

MULTI-TIERED MODELS OF LITERACY COACHING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FACILITATION



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BACKGROUND

- For late middle and high school teachers, the value of collaborating to support the needs of their struggling readers is well established (Schnellert, Butler & Higginson, 2008)
- Collegial collaboration can enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge through engaging in critical reflection and goal-directed, self-regulated learning (Stephens & Heidi, 2014; Toll, 2007; Walpole & McKenna, 2012)
- Previous studies document the importance of building on teachers' existing professional knowledge and how coaches at different levels can work collaboratively to support teachers' self-directed professional growth (Penuel, Phillips, & Harris, 2014; Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011)



RESEARCH QUESTION



What are the multi-tiered models of literacy coaching for the professional learning facilitation of teachers of adolescent struggling readers?

METHODS



PARTICIPANTS

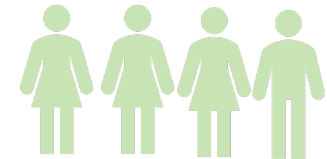
- ▷ 1 Southern Ontario school district
- ▷ 21 high school teachers & four Literacy Coaches

YEAR 1

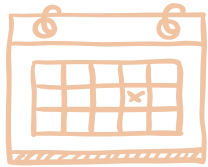
- 6 high school teacher participants
- 2 district Literacy Coaches
- 2 Provincial Literacy Facilitators

YEAR 2

- 15 high school teacher participants
- 2 district Literacy Coaches
- 2 Provincial Literacy Facilitators



STUDY CONTEXT



18-month long
professional learning
project



- ▷ There were 11 professional learning meetings co-facilitated by the Coaches, which were opportunities for all participants to come together to share new strategies, reflect, and discuss their practices



Teachers were coached on how
and why to implement guided
reading and small group
instruction



- ▷ The teacher participants worked in pairs
- ▷ With the support of Literacy Coaches, teachers co-planned and co-taught lessons focused on reading fluency, comprehension, and word study instruction

DATA COLLECTION



Interviews

- ▷ Teacher and coach participants were interviewed
- ▷ Interviews were audio—recorded and transcribed prior to data analysis



Fieldnotes

- ▷ Researchers typed fieldnotes on their devices during coaching interactions or large-group sessions



Artifacts

- ▷ Artifacts were gathered of teacher work such as instructional resources and links to shared reflections on Google Drive

DATA ANALYSIS

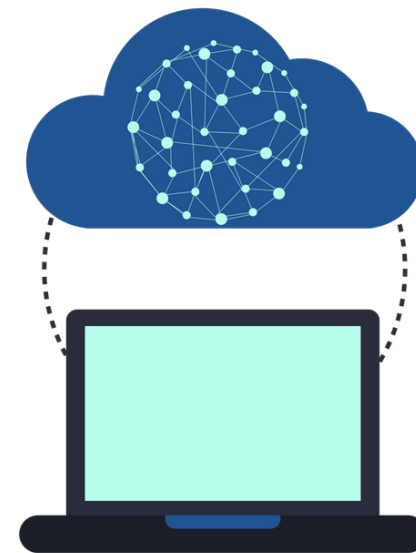
1 Qualitative software (NVivo) was used to import all field notes and interview transcripts

2 Data were read and coded

3 Nodes were created and run through software program to find common themes

4 The findings were clustered into categories to find larger themes

5 Quotes were extracted from the raw data to illustrate each theme



FINDINGS



FINDINGS

Assessment to Instruction

- ▷ Teachers appreciated that citing success criteria aligned with learning goals and formative feedback during a lesson; this was helpful for students' reading improvement
- ▷ Realization that reading and writing skills do not go hand and hand in English assessment
- ▷ Learn how to implement independent and guided reading pedagogies, while matching tasks and texts to learners' needs

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The literacy coach explains that when we assess reading, we assess through the medium of writing, which then is also assessing writing. Therefore, having oral responses is more valuable...Another teacher agrees and adds that conferencing is a better way to assess reading

~Fieldnotes, November 2, 2017

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FINDINGS

Students' Metacognition

- ▷ Teachers came to appreciate that if their students lacked prior knowledge, they needed to scaffold them to build it and help them become active learners
- ▷ Struggling students began to use metacognitive language and demonstrate an awareness of how they were inferring meaning from text
- ▷ Students were more engaged in tasks, returning to texts for answers, and asking questions about the texts

“

[The teacher] is more comfortable with metacognition and how to get students to reflect on their learning. They are asking questions when they are reading with him that demonstrate whether they are inferring or making connections...[the teacher] is more aware of how to teach it explicitly now and he really has slowed his teaching down.

