



K-2 Literacy Support

Because literacy is fundamental for success in college, career, and civic life, it is crucial to support strong literacy development in the early grades (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). It has been said that students “learn to read” in kindergarten through third grade and then “read to learn” in grades four and beyond. While this statement is inaccurate -- even beginning readers read to learn and learning to read is a process that continues through high school and beyond -- the importance of early literacy learning as a foundation to meet the increasingly complex literacy demands beyond the primary grades cannot be overstated (Duke, 2019). Recognizing the importance of early literacy as a gateway to ongoing success, the Nevada legislature enacted SB391 also known as “Read by Grade Three” in the spring of 2015. As of the 2019-2020 school year, the bill requires each elementary principal to designate a full time Literacy Specialist to support teachers at the school site to work with the school administrator and teachers, serve as a resource for professional development, and build master reading teachers to improve student reading achievement.

The Literacy Specialist position requires the integration of a myriad of skills, strategies, and dispositions (Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, 2017) starting with deep pedagogical and content knowledge in literacy combined with experience teaching students. In addition to the ability to teach students, Literacy Specialists must master the andragogical skills, strategies, and dispositions of teaching adult learners. While Literacy Specialists work in many capacities, the role of coach is prominent. Many schools and districts hire coaches in literacy or other content areas with the assumption that, because they are excellent classroom teachers, they will also make excellent coaches. However, without providing coaches a strategic learning pathway for the additional skills needed to become an effective coach of adult learners, the transition from classroom teacher to coach can be a frustrating experience (Aguilar, 2013).

Prior to the start of school in 2019, Humboldt County School District (HCS D) requested professional development services from the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP) to support the Literacy Specialists at three elementary schools. The district was in the second year of implementing a new literacy curriculum for kindergarten, first, and second grades. The three Literacy Specialists had the demanding task of mastering navigation of the new curriculum, gaining a deep understanding of each literacy component and the ways components are integrated to support early literacy, and to support all K-2 teachers in implementing the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Two knowledgeable and experienced NNRPDP Coordinators were chosen to lead the work, one with extensive experience teaching literacy in the primary grades and the other with

experience teaching both elementary and secondary literacy. This combined experience brought to the work a necessary close lens of teaching beginning readers and writers as well as a broad lens of teaching literacy beyond the primary grades. Additionally, both Coordinators have coaching training, skills, and experience. Coordinators' coaching training includes participation in multiple intensive institutes in coaching literacy including digital literacy. Both have studied and applied multiple coaching methods including Elena Aguilar's transformational coaching method (TCM), Cathy Toll's problem-based coaching (PBC) methods, and Jim Knight's Impact Coaching (IC) method. Both Coordinators are experienced in coaching teachers one-on-one, and in group and lab settings.

To accomplish the goals of the project, Coordinators needed to dedicate the time to plan, coordinate, and facilitate monthly coaching institutes, curate learning resources aligned with Literacy Specialists' stated goals that aligned with school and district goals, facilitate weekly virtual PLC meetings, and be responsive to the dynamic needs of the Literacy Specialists. The Coordinators supported the Literacy Specialists' learning of the knowledge and skills necessary to coach and facilitate adult learners. Literacy Specialists then applied those coaching and adult facilitation skills to support the growth of K-2 teachers in their teaching of literacy. To accomplish this, Coordinators implemented a three-part plan: First, Coordinators planned and facilitated monthly two-day coaching institutes. Each day of the institute consisted of a half day of learning coaching content and a half day lab experience of applied coaching in various contexts and configurations. Secondly, Coordinators facilitated weekly virtual Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008) meetings that fostered collaboration among Literacy Specialists and were tailored to meet the ongoing and dynamic needs of the Literacy Specialists. The Literacy Specialists' PLC focused on collaborative learning, collaborative planning, solving professional dilemmas, and district alignment of practice. Coordinators ensured the work remained productive through following carefully planned agendas and the use of protocols. Finally, Coordinators provided just-in-time coaching support to literacy specialists to address individual needs as they arose.

Because this project was cut short due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the last two coaching institutes were not held nor was the final planned observation of Literacy Specialists conducted. With school closures, the Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction announced that students would not take end of the year standardized tests. Therefore, the planned student achievement data analysis comparing the beginning of the year and end of the year MAP scores was not available for this report; instead, the Coordinators compared the available MAP scores from fall and winter. The Coordinators also included reading record data (Ross, 2004) from assessments administered by classroom teachers across the course of the year to show student reading achievement and growth.

