likely to seek new knowledge to reach their goals (Guskey, 1986). Teachers with more experience may have had many more opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful with their students and thus, may not be as easily influenced by coaching. They may also require different levels of sophistication and content for the coaching to be influential. Less experienced teachers may benefit from the additional opportunities to understand how effective they are as teachers and/or they may have less experience to go on in judging how effective they are. Further research into the benefits of working with a coach by experience level is needed.

Although alternative certification teachers' responses were not significantly correlated to many items on the coaching and attitudes and perceptions sections, the item that had a medium positive correlation dealt with job satisfaction: *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading* had a medium correlation to the item *I am enjoying teaching reading this year*. Teachers who came from other fields outside of education may have been accustomed to more teamwork and sharing and therefore, might have related this to job satisfaction. This group was small in number,

(n = 19), so interpretation of the results was limited. More research is needed to determine how job satisfaction is related to work with a coach and colleagues.

The school demographics of interest in this study did not appear to relate to the results. Differences among schools did exist, but there was not a pattern that pointed to the socio-economic status of the school. The two schools with the most items correlated to the coaching items, and the highest magnitude of correlated items, had very different school demographics. One school had 26% free and reduced lunch students and the other had 81% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and thus, was a *Title I* school. Further analysis revealed that there were other differences in the schools based on an analysis of years of experience of the teachers, attendance at other professional development, and the characteristics of the coach that may have contributed to these results. Additional study is needed to determine the factors that contributed to the differences in the results between schools.

Grade level designation did appear to relate to the correlations of teachers' attitudes and perceptions to the coaching items. Teachers in grades K-3 had small to medium significant correlations that resembled the aggregated data items. The teachers in the grades 4-5 group had fewer correlations to the coaching items in the attitudes and perceptions section. The difference in the sizes of the groups, K-3 (n = 88) and 4-5 (n=35) may have been a factor in the differences in correlations. Additionally, it was recognized that the *Reading First* schools had coaches assigned full-time to work with the K-3 teachers for the past three years. The 4th –5th grade teachers had coaches available to them for less time and frequency. Additional research is needed to determine whether teachers' attitudes and perceptions are related to their work with a coach in different ways

in the primary and intermediate grade levels.

Early Reading Practices

The six items in the coaching section were correlated to the rated items in the early reading practices section of the survey. This section had 8 items that teachers were asked to rate as 0 = *Never*; 1 = *Seldom*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 = *Often*; or 4 = *Always*. Of the 8 items, 4 had small, significant correlations with most of the coaching items. The items that were positively, significantly correlated to coaching were:

1. *Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities;*
2. *Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used;*
3. *Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used; and*
4. *Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text.*

The correlations indicated that coaching was related to the teachers' reported early reading practices in phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. The review of literature informed us that the best defense against reading failure is solid instruction in the essential components of reading (Torgeson, 2004); these components include the foundational knowledge of language and the interplay that contributes to understanding what one reads. Phonemic awareness and phonics are part of effective early reading instruction (NRP, 2000). Even small positive correlations of early reading practices to the work of the coaches are important findings in this study.

The *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* was the

screening and progress monitoring assessment used to identify the skills addressed in grades K-3 as part of the *Reading First* initiative. The *Reading First* coaches and the K-3 classroom teachers have gone over profiles of skills by student and classroom four times a year. The “index skills” profiles provided the teachers with information about their students’ progress in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency (Just Read, 2003). The use of the *DIBELS* assessment was expanded to all of the elementary schools in the district last year. The item with some of the greatest magnitude correlations was: *I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues*. This may have had an influence over what the reading coaches emphasized with the teachers in these schools.

Further exploration is needed to determine whether the other critical areas of early reading instruction are also part of what the coaches deliver as professional development to the teachers in Collier County. The four items that were not correlated across all of the coaching items were practices instructing students on the process of reading in text for accuracy and fluency, comprehension, and the use of emerging writing skills to respond to reading. The *National Reading Panel Report* (2000) emphasized the need to integrate isolated skills instruction with other kinds of instruction to provide a balanced program. Evidence in the other findings of this study indicated that teachers responded in the open-ended queries to the importance of instructional practices related to fluency, comprehension, and reading as a balanced process. Those results are discussed later in this chapter.

The disaggregated data for groups one and two, *up to three years* and *four to seven years* of experience, showed increased magnitudes from small to medium correlations on items in the early reading practices section to the coaching items. All

other experience level groups had few items that had significant correlations to the early reading strategies. One item that had significance across all of the experience level groups was: *Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities.*

The importance of phonemic awareness has received increased attention in the literature because it is believed to be a precursor to successful decoding (NRP, 2000). Phonemic awareness was an area that was tested four times a year for students who were not proficient at using decoding skills. Again, the relationship of the work of the coach in areas that are assessed most often may be a factor. Further study is needed to determine how great the relationship of testing is to the content of professional development.

Alternative certification teachers' responses to the coaching items were not significantly correlated to any of the early reading strategies. Again the small number of teachers with alternative certification (n=19) may have contributed to the results of this group and was taken into consideration in the limited interpretation of this finding.

School demographics did not appear to be related to the results in this study because the schools with the greatest amount of significant correlations were *Title I* and *non-Title I* schools. The school with the least correlations was a *non-Title I* school. There did appear to be differences in early reading practices between the schools that resulted in the high and low number of correlations. Further study is needed to determine the differences in coaches and/or school factors inherent in the different relationships to coaching.

Teachers in grades K-3 and grades 4-5 groups had items in the coaching section that were significantly correlated to the early reading items. The grades 4-5 group had coaching items with small, significant correlations to the items below, which are not

usually considered to be part of the intermediate reading curriculum. Students in need of intervention or remediation would receive instruction on these skills.

1. *Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities; and*
2. *Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used.*

A balanced reading program that integrates isolated skills with other instructional methods is recognized as providing for all learners in the classroom (NRP, 2002). More investigation is needed to determine whether phonemic awareness and phonics skills are receiving more attention across grade levels by the coaches than other practices and whether it is taking away from a balanced instructional program. Further study is needed to determine whether an appropriate emphasis was given to word analysis for decoding, especially at the intermediate level, and whether the relationship to coaching indicated other areas did not receive as much emphasis, such as comprehension and vocabulary.

Skilled Reading Practices

The six items in the coaching section were correlated to the rated items in the skilled reading practices section of the survey. This section had 6 items that teachers were asked to rate as 0 = *Never*; 1 = *Seldom*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 = *Often*; or 4 = *Always*. Of the 6 items, none of the items were positively, significantly correlated to the coaching items in the aggregated data. This leads to questions about whether the content of the professional development offered by the coaches included sufficient support for use of strategies in skilled reading.

The disaggregated data in this study provided further information into the ratings

and correlations of teachers in grades K-3 and 4-5. The reports discussed later in this chapter showed that there were differences in these groups on how coaching was correlated to practices. It was recognized that the *Reading First* initiative had a strong presence in some of the schools in this study for the last three years. The *Reading First* coaches worked with K-3 teachers in the two *Title I* and *Reading First* schools in this study under the guidelines of the grant. Additionally, district coaches worked with teachers that did not work with *Reading First* coaches in all of the schools in this study.