~Literacy Coach, January 18 2017

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FINDINGS

Teachers' Reflection

- ▷ Meaningful teacher reflection occurred, promoted by probing questions from the coaches
- ▷ Teachers discussed strategies for grouping students and encouraging self-regulation
- ▷ Facilitators encouraged teachers to articulate their changes in practice and intentions to spread and build school capacity

“ I think Coach 1 and Coach 2 listen and then they give. They sort out what I've said, and they then lead me in a direction, and I think...they always can guide me to a series of options. “What do you think about this?” ‘Here are some things you could do.’ They never tell me what you do. They kind of just say this is one direction to take or this is another direction. Here is a resource here. How could I support you with this, right?

~Teacher Interview, May 25, 2018

FINDINGS

Teacher Engagement

- ▷ Facilitators fortified an environment of safety and trust
- ▷ All teachers were supportive of one another as they engaged in the professional learning process
- ▷ Teachers evaluated their investment in the process and concluded it was a productive as they were enhancing their practices by implementing effective strategies

“

That was really valuable because it made me realize how much I don't know about actually teaching reading or doing an analysis of where a student or a struggling reader is at... to me that was like drinking from a fire hose, but I found it so interesting. It was amazing.

~Teacher Interview, June 7 2018

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FINDINGS

Professional Learning Facilitators

- ▷ The Provincial Literacy Leads (Coaches) were skilled in:
 - eliciting responses
 - keeping teacher participants on task
 - asking questions to prompt critical thinking
 - encouraging teachers to ground their practices in their students' needs and interests

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This discussion was well moderated by the Provincial Literacy Lead. She listened to the two participants who are both very knowledgeable in their roles as facilitators. She does offer good 'in the moment' stories and anecdotes that provide illustrations for the issues they are talking about.

~Fieldnotes, January 30, 2018

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FINDINGS

Alignment with Policy

- ▷ Ministry initiatives and resources were explicitly presented during district whole group and one-on-one coaching
- ▷ This 'messaging' included references to professional readings where research-based instructional strategies were featured
- ▷ There was a distinct attempt to make these connections among sources of information at different levels of expertise

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Coach 1 and Coach 2 are attempting to carry forward the professional learning that they engaged in in the Webinar series with the Ministry of Education – excellent alignment!

~Fieldnotes, January 9, 2018

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FINDINGS

Coaching the Literacy Coaches

- ▷ The Coaches at the school district level adopted coaching skills that they had been introduced to and seen modelled during sessions with their Provincial Literacy Leads
- ▷ These included posing provocative discussion questions to teachers in large group sessions to create dissonance and advance reflection on their practices
- ▷ Literacy Coaches scaffolded teachers' professional learning in a manner that was similar to teachers scaffolding students

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PLL refers to Vinton book and developing student vocabulary with a strategy often used of asking students to identify words and find and write out the definitions

~Fieldnotes, January 11, 2018

eleeeeeeeee

[The coach] notes the Vinton book that they have been using. She cites one of the science teachers having a shift in practice about reading in science. Understanding concepts in text and focus on inquiry related to this was an effective change. She saw what some of the students could now extract from science text.

~Fieldnotes, May 9 2018

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FINDINGS

Multi-Tiered Coaching

- ▷ There was an organic emergence of a middle tier of coaching self-initiated by a high school English Department Head
- ▷ She began to take leadership at her school supporting her colleagues through challenges of practice
- ▷ Teacher participants looked to her as an authentic leader
- ▷ Coaches saw the value in building and sustaining capacity at the school level

“

So my role this year at school has been different. I've been a co-chair in the department focusing on literacy needs for the whole school. I've been trying to use what we've been discussing with Resilient Readers project for the entire school and trying to implement different strategies to help readers and all classes.

~Teacher Interview, May 25, 2018

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EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

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EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The enactment of multi-tiered coaching presents a **new model** for coaches in school districts to support high school teachers in implementing elementary pedagogies for their struggling adolescent readers

It is important to consider the **interdependent roles** of professional learning facilitators with varying degrees of expertise and different backgrounds

Using **elementary pedagogies** (practices students are familiar with) to target struggling readers prepares them to be **self-directed**, **metacognitively** aware learners

Overall...

this research demonstrates the positive impact of transferring elementary reading pedagogies into secondary school English teachers' practices to support the learning needs of struggling readers, systematic links to policy, and the impact of multi-tiered coaching



QUESTIONS?



Social Sciences and Humanities
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CREDITS

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