Initial Data and Planning

All three elementary schools asserted increased achievement in reading as their number one priority as stated in school improvement plans. Each school outlined specific goals to that end including reducing the number of students scoring below the 40th percentile by 10% in each grade level and increasing the percent of students proficient overall. Literacy Specialists have the potential to impact all K-2 teachers, and thus all K-2 students. Thus, schools identified supporting Literacy Specialists work with K-2 teachers to effectively implement the district literacy curriculum as key to improving instruction to meet the needs of all students.

While the Literacy Specialists had spent a great deal of time learning the curricular components and system, because they were not in the classroom teaching students, they lacked first-hand experience using the materials for instruction. Acknowledging this lack of actual classroom use of the materials, they elected a different learning focus. Rather, they identified their most pressing need as developing the coaching and facilitation knowledge and skills to work effectively with adult learners. According to coaching expert Elena Aguilar (2013), coaches are generally hired because of their skill and effectiveness in the classroom, without consideration of the separate, equally important, and complex skills of working with adult learners, and without a designated path to acquire these additional competencies. These Literacy Specialists were no exception. They were hired because they were exceptional classroom teachers; however, they had no formal training in coaching and facilitating the learning of adults.

To address acquiring first-hand experience with the curriculum, Literacy Specialists began the school year spending a portion of the day using the new materials to teach small groups of struggling readers. When the Coordinators began the work, they observed each Literacy Specialist in small group sessions with students. These observations, which took place after Literacy Specialists had been working with students for about a month, revealed that the Literacy Specialists had the necessary skills to apply the new curriculum with students and were confidently using the materials along with their professional skill and judgment to meet the needs of students.

Supporting the Literacy Specialists to broaden and continuously recalibrate their focus from teaching students to teaching adults became a key coaching point for the Coordinators. The Literacy Specialist position required by RBG3 legislation came with the expectation that the Literacy Specialists work full time in the role of supporting teachers to become more effective at teaching literacy. In the instance of teaching small groups of students each day, Literacy Specialists needed to either conclude their work with students in order to carve out more time to

coach teachers or continue teaching small groups of students but shift the focus to adult learners by inviting teachers to co-plan, observe, or co-teach the session followed by reflection and debrief. Strategic use of time and resources to impact adults was a major focus of the intervention.

Initial gathering of information revealed that the intervention plan would need to provide space for, and promote, Literacy Specialists' autonomy to apply the skills and strategies learned to their unique contexts. While the plan would need structure and consistency, a one-size-fits-all approach would not be efficacious. While similar in many respects, each of the three schools differ as well. The schools are led by administrators with different values and ideas regarding professional learning; varying philosophies of teaching and learning prevail at each school; the teaching staff as a whole, grade level teams, and individuals at each school site differ significantly. Some school staff, teams, and individuals whole-heartedly embraced learning opportunities offered by Literacy Specialists or required by administrators; others were more reluctant. Some teachers viewed the Literacy Specialists with skepticism indicating a need to develop trust and to be convinced of the efficacy of the learning in order to progress to the next step in a coaching relationship. To meet the various needs of teachers at each school, Literacy Specialists needed to tailor the way they implemented skills and strategies with a differentiated approach.

As Coordinators met with the Literacy Specialists and with administrators to gain an understanding of the strengths and challenges of each school, it became apparent that, in order for Literacy Specialists to have the greatest impact, stakeholders would need to broaden their definition of coaching (Moody, 2019) from one-on-one interactions with a single teacher to include coaching groups of teachers as well as all other interactions with teachers. Each school's expectations for Literacy Specialists differ slightly and Literacy Specialists fulfill many duties beyond what might traditionally be considered coaching including facilitating staff professional learning sessions, facilitating small-group grade-level PLCs, leading Instructional Consultation Meetings (ICAT) and assisting with developing intervention plans, entering and analyzing data, and parent communication, in addition to one-on-one coaching sessions. While some Literacy Specialists' tasks could be adjusted or schedules changed to allow more one-on-one coaching opportunities, many could not. Thus, the intervention plan needed to fit within, and maximize use of, existing schedules and structures common to, as well as unique to, each school. For the greatest impact, Literacy Specialists needed to expand upon and enhance opportunities to work with teachers, treating every interaction with teachers as an opportunity to facilitate teacher learning and growth.