The skilled reading practices section of the survey included items about students' opportunities to navigate within text for different purposes. The strategies covered had to do with fluent and accurate reading, understanding vocabulary and word usage to comprehend text, drawing inferences, and activating background knowledge. A wide range of strategies constitutes the repertoire of the good reader's cognitive approaches to the reading process. These strategies need to be affirmed and/or explicitly taught for all students to be successful at reading for meaning (Duke, 2004).

The self-reports of the teachers with *up to three years* of experience indicated that their ratings of items in the skilled reading practices section had small to medium correlations to coaching items. Among those were:

1. *Opportunities for students to develop meaningful ideas from groups of words are used; and*
2. *Students are instructed on how to draw inferences and given opportunities to practice.*

The findings of differences in the schools showed that *non-Title I*, school # 441, had small to larger than typical correlations of coaching to skilled reading items.

Correlations existed that were not in the aggregated data. One *Title I*, school #351, had a few coaching items with significant correlations to skilled practices. The evidence of correlations in some schools, with increased magnitude in one school, may indicate that some coaches ensured that teachers knew and used these strategies. Further study into the different characteristics of effective coaches would help to explain these results.

The K-3 teachers had more significant correlations to coaching and the skilled reading section than the grades 4-5 teachers. This was a surprising result since the grades K-3 teachers were more likely to be working with early readers than skilled readers. Further investigation is needed to determine if these differences represent coaching content or delivery, or whether this was because the K-3 coaches had been in the schools for a longer period of time due to the *Reading First* funding.

Further exploration is needed to determine whether the skilled reading content on this survey was part of what all of the coaches in the Collier schools delivered as professional development, and if so, how it was related to teachers' practices. The lack of positive correlations of the skilled reading practices in the aggregated data needs further exploration. It is important to determine how coaches and teachers regard their responsibilities to skilled readers and the delivery of instructional practices related to decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading as a process. The lack of skilled reading items showing up as related to coaching warrants further investigation.

Balanced and Integrated Reading Practices

The six items in the coaching section were correlated to the rated items in the balanced and integrated reading practices section of the survey. This section had seven

items that teachers were asked to rate as 0 = *Never*; 1 = *Seldom*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 = *Often*; or 4 = *Always*. Of the seven items, none of the items were significantly correlated to any of the coaching items. Although there were no correlations revealed in the analysis of the aggregated quantitative data, the open-ended responses included many responses to ways teachers integrated reading and writing. An exploration of those responses later in this chapter will provide more information about how these teachers viewed the role of integrated instruction in their practice. The absence of correlations to the balanced and integrated items in the aggregated data leads to more questions about the content of the professional development of the coaches. The disaggregated data showed some correlations that indicated some coaches did address these strategies, but they were not prominent in all of the coaches' content.

The groups of teachers with less experience indicated some correlations to balanced and integrated strategies. The items with small to medium correlations were spread out between the groups of teachers with *up to three years* and *four to seven years* of experience. However, there were not enough items to consider this an important finding. The only disaggregated data to have noticeable numbers of items in the balanced and integrated section were individual school data. The *non-Title I* school with the greatest number and magnitude of correlations in all of the sections previously discussed had the most in this section. Differences in schools warrant further investigation into the coaches and their delivery of the content.

The review of literature explained how exemplary teachers used frequent exposure to a variety of types of texts and enabled students to explore writing in different genres (Allington & Johnson, 2002). The use of balanced and integrated approaches to

connect content areas and literature to students' reading and writing development are important components of a comprehensive, balanced reading instructional program. Previous research into the importance of balanced and integrated instruction to vocabulary development and deepening comprehension is an important consideration in any findings related to instructional practices in reading (Snow, 2002). The balanced and integrated reading practices section of the survey had questions about integrating decoding and comprehension within text during instruction. This did not show up as being correlated to coaching in the aggregated data. In addition, teachers' rated the exploration of vocabulary, using writing with literature and subject area content, and providing time for independent reading and these did not show up as being correlated to coaching.

The lack of positive correlations in the balanced and integrated reading section to work with a reading coach requires additional study to determine what the findings mean. How teachers regard their responsibilities to readers, as well as the emphasis of coaches, could be part of these results. Teaching decoding and comprehension during instruction within text, word study as part of vocabulary instruction, using writing with literature and subject area content, and providing time for independent reading are important to balanced instruction in reading. The lack of correlations to these reading strategies could mean unbalanced delivery of the essential components of reading. How coaches deliver the skilled reading content, and what they emphasize in professional development to change instruction, are topics for future research.

Interventions

The six items in the coaching section were correlated to all of the rated items in the intervention section of the survey. This section had three items that teachers were asked to rate as 0 = *Never*, 1 = *Seldom*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Often*, or 4 = *Always*. Of the three items, all of the items had small significant correlations to most of the coaching items. The items that were positively correlated across most of the coaching items were:

1. *Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read;*
2. *Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers; and*
3. *Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed.*

Students who are not meeting district expectations in Collier County had Academic Improvement Plans (AIP); AIP students were identified by assessments and classroom performance. The *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* was the screening and progress monitoring assessment used to identify the skills development in grades K-3; in addition, it was used with struggling students in some intermediate classes. Reading coaches and the K-3 classroom teachers went over profiles of skills by student and classroom. The “index skills” profiles provided the teachers with information about their students’ progress in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency (Just Read, 2003). The use of the *DIBELS* assessment in all of the elementary schools in the district helped to ensure that struggling students were identified early, diagnostic assessments used when needed, and intervention plans put into place. Classroom assessments, running records, informal reading inventories, and tests that accompanied

programmed instruction software, also informed K-5 teachers about the progress of students toward developing the skills and strategies of proficient reading.

Struggling readers need teachers who are very knowledgeable of effective methods, learning styles, and how to recognize students' strengths to help them find success (Clay, 2002). Screening and diagnostic assessments can identify students' strengths and deficiencies in their development. Across grades K–5, interventions should include problem-solving approaches to literacy aimed at students' changing developmental needs. Responsive teachers, who have a plan in place and follow the plan as recommended, can accelerate the development of their students. Further study is needed to determine what was happening once students were identified and plans were put into place in these schools.

The disaggregated data showed that years of experience groupings resulted in decreased numbers of correlations to the intervention items. The effect of smaller group sizes may have been a factor. The teachers with *up to three years* of experience did not have any correlations to the intervention items; other groups had few correlations. The aggregated data showed small correlations with all of the intervention items to the coaching items.