To assess where to begin support for Literacy Specialists to develop the complex knowledge and skills to coach and facilitate the learning of teachers in their building, Coordinators used a tool designed by Elena Aguilar (2013), creator of the Transformational

Coaching Model (TCM). The Transformational Coaching Rubric identifies a wide range of skills within six essential components of an effective coach: knowledge base, relationships, strategic design, the coaching conversation, strategic action, and coach as learner. The use of the Transformational Coaching Rubric in the project was multi-faceted. Coordinators used the tool to help guide planning as well as utilizing the rubric as an observation tool. The Literacy Specialists used the tool as a self-assessment at the beginning and mid-year. They also collectively chose skills within each component on which to focus. Initial observations of Literacy Specialists in their coaching role using the Transformational Coaching Rubric along with Literacy Specialists' self-assessment data allowed Coordinators to plan next steps and to exercise a responsive approach to learning. Table 10 identifies skills the Literacy Specialists chose to work on in each component along with needs identified by the Coordinator.

Table 1 *Chosen Components of the Transformational Coaching Rubric*

Transformational Coaching Rubric Component	Skills the Literacy Specialists chose to work on	Additional needs the NNRPDP Coordinator observed
Knowledge Base	Coaching approaches	Shift from teaching students to coaching teachers
	Adult learning theory	Shift from collaborator to coach
	Inquiry lens	
Relationships	Enrolling a client (beyond compliance)	Build a coaching culture
Coaching Conversation	Range of approaches	Strategically lead conversations through questioning and other strategies
	Entry points	
Strategic Design	Data	Creatively use existing schedules and structures to impact more teachers more often. Focus more on working with teams of teachers.
	Goals	
	Theory of action	
Strategic Action	Feedback	Implement structures such as peer learning labs allowing teachers to learn from and with each other in settings that are job-embedded and close to practice.
	Reflective	
	Analyzing data	
	Modeling	
	Coaching activities	
	Gradual release	
	Client needs	
Coach as Learner	Collaborates with other coaches	

Transformational Coaching Rubric Component	Skills the Literacy Specialists chose to work on	Additional needs the NNRPDP Coordinator observed
	Solicits feedback Reflects on coaching practice Seeks professional learning opportunities	

To address needs identified by the Coordinator as well as skills chosen by the Literacy Specialists, an intervention was designed consisting of three components: 1) monthly two-day coaching institutes, 2) weekly virtual Professional Learning Community meetings, and 3) “just-in-time” individual coaching for Literacy Specialists.

Monthly coaching institutes addressed the need to support the Literacy Specialists to collectively build knowledge, skill, and capacity around coaching adult learners. A growing number of schools are implementing some form of instructional coaching to support teacher development, and, according to a meta-analysis of 60 studies conducted by Kraft and Blazar (2018), coaching works! Coaching has been shown to have a significant impact in teacher practice and a smaller, but measurable impact on student achievement (Kraft & Blazar, 2018). Literacy coaching in particular has been shown to have a significant impact on student reading achievement (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011). However, coaching is also an expensive form of professional development given the time and expertise required to provide one-on-one support for teachers. Because one-on-one coaching is expensive, one way to fulfill the promise of coaching impact is through coaching teams of teachers (Moody, 2019). Peer learning labs (Patterson & Tolnay, 2015) in which coaches facilitate and impact the learning of multiple teachers at once were also incorporated in the monthly coaching institutes as a vehicle for team learning. Peer learning labs provide an authentic shared experience for teachers to explore the links between planning, instruction, and assessment while gaining a collective vision for what works in teaching and learning. Teams of teachers began by analyzing reading records to determine a learning focus followed by careful planning of a guided reading lesson. After this planning session, the team entered a classroom to teach or observe the lesson, followed by a reflection and debrief session.

Weekly virtual Professional Learning Communities (PLC) meetings sustained and deepened an already-established collaborative relationship between Literacy Specialists while being responsive to ongoing dynamic needs. Research shows that well-developed Professional Learning Communities have a positive impact on both teaching practice and student achievement (Ross & Adams, 2008; Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018) and are a powerful collaborative team structure (Fulton & Doerr, 2010). Effective PLCs build collective efficacy, an influence in education shown to have a very high effect size according to the meta-analysis of researcher

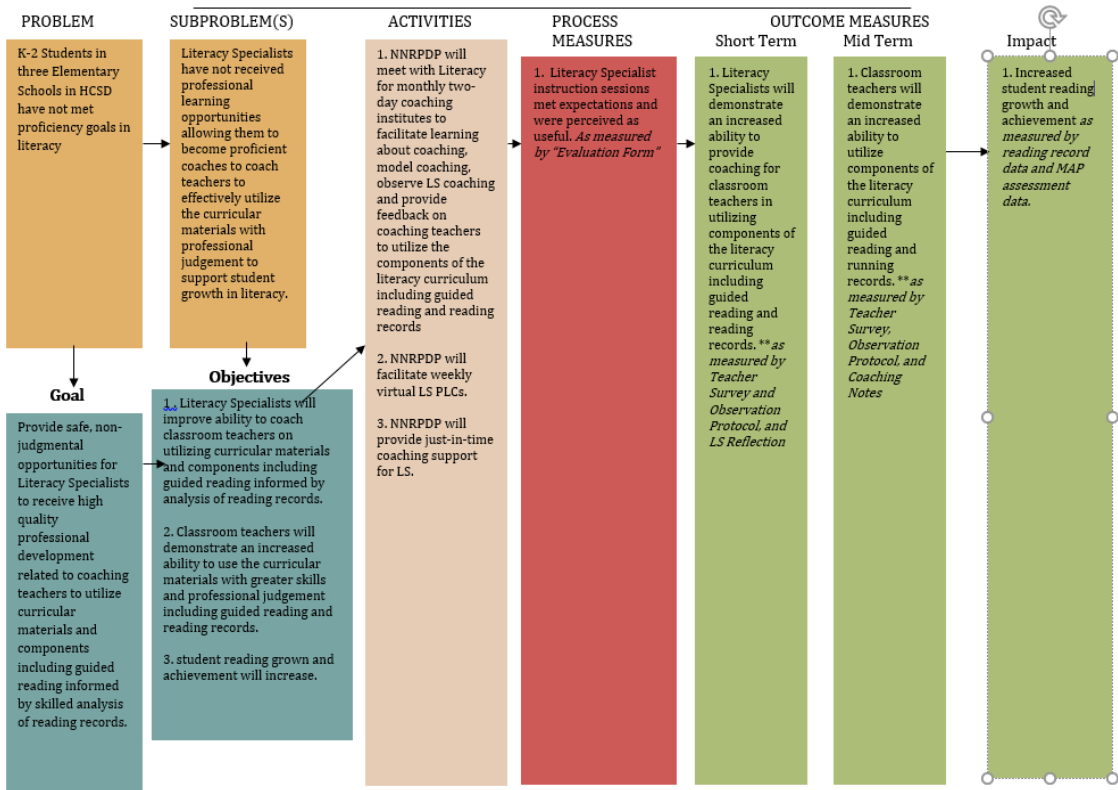
John Hattie who placed collective efficacy as the number one influence in 2016. With collective efficacy, a team adheres to a belief that together, they can impact the teaching and learning process over and above any negative influences. Because Literacy Specialists work as coaches and facilitators to support the learning of teachers in their building, the focus of their work is distinct from classroom teachers. While they might participate in or facilitate the work of grade level teams, they are not part of the team in the same way which creates a feeling of isolation. The opportunity to collaborate weekly with others in the same role was an essential component of the learning design of the intervention.

“Just-in-time” coaching is an approach that has become popular across professions offering in-the-moment focused coaching as challenges arise rather than waiting for regularly scheduled sessions which may or may not address specific needs. This component allowed Literacy Specialists to reach out via phone call or video platform with imminent needs such as rehearsing an upcoming conversation with a client, refining plans for a professional learning session with a team of teachers, or planning a peer learning lab.

The initial data and planning resulted in the logic model shown in Figure 8. This model outlined identified outcomes, the learning needs of those involved, along with planned intervention approaches.

Figure 1 *HCSD and NRPDP Logic Model*

NNRPDP/HCS D LITERACY SUPPORT - LOGIC MODEL



Local Resources and Capacity

Humboldt County School District entered the professional learning with the necessary resources and ample capacity to accomplish the work. Literacy Specialists were eager to work with Coordinators and enthusiastically committed to the significant amount of time required for learning and applying new skills, as well as demonstrating the willingness to be vulnerable to receive and provide feedback. Each of the three Literacy Specialists came to the work with extensive knowledge in the education field reflected in master's degrees, two in literacy, as well as skills gained from over twenty years' experience teaching literacy in grades K-2. Throughout their careers, the Literacy Specialists have sought out and completed a broad range of literacy training including balanced literacy through CELL/EXLL, guided reading through the Bureau of Education and Research, participation in the Nevada Reading Excellence Act, National Board certification, as well as extensive reading, classes, and conferences.