Teachers, who are willing and able to complete the necessary requirements to insure interventions for struggling readers, are an important part of changing the course of failure. The research studies on the state of teacher qualifications in America in a report by Paige, Commissioner of Education (2002) to Congress revealed that certification is not always an indication of a teacher who is trained and capable of teaching students who are in our low performing schools. Teachers who work with

students who have the odds against them need to be more cognizant of how to bring about success through interventions. They need to have more in their reading instruction repertoire of techniques to reach all students. Many teachers need school-based support beyond what is needed for certification.

Alternative certification teachers' did not have any significant correlations to the interventions. Again, the group size may have contributed to this finding.

School data did show a relationship to the frequency and magnitude of the coaching items and the correlation to the intervention items. One of the *Title I* schools had a greater number and magnitude of correlations in all other sections, but had none in the intervention section. The other *Title I* school had fewer correlations in all other sections, but had 2 out of 3 correlations in the intervention section. One *non-Title I* school had the highest frequency and magnitude of correlations in all sections, including 3 out of 3 in the intervention section. The other two *non-Title I* schools did not have any coaching items correlated to intervention items. It was a responsibility of coaches in the district to see that interventions were provided to lessen the gaps of struggling students in *Title I* and *Reading First* schools, based on the guidelines under *No Child Left Behind* (2001).

Differences in how teachers' responded to the intervention items need to be investigated further to determine the factors that contributed to the correlations in the disaggregated data. Additional information about how Collier coaches worked with teachers to help them understand a multi-faceted approach to intervention is needed.

The need for continuous training on the latest research on effective practices in reading is being addressed through federal funding for K-3 with the *Reading First* grant funds and the placement of reading coaches in high risk, low performing schools ("No

Child Left Behind Act of 2001," 2001). It is the responsibility of the school and district administration to ensure that the funding is being put to good use through effective coaching practices, with appropriate content and delivery. Interventions as part of effective practices for the students in *Title I* schools are critical. To understand the influence of the content, context, and the process of coaching on the effectiveness of interventions, further research is needed.

The teachers who participated in the open-ended queries provided additional information on their intervention practices. This additional qualitative information revealed more about the teachers instructional approaches intended to intervene in the progress of struggling readers. However, the low response rate limited the interpretation of the themes in this study. The low response rate may indicate that teachers did not know how to identify unique intervention practices or were not as comfortable describing them. The rated items on the survey only dealt with the process of identification and accountability for the intervention of struggling readers. The combination of information provided a more complete picture of interventions, but more study is needed to determine whether coaching is related to the instructional practices, identification, and/or accountability for interventions. The integration of this information was explored later in this chapter.

Additional Findings

The findings of the self-reports on the rated items of the survey indicated that there were small to medium, significant correlations between items on the coaching section of the survey in three out of five of the sections of the aggregated data. The

disaggregated data showed relationships to some of the intervening variables that resulted in trends. The differences in results ranged from the loss of significant correlations to the strengthening of the magnitude of correlations, based on the grouping criteria.

The differences in the experience level of teachers across schools made the interpretation of experience level and school data more difficult to separate. The percentage of teachers with *up to three years* of experience for all schools was over 14%. School # 351 had the greatest percentage, 40%, of teachers with *up to three years* of experience; they were a *Title I* school with a *Reading First* coach available for the last three years. School # 351 also had one of the highest numbers of correlations of coaching items to practice items. School # 441 had an even higher number and greater magnitude of correlations; this school had fewer than 14% of their teachers with *up to three years* of experience. They were not a *Title I* and *Reading First* school, so the teachers did not have a coach available on a daily basis for the last three years. More investigation is needed to determine whether the differences in the teachers' self-reports can be attributed to the quality of coaching, or other factors, in these schools.

The items that required a fill-in or short response further explained the findings in this study. The fill-in responses pertained to other professional development teachers participated in and materials teachers used to instruct students in early, skilled, and intervention practices. The short-response items were open-ended queries about instructional practices in all of the sections of the survey.

The other professional development identified by over 50% of respondents consisted of workshops that lasted up to three days, activities lasting several weeks, on-line courses, and other professional development. There were nine workshops on reading

named. Of the nine, the professional development offerings were as follows:

1. Guided reading,
2. 100 Book Challenge,
3. Spalding Phonics,
4. Balanced literacy,
5. Fluency programs,
6. Assessments,
7. Reading comprehension through “thinking maps,”
8. Writer’s workshop,
9. Technology.

The two workshops topics that had to do with practices in text: guided reading and *100 Book Challenge* had over 50% of the responses of those teachers that named the workshops they attended. The second highest percentage of respondents indicated they attended training on the scripted phonics program, *Spalding Phonics*. There were also two workshops named that dealt with assessments, but only five teachers named these. Many teachers, 47%, did not indicate that they attended a professional development workshop.

Processes in text and a scripted phonics program had the highest representation in the responses about other professional development and workshops. Correlations of items on the survey in the early, skilled, and balanced and integrated practices sections showed few coaching items correlated to reading within text for fluency and accuracy; comprehension; word work; or vocabulary development. Coaching items that pertained to phonemic awareness and phonics were most prevalent in the analysis. However, since

there was evidence that other professional development was available to teachers in these schools; more research is needed to determine whether these activities or the results were linked.

The review of literature identified the increased likelihood of oral language delays in children from impoverished households (Hart & Risley, 1995). In addition, the review identified why oral language development is important to prevent reading difficulties and how it is necessary to have continued vocabulary support to maintain reading development. A stumbling block to students developing and maintaining fluency and comprehension is a lack of adequate oral language and vocabulary to apply to text (Snow et al., 1998). Oral language development did not come up in the professional development activities or in the open-ended responses. One of the *Title I* schools had 69% non-English native speakers; the other *Title I* school had 65% non-English native speakers. The *Title I* schools each had over 80% poverty, based on free and reduced lunch percentages. The absence of support for oral language and vocabulary development from the responses of the teachers on this survey warrants further study. It may be that support was provided through professional development, but there was not evidence of that in the results of this study.

The materials identified by teachers reflected a variety of types and usage. Although many teachers left these items blank, 66% responded to the queries. The responses were as follows:

1. Early reading materials - 39% of the teachers identified 2 *or more* materials;
2. Skilled reading materials - 26% of the teachers identified 2 *or more* materials;
3. Intervention materials - 20% of the teachers identified 2 *or more* materials.

The review of the literature included a discussion of the findings published in the executive summary of the NRP (2000) report: “reading instruction involves four interacting factors: students, tasks, materials, and teachers.” (Section 5, page1) The materials are part of meeting the individualized needs of students. The identification of 2 *or more* materials indicated that the respondents recognized the need for a variety of materials.

The short answer responses to the queries in the attitudes and perceptions and the practices sections provided additional information in this study. Key words were identified and then sorted into themes. The responses were analyzed by theme for the aggregated and disaggregated school data. The results were compared to the survey correlations reported for the five schools.

The first query: *Briefly describe an effective new approach to reading that you are using in your classroom* had a total of (N = 99) responses. The highest frequency (n=44) theme was approaches that included isolated skills instruction and targeted practice. The subcategories in this theme were: a) phonics, b) phonemic awareness, c) pre-reading skills, d) graphic organizers, e) comprehension, f) fluency, and g) vocabulary. The greatest attention was given to phonics and phonemic awareness activities. This was consistent with the significant correlations of items that dealt with isolated skills activities for letter and word mastery and skill lessons in blending sounds to coaching items.