Administrators agreed to support the work by providing Literacy Specialists the necessary time away from their regularly-scheduled duties. Each administrator met with Coordinators and the Literacy Specialists from the school multiple times to coordinate and recalibrate efforts. When the monthly coaching institute was held at a particular school, the

administrator assisted with planning and coordinating the event and welcomed Coordinators and Literacy Specialists from throughout the district to share in the learning.

The district office supported the learning by setting up initial meetings and providing an agreed-upon text, *The Art of Coaching* (Aguilar, 2013), that helped provide a framework for the learning.

A Professional Learning Plan (see Appendix M) was created and shared. The plan outlined basic details of the project. Details included outcomes and evidence, and the agreed-upon roles and responsibilities of each collaborative entity described in Table 11.

Table 2 *Roles and Actions of Educators*

NRRPDP Coordinators	Literacy Specialists	Administrators	K-2 Classroom Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate weekly PLC meetings • Plan and facilitate monthly 2-day coaching institutes. • Curate and provide coaching content • Model coaching • Coordinate opportunities for LS to practice coaching • Coach LS as they coach teachers • Provide just-in-time support for LS as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and participate in weekly PLC meetings • Attend and participate in monthly coaching institutes • Increase opportunities to impact teachers • Apply skills and strategies in coaching teachers including providing and receiving feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time for LS to attend PLC meetings • Allow time for LS to attend monthly 2-day coaching institutes. • Meet with LS and NRRPDP Coordinator when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingly and actively participate in coaching opportunities both individually, as teams, and as a whole group • Provide as well as receive feedback

While coaching is a costly professional learning model in terms of time and fiscal investment, particularly when focused on one-on-one interactions between coach and teacher, the district had already allocated funds for Literacy Specialists’ salaries in accordance with state legislation. Despite being an expensive model, coaching has the potential for greater impact on changing teacher practice and raising student achievement in comparison to other professional learning models (Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018). Research on coaching specific to reading in the early grades suggests that coaching contributes to significant reading gains (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011).

The intervention design supported the overall strategic goal of all the elementary schools to increase the effectiveness of Tier one instruction with full implementation of the new literacy curriculum. Tier one instruction refers to instruction provided in the regular classroom to meet the needs of all students. The implementation model, which included safe supported interactions between Literacy Specialists and Coordinators, and between Literacy Specialists and teachers,

also supported the three Humboldt County School District goals laid out by the school board of trustees: 1) improve academic achievement at all levels for all students 2) develop capacity for leadership at all levels 3) establish safe, respectful and supportive learning environments in all sites, schools, and classrooms.

A “gradual release of responsibility framework” was implemented to assist Literacy Specialists as they assumed more leadership and responsibility for continuing the work once it was begun. This framework purposefully shifts responsibility from teacher to learner, or in this case to Literacy Specialists. Coordinators began the year by modeling structures and strategies, then including Literacy Specialists in planning and facilitating, and then observing the Literacy Specialists implementing structures and strategies while providing feedback. It is the hope that the intervention will last longer than one year. Research indicates that many years of sustained implementation are necessary to yield results (Borman et al, 2003; Borman & Hewes, 2002; Doss, Akinniranye, & Goke, 2020).

Method

Learning Design

The intervention design included three key components:

1. A monthly two-day coaching institute designed to acquire and apply new knowledge of coaching and facilitation of adult learning. Institutes included various application structures such as peer learning labs where teachers and coaches collectively experience the fundamental components of teaching: data analysis, planning, teaching, and reflecting.
2. Weekly virtual Literacy Specialists PLC meetings designed to foster collaborative culture of shared practice.
3. Just-in-time coaching to provide relevant, in-the-moment coaching to solve current challenges.

The learning design components, each with a different purpose, take into account the three theories of adult learning and align with the seven features of effective professional development advanced by The Learning Policy Institute (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). The design also accounts for Nevada’s Standards for Professional Learning (Nevada Department of Education, 2017).