The effective new approaches that received the second highest (n=38) were approaches within text that included teaching reading as a process. This indicated that teachers perceived that they had learned effective new approaches to teaching reading as a process. This did not show up in the significant correlations to the coaching items that

were rated on the survey. However, guided reading, which consists of teaching reading as a process, was one of the most frequent responses to other professional development that teachers attended.

There were few references to vocabulary instruction and approaches to oral language development in all of the responses to the open-ended survey items or in the correlations. Although a lot more information is needed about how vocabulary and language development interplay with fluency development and comprehension, it is accepted that these are important parts of the repertoire of effective approaches to reading instruction. It is important that coaches include this in the professional development offered to teachers, especially where there are second language learners.

A smaller number of teachers responded to the second query: *Briefly describe a lesson where you use explicit instruction to help students develop early reading strategies* had a total of (N=30) responses. The low response rate limited the interpretation of this item. However, there were patterns that emerged within the responses. Techniques used to teach reading as a process, particularly through guided reading with targets and word work, had the highest response (n=13) and isolated skills in phonics had the second highest (n=9). The original survey by Shaha (2004) included a rated item about explicit instruction. That item was removed from the survey for use in this study because the researcher was not certain that teachers would be familiar with the term “explicit instruction.” The low response rate may confirm this and be an indication of uncertainty about how to respond to this query.

Briefly describe one comprehension strategy you have taught your students had a total of (N=75) responses. The highest frequency of responses (n=36) was in the theme of

practices used to promote comprehension strategies during reading; the next highest were practices used after reading and techniques for assessing comprehension skills, such as: identify the main idea or cause and effect. The review of literature included a definition of comprehension strategies by the National Reading Panel report (2000): comprehension strategies are procedures that guide students' thinking to help them become aware of the meaning underlying the words on the page. This takes place before, during, and after reading. These strategies need to be affirmed and/or explicitly taught for all students to be successful at reading for meaning (Duke, 2004). The teachers who responded to using practices that instruct students in the strategies for comprehending before, during, and after reading are aware of the importance of this, even though these did not show up as correlations to coaching items on the survey. More study is needed to determine whether adequate emphasis was given to comprehension strategies by the reading coaches in these schools.

The query *Briefly describe one way that you integrate reading and writing into a content area* had a total of (N=71) responses. The responses were matched to the themes in the balanced and integrated reading practices section, and additional themes, to show that integrating reading and writing was a practice often used in the content areas. This is an important practice in developing students' strategy use and developing the reciprocal processes of reading and writing. Students need to become familiar with the thinking that goes into writing informational text and then relate it to what they read to fully comprehend the form and purpose of expository writing. Although the items on the survey that pertained to this practice were not correlated to coaching items in the aggregated data, the open-ended responses provided evidence that this was a practice

used by teachers in these Collier schools.

The use of units of study or thematic approaches for the content areas was represented in the open-ended responses as ways to integrate instruction. This is considered an important strategy for helping students understand content material, as explained in the review of literature. Exposure to thematic units is also an approach discussed in the review of literature as one that supports vocabulary growth across content areas through frequent and varied exposure.

The low response rate to the final query on the survey limits the interpretation of this item. *Briefly describe an instructional approach you use as an intervention for a struggling reader* had (N=52) responses. Of the teachers responding, the theme that was represented more than any other (n=20) was the use of instructional techniques that are intended to provide specialized delivery, intensity, or additional time. The next highest (n=8) was grouping strategies, such as, one-on-one or small group instruction. The review of the literature revealed recommended intervention practices. According to Torgeson (2004), the teacher should increase the number and frequency of positive instructional interactions; this may be through instructional techniques that provide appropriate practice, utilize strategic cueing, or vary instruction for individual needs. The additional time and intensity of targeted instruction may be one-on-one or small group instruction with frequent progress monitoring. Additional information about coaching and teachers' use of interventions is needed to determine if coaches are having an influence over the delivery of interventions.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This study was undertaken to examine teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and practices in teaching reading and to determine if there were positive, significant correlations to the amount of coaching they indicated they had received in the last three years. The purpose of the study was to contribute to the knowledge of coaching and its relationship to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and instructional practices. The results indicated small to large, significant correlations of coaching to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices in the aggregated and disaggregated data. These findings provided evidence that the coaches made a difference in how the teachers in this study perceived their work with students, effective practices, student performance, the implementation of new instructional techniques, and reassessing their instruction. Even small correlations of positive attitudes and perceptions to the work of coaches in the aggregated data were important findings in this study. The evidence in these results supports the use of coaches as professional development.

The *Reading Instruction Survey* was selected because the instructional practices items matched the content provided to the coaches in their professional development by State reading specialists and the knowledge and skills covered in State assessments used to determine reading proficiency. The content of the research-based reading practices was determined by reading staff of *Just Read, Florida* and the State professional developers with *Reading First*. In addition, progress monitoring results for individual students, teachers, and schools on the DIBELS, SAT 9, *Peabody Vocabulary Test*, and the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* (FCAT) were used as ongoing discussion and planning for instruction and interventions between coaches and teachers.

The significant, positive correlations of attitude and perception items and the amount of coaching teachers indicated showed some trends worth further exploration. Among those trends was the fact that the item: *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading*, had a mode of 3, which was the score that occurred most often. A nationwide study by Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Kwang (2002) on Eisenhower funded projects showed that input from teachers on the content of professional development resulted in greater satisfaction. The input of teachers on needs and interests may have contributed to the positive correlations in this study.

The survey item: *A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading*, also had small to medium correlations with early reading items in the aggregated data and most disaggregated data groups. This demonstrated that a relationship to positive change was present and that continued teacher input on needs and interests would likely facilitate additional changes in the future.

The trend towards significant, positive correlations in the early reading practices section showed that when teachers rated their work with a coach higher, they also tended to have higher scores on the ratings of phonemic awareness and phonics items. The increased use of these skills in instruction was part of the *Reading First* initiative and was assessed four times a year on the *DIBELS*. The review of literature revealed that an important feature of high quality professional development was alignment of content to standards and the use of assessments to determine teacher performance and student achievement (Desimone et al., 2002). The results of this study suggested that the assessments four times a year contributed to the content of the professional development by the coaches.

The evidence of higher ratings of use of isolated skills lessons and manipulatives for phonemic awareness among teachers who worked with a coach showed a positive trend towards the changes that were sought by district, state, and federal initiatives. The results indicated that there were positive relationships between coaching and reading instruction that may have resulted from the coordination of efforts in the district and state. The use of *DIBELS* and the emphasis on progress monitoring of the five essential components came from the work of the *National Reading Panel* and was supported in legislation through the *No Child Left Behind Act*. This is an example of how research and resources contributed to the interactions of coaches and teachers.

The increasing availability of coaches in these schools may result in even more relationships in the future. In this study, evidence of other critical areas of instruction in reading did not show significant, positive correlations in the aggregated data. The findings created more questions about the balance of professional development provided by the reading coaches in these five schools and/or how teachers defined effective professional development. It is a recommendation that the school principals and district personnel look at the relationships of the coaches in these schools to teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices to plan for further study.

Additional information provided by teachers in the open-ended queries on the survey indicated that there was recognition by many of the teachers that teaching reading as a meaning-making process was an important part of their instruction. Additional evaluation of the content of professional development of the coaches and teachers' perceived needs for instruction will lead to further alignment.

Although the responses pertaining to oral language and vocabulary were limited,

the six open-ended responses that mentioned the use of retell and think-aloud in comprehension demonstrated an understanding by some teachers of the use of oral language as a comprehension strategy. The use of thematic units for content area instruction was recognized as a powerful strategy for developing vocabulary in the research; it was also identified by a limited number of teachers in this study.

Oral language was not found on the survey, mentioned as a topic of professional development, or described in the open-ended responses by the teachers in the early, skilled, balanced and integrated, or intervention sections. The use and sophistication of oral language is an essential component of meta-cognitive development that leads to deeper comprehension. The schools that participated in this study had 19%, 25%, 46%, 65%, and 69% of students who were non-English native speakers. The acquisition of a second language while learning to read causes many more complex problems for the teacher's instruction and the students' learning. This finding indicated a need for further exploration into the role of language development in ongoing work between teachers and coaches.

The review of literature demonstrated that more intensive vocabulary development is needed for students with a second language in the home and/or impoverished backgrounds. The lack of significant, positive correlations of coaching items to the vocabulary instruction items, and the very limited mention of this in the open-ended responses, leads to more questions about whether vocabulary was given enough attention in the professional development content of the coaches. Vocabulary strategies before, during, and after reading are important parts of the process of comprehending novel text. Reading in the content areas, and other informational texts,

requires that the reader have strategies for uncovering specialized vocabulary. All students need to have access to vocabulary strategies for success in increasingly more difficult texts in school and future career fields.

The content of the professional development delivered to these teachers by the coaches needs to include extensive investigation into the role of oral language and vocabulary development for improved student performance. It is a recommendation of this researcher to the coaches and administrators of these schools that they look at incorporating more oral language and vocabulary activities into the content of future professional development.

Educational researchers have not yet determined the contextual factors related to successful coaching; those factors were intervening variables in this study (IRA, 2005). A longitudinal study of the Eisenhower professional development projects was explored in the review of literature. The study showed that professional development had different results between schools and programs, and sometimes between teachers within a school (Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, & Birman, 2000). This longitudinal study, and others, has shown that successful implementation of any professional development hinges on the interaction of the content, context, and delivery. The transfer of knowledge or content that constitutes research-based practices in reading takes effect in the interaction of teacher and student. The coach is the resource provided as an intermediary in these interactions. The coaches' effectiveness is dependent upon the context of the school and classroom and the reception of the delivery of information by the teachers. The results of this study were limited by the complexity of these interactions and the inability of coaches to separate the content from the context and delivery.

Recommendations for Future Research

From the analysis of the data in this study, considerations for further investigation and future research topics were identified. In order to generalize the results to other populations and contexts, the following is recommended:

1. This study could be replicated with a random sample of teachers from a larger population, in Florida or throughout the country, to determine whether the findings can be interpreted for the general population of teachers that work in schools, which employ coaches as a system of professional development.
2. Student achievement levels, and how they relate to the extent of coaching their teachers indicated they had received, could be used to add another dimension that would strengthen the findings of this study.
3. Additional validation, or the use of another survey to validate the results, could be used to add strength to the interpretation of the results and applicability for use with other populations of teachers.
5. This study could be repeated with other school districts that employ reading coaches as a system of professional development; in addition, districts that do not have coaches could be included for a comparison of results on the attitudes and perceptions and practices sections of the survey.

The results of the aggregated data were important findings that support coaches as professional development. For this population of teachers, coaching made a difference. However, further investigation of the results of this study by the administration, coaches, and teachers in the participating schools are recommended as follows:

1. Determine the extent to which the content delivered by the coaches in these

schools included oral language development, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension practices.

2. Examine the role of assessments to determine whether the content of the coaches' professional development was influenced by the skills tested most often.
3. Explore whether balanced and integrated reading practices were part of what the coaches promoted.
4. Review the content of professional development to include more oral language development and vocabulary, particularly in the *Title I* schools.
5. Review the results of this study to plan for future development for the reading coaches and teachers in the district.
6. Investigate the contextual factors, including the support of school and district administrators, to determine what contributed to the differences in school findings.
7. Review the factors identified as teachers' experience levels, participation in other professional development, and instructional practices as contributors to the role of the coach.
8. Investigate the characteristics of a quality reading coach to determine the role they play in the success of reading coaches as a system of professional development.
9. Determine the success of reading coaches in relation to the growth of teachers' repertoire of strategies and skills for meeting the needs of struggling readers.

10. Examine the type and quality of interventions supported by coaches and used by teachers.
11. Determine whether coaches adjust the instructional practices they promote at the early and skilled reading levels.
12. Determine whether having to work with a coach after many years of experience is viewed as a detractor to teachers' attitudes and perceptions.

The results of this study indicated that there were relationships of teachers' self-reported work with coaches in these schools to teachers' self-reports of their attitudes, perceptions, and practices in reading. The findings showed that coaching made a difference for these teachers. There were small to large correlations in the aggregated and disaggregated data that led to the conclusion that coaches as a form of professional development in reading were related to how teachers perceived their work as reading teachers and the practices that they reported using most often.

A premise of this study was that coaching was related to teachers' instructional skills, attitudes, and perceptions. In classrooms around the country, 1/3 of students still struggle to read with ease, clarity, and purpose; these students need teachers with the attitudes, perceptions and practices that bring success (McCardle, P., & Chhabra, V., 2004). The findings of this study indicated that coaching could help teachers develop in ways that would reach struggling readers. Further research is needed to determine the extent of influence coaches have on teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and practices and how to enhance the content and delivery for all students.