Three major theories of adult learning have emerged over the past quarter of a century. These theories include the theory of andragogy, the theory of self-directed learning, and the theory of transformational learning (Corley, 2008). From the **theory of andragogy**, the learning design for this intervention included opportunities for Literacy Strategists to *co-construct learning objectives* by choosing aspects of the Transformational Coaching Rubric on which to

focus. Literacy Strategists in turn offered this same opportunity to teachers at their schools by sending out a survey. This survey allowed teachers to identify components of the literacy curriculum they most wanted to focus on with coaching support. Literacy Strategists also had an opportunity to *collaboratively select methods, materials, and resources*. Each monthly coaching institute and weekly PLC, while following a consistent structure, allowed for collaborative planning between Coordinators and Literacy Strategists in order to meet the dynamic learning needs of the group as well as those of teachers at their schools. Each Literacy Specialist's learning experience also included opportunities for evaluating *the learning experience and making adjustments* as needed. Coaching institutes were refined and adjusted based on reflection on previous institutes. From the **theory of self-directed learning**, the learning design of the intervention included *self-assessment* and *negotiating learning goals and strategies*. From the theory of **transformational learning**, *creating a climate of trust, participation, and problem-solving* were prioritized on all levels.

The Learning Policy Institute (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) defines seven features of effective professional learning based on extensive study of the research. The learning design of this intervention embodies all seven features. The intervention is **content focused** (p. 5, 2017) on literacy. The intervention **incorporates active learning** (p. 7, 2017) where Literacy Specialists and teachers try the strategies and skills of teaching and coaching in classroom settings. The intervention **supports collaboration** (p. 9, 2017) in all aspects as Literacy Specialists collaborated with Coordinators, with one another, and with teachers sharing practice to positively impact instruction. The intervention **uses models of effective practice** (p. 11, 2017) using research supported components of a comprehensive literacy approach while building professional knowledge and judgment of when and how to effectively use various approaches. The intervention **provides coaching and expert support** (p. 12, 2017) which is the central component of the design. Literacy Specialists receive coaching and expert support from Coordinators and in turn, they coach and support the individual and collective needs of K-2 teachers at their school. The intervention **provides opportunities for feedback and reflection** (p. 14, 2017). Coordinators integrated opportunities for feedback and reflection in every interaction with Literacy Specialists and with teachers. This included written feedback and reflection as well as ongoing dialogue. This intervention was of **sustained duration** (p. 15, 2017) with short and longer regular and consistent interactions over the course of a school year.

The intervention also aligns with Nevada's Standards for Professional Learning (NDE, 2017) as shown in Table 12.

Table 3 *K-2 Literacy Support Aligned with the Standards for Professional Learning (NDE, 2017)*

Standard	Alignment
<p>LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment</p>	<p>NNRPDP Coordinators provided multiple opportunities for LS to form and benefit from a productive and collaborative learning community. In weekly virtual PLCs, LS came together on a regular basis to discuss ways to increase their effectiveness and impact across school contexts and to align literacy and coaching goals. Participation in monthly coaching institutes provided LS an opportunity to learn content together, distilling a shared understanding of best practice in literacy learning, best practice in coaching, and space to apply content in a supportive context.</p>
<p>LEADERSHIP: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning</p>	<p>NNRPDP Coordinators provided opportunities for LS to develop leadership capacity. As LS became more knowledgeable and skilled in working with adult learners and more confident in coaching, they also gained greater capacity assuming greater responsibility for developing the teaching capacity within the school and district.</p>
<p>RESOURCES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning</p>	<p>NNRPDP Coordinators curated relevant research-based texts and materials. They provided materials to build upon the current knowledge and skills of LS and to respond to the collective and individual needs of LS as they arose.</p>
<p>DATA: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.</p>	<p>LS participants collaboratively chose elements of Elena Aguilar’s Transformational Coaching Rubric on which to focus and gain proficiency. This rubric served as a self-assessment tool, a guide to content, and an observation tool for NNRPDP Coordinators to use when observing LS. A teacher survey gave LS and NNRPDP coordinators an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of their work and to make adjustments. Student data in the form of running records gave teachers, LS, and NNRPDP coordinators continuous formative data on which to base next steps in instruction.</p>
<p>LEARNING DESIGNS: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes</p>	<p>NNRPDP Coordinators designed this professional learning opportunity utilizing adult learning theory, and research-based practice in coaching. The design focuses on developing the specific knowledge and skills necessary to effectively coach teachers. It incorporates active learning as LS are able to try new coaching strategies in authentic, job-embedded contexts. Consistent with</p>

Standard	Alignment
	current best practice for adult learners, the learning design calls for collaborative practice, gives opportunities to co-create a clear vision of best practice, provides coaching and support, and opportunities for reflection and feedback.
IMPLEMENTATION: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students; applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change	NNRPDP Coordinators implemented the planned professional learning with a focus on implementation. LS were supported with ongoing opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills and then to apply the knowledge and skills in a systematic and cyclic way. NNRPDP coordinators consistently provided opportunities for LS to give and receive feedback in a safe and supportive environment while promoting continuous growth and change in practice.
OUTCOMES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students focuses on equitable access, opportunities and outcomes with an emphasis on achievement and opportunity disparities between student groups.	NNRPDP Coordinators encouraged similar coaching experiences within and across schools in order to ensure that teachers throughout the district received support. This in turn led to students consistently receiving high-quality instruction.
EQUITY: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students focuses on equitable access, opportunities and outcomes with an emphasis on achievement and opportunity disparities between student groups.	NNRPDP Coordinators facilitated discussions focused on ways to ensure that the literacy coaching support provided by LS would be available to all teachers within the district and that all students would benefit from effective instruction.
CULTURAL COMPETENCY: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students facilitates educator’s self-examination of their awareness, knowledge, skills, and actions that pertain to culture and how they can develop culturally-responsive strategies to enrich educational experiences for all students.	NNRPDP Coordinators facilitated discussions with the LS giving opportunities for self-examination and promoting a greater awareness of cultural norms and biases and the role they play in teaching and learning.

Participants and Procedure

This initiative focused on supporting three Literacy Specialists at three K-4 elementary schools in one district. Each of the three schools serves between 350 and 520 students with approximately ten to fifteen K-2 teachers at each school for a total of thirty-seven teachers.

Measurement

Objective One

Literacy Specialists will demonstrate an increased ability to coach and facilitate classroom teachers' skills with teaching the literacy components of the chosen curriculum, particularly guided reading informed by reading records. To determine the correlation between the intervention provided by Coordinators and the growth of Literacy Specialists as coaches, the Coordinators conducted a textual analysis of the Coordinators' notes, Literacy Specialists' reflections, teacher survey data, and notes from a focus group interview with the Literacy Specialists conducted by an outside evaluator. Additionally, the Literacy Specialists completed a self-assessment at the beginning and mid-year using the Transformational Coaching Rubric.

Objective Two

Classroom teachers will demonstrate an increased ability to use the curricular materials with greater skill and professional judgment including guided reading and reading records. To determine the correlation between the literacy specialists' increased capacity as coaches and the growth of K-2 teachers, the Coordinator conducted a textual analysis of a teacher survey, Literacy Specialists' reflections, and notes from a focus group interview with the Literacy Specialists conducted by an outside evaluator.

Objective Three

Students will demonstrate increased growth and achievement in literacy. To determine the correlation between teachers' increased ability to provide effective literacy instruction and increased student reading achievement, the Coordinator examined student achievement and growth data from two sources: 1) reading records performed by classroom teachers and 2) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading assessment.

Reading record assessments (Ross, 2004) are conducted by classroom teachers, with individual students, using a coding system to measure reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Skilled classroom teachers use the results of the reading record to determine next steps for teaching individuals and small groups of students. The Coordinator used data from reading records conducted in January and February for Kindergarten students and in October and February for first and second grade students.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computer adaptive, normative assessment. The original plan prior to the global pandemic was to compare MAP reading data for fall and spring. However, MAP data were only available for fall and winter. Kindergarten does not complete the fall MAP assessment; Kindergarten winter MAP scores are not included.

The various measurement methods and tools used to provide evidence of meeting these objectives are shown in Table 13, aligned with Guskey’s five levels of professional development (Guskey, 2002).