APPENDIX A READING INSTRUCTION SURVEY

Reading Instruction Survey

Joan M. Conway

Teacher Identification Number: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

The purpose of this first section of the survey is to find out about the professional development with a reading coach that you have had within the last three years. Please respond with a rating of **0 if you had no contact with a reading coach around this subject; respond with a 4 if you worked with a coach many times, over several months**. A rating of 4 means you worked with a coach on this extensively. Rate your responses from 0 to 4. Your rating is important to this study. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Classroom Teachers Grades K-5

Start Here

Not at all - Somewhat - Extensively

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I worked with a reading coach on assessment related issues (selecting, administering, interpreting assessments, and/or using data to plan for instruction). | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I worked with a reading coach on new instructional techniques in reading. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I worked with a reading coach on determining the effectiveness of my interventions for struggling readers. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I worked with a reading coach on learning new ways to provide interventions for struggling readers. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. A reading coach modeled reading instruction lessons in my classroom. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. A reading coach met with me and my colleagues on needs and interests in reading (e.g.: grade level meetings, study groups, etc.). | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey
Joan M. Conway

CONTINUE HERE

Instructions

The purpose of the rest of the survey is to collect information regarding your teaching of reading. A rating of **0 means that you completely disagree** with the statement; a rating of **4 means that you completely agree** with the statement. Rate your response from 0 to 4. Your honest opinions are important to this study. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Start Here	Completely Disagree					Completely Agree				
1. I am teaching reading the way I like to this year.	0	1	2	3	4					
2. I have learned new effective strategies for teaching reading.	0	1	2	3	4					
3. I feel confident about teaching reading this year.	0	1	2	3	4					
4. My reading instruction improves my students' reading performance.	0	1	2	3	4					
5. My understanding of the reading process has improved my reading instruction.	0	1	2	3	4					
6. I have re-assessed how I teach reading this year to improve my instruction.	0	1	2	3	4					
7. I am enjoying teaching reading this year.	0	1	2	3	4					
8. I have changed the way I teach reading this year for the better.	0	1	2	3	4					

Excerpted and adapted with permission of the National Staff Development Council, www.nsdc.org, 2005 and Performance Learning Systems, Inc. Shaha, S. H., Lewis, V. K., O'Donnell, T. J., & Brown, D. H. (2004). Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students. *The Journal of Research in Professional Learning* (September 2004), 1-18. All rights reserved.

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey

Joan M. Conway

CONTINUE HERE	Completely Disagree					Completely Agree				
10. I am considered a leader in teaching reading in my school.	0	1	2	3	4					
11. I could train others how to teach reading.	0	1	2	3	4					
12. I am confident in discussing reading related issues with my peers.	0	1	2	3	4					
13. I am good at identifying students' needs and correcting reading deficiencies.	0	1	2	3	4					
14. I am more effective in my reading instruction this year because of new reading instruction techniques I have used.	0	1	2	3	4					
15. Briefly describe an effective new approach to teaching reading that you are using in your classroom this year. (please use the back, if needed):										

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey
Joan M. Conway

CONTINUE HERE

Circle Yes or No to answer whether you attended a *Reading First Reading Academy* in the **last three years:** **Yes** **No**

Please **circle Yes** for the type(s) of additional professional development in reading you participated in **this school year:**

One to three day workshop: Yes Which one(s)?

Reading workshop extending over
a period of several weeks or more: Yes Which one(s)?

On-line course(s): Yes Which one(s)?

Other(s):

Demographic Information: Circle the answer that applies to you.

Gender: Male Female

Years Teaching: Up to 1 year 1-3 years 4-7 years 8-10 years
11-15 years 16-20 years More than 20 years

Years Teaching at Your Current Grade Level: Up to 1 year 1-3 years
4-7 years 8-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years More than 20 years

Years Teaching at Your Current School: Up to 1 year 1-3 years
4-7 years 8-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years More than 20 years

Type of undergraduate degree? _____ Major area of study? _____ Type of advanced degree? _____ Did you go through alternative certification? **Yes No**
Please list your areas of certification in Florida:

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT SECTION

Reading Instruction Survey
Joan M. Conway

CONTINUE HERE

In this section, a rating of **0 means you never use** that instructional approach or activity; **1 means you seldom use; 2 means you sometimes use; 3 means you often use; 4 means you always use** that instructional approach or activity. Rate your responses from 0 to 4. The accurate rating of your use is important to this study. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Early Reading Strategies:

Start Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always				
1. Manipulatives are used in phonemic awareness activities to help students problem-solve with sounds in words.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Isolated skills activities for mastery of the names and sounds of letters are used.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Students are instructed to use the ways words sound in text for accuracy and fluency.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Students respond to stories using their emerging spelling skills to compose their own sentences and stories.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Students are taught how to construct the meaning of what they read.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Separate skill lessons in blending letter sounds together are used.	0	1	2	3	4

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey
Joan M. Conway

Continue Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always				
7. Students are instructed to listen to the pronunciation of sounds and words in text to check their accuracy.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Students are assisted with blending sounds together to read unknown words in text.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Identify the materials you use most often to teach your early readers.					
10. Briefly describe a lesson where you use explicit instruction to help students develop early reading strategies (please use the back, if needed):					

Skilled Reading Strategies:

Start Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always				
1. Students are provided opportunities to identify words accurately and fluently.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Students are instructed on how to determine the meaning of words to aid comprehension..	0	1	2	3	4
3. Opportunities for students to develop meaningful ideas from groups of words are used.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Students are instructed on how to draw inferences and given opportunities to practice.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Students are provided opportunities to relate what they know to the text being read.	0	1	2	3	4

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey

Joan M. Conway

Continue Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always				
6. Opportunities to practice reading in text for accuracy and fluency are given.	0	1	2	3	4
7. Identify the materials you use most often to teach your more skilled readers.					
8. Briefly describe one comprehension strategy you have taught your students. (please use the back, if needed):					

Balanced And Integrated Reading Strategies:

	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always				
1. Instruction is provided in decoding and comprehending simultaneously.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Students have frequent exposure to a variety of types of texts.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Writing is used to foster deeper understanding of both the forms and meaning of text.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Decoding and comprehension strategies are taught from the start of reading instruction.	0	1	2	3	4
5. The relationships of words are explored during vocabulary lessons.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Students are provided opportunities for responding in writing to literature and content area materials.	0	1	2	3	4

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Reading Instruction Survey

Joan M. Conway

Continue Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always
----------------------	--

7. Students have incentives and time for independent reading 0 1 2 3 4

8. Briefly describe one way you integrate reading and writing into a content area. (please use the back, if needed):

Intervention:

Continue Here	Never – Seldom – Sometimes - Often - Always
----------------------	--

1. Screening for early intervention is used to identify students who are struggling to learn to read 0 1 2 3 4

2. Follow-ups and more intensive diagnostic assessments are requested for struggling readers. 0 1 2 3 4

3. Intervention plans are used as recommended and updated as needed. 0 1 2 3 4

4. Identify the materials you use most often to teach your intervention students.

5. Briefly describe an instructional approach you use as an intervention for a struggling reader. (please use the back, if needed):

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

APPENDIX B PRINCIPAL LETTER

February 20, 2006

06-3299 * UCF IRB

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida (UCF). I am surveying teachers to find out how they feel about their teaching of reading. I am asking your teachers to participate in this survey lasting no more than 20 minutes because you agreed by e-mail to have your K-5 classroom teachers take part in this study. The teachers will not be expected to complete this survey during time that coincides with their students' instruction. In previous correspondence, you agreed to provide your teachers time during a faculty meeting to complete this survey. As the principal, you will be given a copy of the survey questions but will not see individual teachers' responses. You are being asked to sign this consent form to show that you have been informed of the process by which the surveys are to be distributed, collected, and handled for this study. This consent letter is part of the UCF and Collier County Institutional Review Board requirements for research in your schools.

The surveys will be sent to your school in advance of the two-week timeframe for distribution. A member of your instructional staff, who is not participating in the survey, should be designated to pass out and collect the teacher consent forms, which will be returned to my advisor at UCF in an addressed envelope provided to you. The consent forms will be kept in a locked file at her office. The teachers, who have consented to participate, will be given a copy of the survey by the designated staff member who will also collect them, and put them in an envelope to be returned to me by U. S. mail. The data will be entered into statistical software using the teacher identification number that is on the survey. The number cannot be matched to an individual but will be identified by

school to provide school results.

Teachers will not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer. I look forward to their responses and sharing the results with you. All responses will be kept confidential and will not be represented individually in the study. There are no anticipated risks, compensation, or other direct benefits to you or your teachers as participants in this study. If you still agree to have your teachers participate, please sign on the line at the end of this letter and return to the address below.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at conwayjo@yahoo.com or (828) 460.0255; or contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Vicky Zygouris-Coe, at vzygouri@mail.ucf.edu or (407) 823-0386. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed at UCF IRB Office at University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 302, Orlando, FL 32826-3252. The phone number is 407-823-2901. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Conway

Signature of School Principal: _____ Date _____

School ID Number: _____

Return to:

Joan M. Conway
333 Pisgah View Drive

APPENDIX C EDUCATOR LETTER

February 20, 2006

06-3299 * UCF IRB

Dear Educator:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida (UCF). I am surveying teachers to find out how they feel about their teaching of reading. I am asking you to participate in this survey lasting no more than 20 minutes because you have been identified as a K-5 classroom teacher, over the age of 18, in Collier County. You will not be expected to complete this survey during time that coincides with your students' instruction. Your administrators have agreed to provide you time during a faculty meeting to complete this survey. They have been given a copy of the survey questions but will not see your responses. A member of your staff who is not participating in the survey will collect these consent forms, which will be returned to my advisor at UCF and kept in a locked file at her office.

If you have consented to participate, the designated staff member who is not participating in the survey will give you a copy of the survey, collect them, and put them in an envelope to be returned to me by U. S. mail. The data will be entered into statistical software using the teacher identification number that is on your survey. The number cannot be matched to an individual.

If you agree to participate, please sign this form, turn it in, and then complete the survey. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. I look forward to your responses. All responses will be kept confidential and will not be represented individually in the study. There are no anticipated risks, compensation, or other direct benefits to you as a participant.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at

conwayjo@yahoo.com or (828) 460.0255; or contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Vicky Zygouris-Coe, at vzygouri@mail.ucf.edu or (407) 823-0386. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed at UCF IRB Office at University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 302, Orlando, FL 32826-3252. The phone number is 407-823-2901. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Conway

Signature of survey participant: _____ Date_____

APPENDIX D PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Principal:

Enclosed are the teacher consent letters and surveys for your K-5 classroom teachers to complete. There are also some extra letters and surveys in the packet and a copy for your records. Please notify your teachers up to a week in advance that they will be asked to participate in a voluntary survey. On a date that is convenient for you, within two weeks of receipt of the surveys, have your K-5 classroom teachers come together to complete the survey. Follow these steps:

1. Assign a staff member, who is not completing the survey, to distribute and collect the materials.
2. The designee informs teachers of what will occur using this protocol:

“Teachers, you will be given a consent letter to read and decide whether you wish to participate in a voluntary survey. A doctoral student at the University of Central Florida is conducting this survey independently of the Collier school system. Your participation will assist this student in meeting the requirements of her dissertation and give you an opportunity to reflect on your reading practice.

I will pass out the consent letters for you to sign, if you wish to participate. You must turn in a signed consent form to complete a survey. The letter explains the purpose of the survey and your participation. I will collect the signed consent forms and then pass out the surveys to those who wish to participate.”

3. Your designee passes out and collects the consent letters and places them in the envelope addressed to Dr. Vicky Zygouris-Coe at UCF.
4. Your designee passes out the numbered surveys, allows at least 20 minutes for teachers to complete them after all participants have received the survey, and collects them and places them in the box addressed to Joan Conway. Please return all unused surveys in this box also.
5. The self-addressed, prepaid envelope and box should be placed in the mail on the day that the survey is completed. Thank you for participating in this study.



APPENDIX E UCF IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research & Commercialization

March 3, 2006

Joan Conway
333 Pisgah View Drive
Marion, NC 28752

Dear Ms. Conway:

With reference to your protocol #06-3286 entitled, "**Coaching as Professional Development: Teachers' Attitudes and Practices**," I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved on 2/27/06. The expiration date will be 2/26/07.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB office when you have completed this research study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
UCF IRB Coordinator
(FWA00000351 Exp. 5/13/07, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File
Vicky Zygouris-Coe, Ph.D.

BW:jm

APPENDIX F COLLIER IRB APPROVAL



OFFICE OF
PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY / STAFF DEVELOPMENT
5775 Osceola Trail
Naples, Florida 34109-0919
(239) 377-0005 • (239) 377-0006 FAX

Joan M. Conway
Project Coordinator
North Carolina - Early Childhood Educator
Professional Development Project
Orelena Hawks Puckett Research Institute
18A Regent Park Blvd.
Asheville, NC 28806

Dear Ms. Conway,

We are delighted to inform you that your request to conduct the research outlined in your descriptions of your proposal entitled "Coaching as Professional Development: Teachers, Attitudes and Practices" has been approved.

We do hope we that any publications or presentations derived from this presentation will be shared with Collier County Public Schools. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about this research at 239 377 0017 or via e-mail at shaynevi@collier.k12.fl.us. Please inform the Committee of any changes in your study.

We wish you the very best in your research efforts. Thank you.

Sincerely

Vivian Shayne, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Program Evaluation
Collier County Public Schools
5775 Osceola Trail
Naples, FL 34109

COLLIER COUNTY CHARACTER EDUCATION TRAITS

*Citizenship Cooperation Honesty Kindness Patriotism Perseverance
Respect Responsibility Self-Control Tolerance*

THE COLLIER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS AN EQUAL ACCESS / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

APPENDIX G NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL APPROVAL

Joan M. Conway
333 Pisgah View Drive
Marion, NC 28752

September 14, 2005

Joan Richardson
National Staff Development Council
1128 Nottingham Road
Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230

Dear Ms. Richardson:

This letter will confirm our recent e-mail conversation. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled " The Pyramid Of Influence: Providing Effective Interventions To Struggling Readers Through Coaching." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following:

Shaha, S. H., Lewis, V. K., & Brown, D. H. (2004). Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students. *The Journal of Research in Professional Writing* (September 2004), 1-18. *Learning*

The excerpts to be reproduced are: *Teacher Knowledge and Attitude surveys*.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the publication of my dissertation by UMI. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that NSDC owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me along with the form required by NSDC. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Conway

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: Joan Richardson
Joan Richardson
Date: 9-15-05

APPENDIX H PERFORMANCE LEARNING SYSTEMS APPROVAL

January 10, 2006

Karen A Coyne
Copyright Administrator
Performance Learning Systems, Inc
3605 W Pioneer Pkwy, suite C
Pantego TX 76013

Dear Ms. Coyne:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "A Comparative Study of Coaching as a System of Professional Development." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the evaluation instruments for teachers in:

Shaha, S. H., Lewis, V. K., & Brown, D. H. (2004). Evaluating professional Development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students. *The Journal of Research in Professional Learning* (September 2004), 1-18.

The excerpts to be reproduced are: *Teacher Knowledge and Attitude surveys and additional validation information that was not included in this article.*

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the publication of my dissertation by UMI. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that Performance Learning Systems owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Conway

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: *Karen A Coyne* Date: *Jan. 13, 2006*
Karen A Coyne
PLS Copyright Administrator

Please use the copyright credit information as sent on the PLS Reprint Permission Agreement which needs to be completed before using the material.

Thank you.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adams, M. J. (2000). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- AISR. (2005). *Professional learning communities*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University.
- Allington, R., & Johnson, P. H. (2002). *Reading to learn: Lessons from exemplary fourth grade classrooms*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications, Inc.
- Bandura, A. (1994). *Self-Efficacy*. In V.S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior*. Retrieved July 2, 2005, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/BanEncy.html>
- Bandura, A. (2001). *Guide for constructing self-efficacy scales*. Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University.
- Bloom, B. S. (1968). Learning for mastery, *Evaluation component*, 1 (2), 1-12.
- Bolster, A. S. (1983). Toward a more effective model of research on teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 53, 294-308.
- Bond, G. L., & Dykstra, R. (1966). The role of the coordinating center in the cooperative research program. *The Reading Teacher*, 19(8), 566-569.
- Bong, M., & Clark, R. E. (1999). Comparison between self-concept and self-efficacy in academic motivation research. *Educational Psychologist*, 34(3), 139-153.
- Cheyne, J. A., & Tarulli, D. (1999). *Dialogue, Difference, and the "Third Voice" in the Zone of Proximal Development* [web site]. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved August 8, 2002, 2002, from the World Wide Web: <http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~acheyne/ZPD.html>
- Clay, M. (2002). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement* (second ed.). Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Crandall, D. P. (1983). The teacher's role in school improvement, *Educational Leadership*, 41 (3), 6-9.

- Curtis, R. (2001). *Coaching in the Boston Public Schools* (Report Funded by the Comprehensive School Reform Grant OERI-R215C000045). Boston: U. S. Department of Education and Tower Foundation.
- Desimone, L., Porter, A. C., Birman, B. F., Garet, M. S., & Kwang, S. Y. (2002). How do district management and implementation strategies relate to quality professional development that districts provide to teachers? *Teachers College Record*, *104*(7), 1265-1312.
- DeVries, B. A. (2004). *Literacy assessment and intervention for the elementary school classroom*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.
- Dixon-Krauss, L. (2002). *A mediation model for dynamic literacy instruction* [World Wide Web]. University of West Florida. Retrieved September 21, 2002, from the World Wide Web: <http://psych.hanover.edu/vygotsky/krauss.html>
- Donovan, M. S., Bransford, J. D., & Pellegrino, J. W. (2002). *How people learn: Bridging research and practice* (Sixth ed.). Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.
- Duke, N. K. (2004). *Learning from research: Critical understandings to guide our practice*. Reno Nevada: IRA.
- Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving survey questions* (Vol. 38). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guskey, T. R. (1986). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, *15*(5), 5-12.
- Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice*, *8*(3/4), 381-391.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
- Henson, R. K., Kogan, L. R., & Vacha-Haase, T. (2001). A reliability generalization study of the teacher efficacy scale and related instruments. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *61*(3), 404-420.
- IRA. (2003). *Standards for reading professionals*. International Reading Association. Retrieved July 21, 2004, 2004, from the World Wide Web: http://www.reading.org/advocacy/standards/standards03_revised/

- IRA. (2004). *The role and qualifications of the reading coach in the United States*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- IRA. (2005). *Standards for middle and high school literacy coaches*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Janssen, C. M. (2006). *FCAT State assessment results for grades 3-10* (Memorandum to the Superintendent). Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.
- Jones, N. K. (1994). *Learning to read: Insights from Reading Recovery*. Unpublished manuscript, Portsmouth N. H.
- Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Just Read, Florida. (2003). *K-3 Academy*, Florida Department of Education.
- Klingner, J., Ahwee, S., Pilonieta, P., & Menendez, R. (2003). Barriers and facilitators in scaling up research-based practices. *Exceptional Children*, 69, 411-429.
- Logerfo, L. (2006). *Climb every mountain* [Professional Organization Web Site]. Education Next. Retrieved June 4, 2006, from the World Wide Web.
- Lyons, C. A., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education: A guide to professional development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lyons, C. A. (2003). *Teaching struggling readers: How to use brain-based research to maximize learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McCardle, P., & Chhabra, V. (2004). *The voice of evidence in reading research*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- NCES. (2005). *Characteristics of Public School Teachers' Professional Development Activities: 1999-2000* (Issue Brief NCES 2005-030). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education: Institute of Education Science.
- NCLB, No Child Left Behind: Reading first, Sec. 1201. Purposes Subpart 1 (2001).
- No Child Left Behind Act, Subpart 1 - Reading First. Sec.1201 (2001).
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Report No. 107-335 1001-1908 (2001).

- NRP. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read (An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction)* (No. NIH Pub. No. 00-4754): U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Pajares, F. (2003). Self-efficacy, beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: a review of the literature. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 19*, 139-158.
- Porter, A., Garet, M. S., Desimone, L., Yoon, K. S., & Birman, B. (2000). *Does professional development change teaching practice? Results from a three-year study.* (Reports - Research (143) DOC-2001-01). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences.
- Pressley, M., Allington, R. L., Wharton-Mc Donald, Block, C. C., & Morrow, L. M. (2001). *Learning to Read: Lessons from exemplary first-grade classrooms.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Shaha, S. H., Lewis, V. K., O'Donnell, T. J., & Brown, D. H. (2004). Evaluating professional development: An approach to verifying program impact on teachers and students. *The Journal of Research in Professional Learning* (September 2004), 1-18.
- Shaha, S. H. (2006). Validation Data. In J. M. Conway (Ed.).
- Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension.* Santa Monica, CA: Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), U. S. Department of Education.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.
- Torgeson, J. (2004). *Immediate, intensive interventions: Their critical role within a whole school program to prevent reading difficulties.* Retrieved May 31, 2004, 2004, from the World Wide Web:
http://www.fcrr.org/staffpresentations/Joe/NA/errftac_region_interventions.ppt
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Edited and translated by M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.