Table 4 *Five levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2002)*

Evaluation Level	Questions Addressed	How Will Information be Gathered?	What is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
1. Participants’ Reactions	<i>Training expectations, presenter skills, increased knowledge, motivation to improve</i>	<i>NNRPDP Evaluation Form</i>	<i>Initial satisfaction with the experience</i>	<i>To improve program design and delivery</i>
2. Participants’ Learning	<i>Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?</i>	<i>NNRPDP observation notes of LS as coaches aligned with elements of the Transformational Coaching Rubric</i> <i>LS reflections during the year</i> <i>LS end of the year focus group interview conducted by an outside evaluator</i> <i>HCSD K-2 teacher survey</i> <i>LS self-assessment using the Transformational Coaching Rubric.</i>	<i>LS as coaches ability to coach classroom teachers in utilizing components of the literacy curriculum including guided reading and reading records</i>	<i>To improve program content, format, and organization</i>
3. Organization Support and Change	<i>Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported? Was the support public and overt? Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? Were sufficient resources made available? Were successes recognized and</i>	<i>Teacher survey</i>	<i>The organization’s advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition</i>	<i>To document and improve organization support To inform future change efforts</i>

Evaluation Level	Questions Addressed	How Will Information be Gathered?	What is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
	<i>shared? What was the impact on the organization's climate and procedures?</i>			
4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills	<i>Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills?</i>	<i>NNRPDP observation notes of LS as coaches aligned with elements of the Transformational Coaching Rubric</i>	<i>LS ability to coach classroom teachers in utilizing components of the curricular materials including guided reading and reading records</i>	<i>To document and improve the implementation of program content</i>
5. Student Learning Outcomes	<i>What was the impact on students? Did it affect student performance or achievement?</i>	<i>MAP reading data from fall and winter. Reading records collected from each classroom teacher on all K-2 students.</i>	<i>Student growth and achievement</i>	<i>To document improvements in literacy instruction and subsequent student growth and achievement</i>

Note. Italicized text is the Coordinators' description of evidence collected during the course.

Unless otherwise noted, qualitative responses are only included in this report if they are representative of a larger pattern of responses. In other words, the statements included are from one person, but they represent the opinions of multiple individuals.

Results

Objective One

Literacy Specialists demonstrated an increased ability to coach and facilitate classroom teachers' skill with teaching the literacy components of the chosen curriculum, particularly guided reading informed by reading records. Textual analysis of multiple sources and perspectives including the Coordinators' notes, literacy specialists' reflections, teacher survey data, as well as notes from a focus group interview with the Literacy Specialists conducted by an outside evaluator provided evidence suggesting that the Literacy Specialists grew as coaches in all components of the transformational coaching rubric. Themes that emerged in each component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric (Aguilar, 2013) are shown in Tables 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 along with support from the perspectives of the Coordinators, the Literacy Specialists, and classroom teachers.

Table 5 *Knowledge Base Component of the Transformational Rubric*

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
The LS understood and assumed the role of coach and facilitator of adult learners. This profound paradigm shift propelled the LS from teacher of students to teacher of teachers and from collaborator to coach.	<i>LS wearing a "coaching hat" as opposed to a "teaching hat" was noted in peer learning labs as LS focused on teacher learning, noting student learning, but more importantly, what teachers noticed about student learning.</i>	<i>"We've re-defined our roles this year; instead of being collaborative supporters, we've moved into the coaching goal with the outcome of improving teacher practice and impacting students."</i>	<i>"S sat in on some of my Guided Reading lessons and provided feedback and possible adjustments throughout."</i>
The LS increased knowledge of adult learning theory provided a foundation for coaching and facilitation.	<i>LS provided teachers autonomy in their learning; Teachers were given opportunities to express their learning needs and LS responded.</i>	<i>"I have designed and facilitated all day grade level PLC meetings with teachers and have used my knowledge of adult learning theory to increase teacher learning."</i>	<i>"J has been helpful with book clubs this year" This statement captures an instance of teachers exercising choice around which literacy component on which to work.</i>
The LS increased knowledge of coaching led to a greater variety of coaching approaches including skillful questioning, modeling, and building on successes and strengths.	<i>Coordinator noted LS "meets the teacher where she is - does not give her answers; asks good questions."</i>	<i>"I taught the teachers to ask questions and think ahead."</i>	<i>J often pops into my room and leaves me a little note of something I am doing well and either a question (guided question) or small suggestion/tweak to improve my teaching.</i>
The LS increased knowledge of coaching led to greater ability to ascertain teacher needs and strategic responsiveness to those needs.	<i>LS focused on why as well as how to use the literacy materials. Discussions with teachers, planning with teachers, all became opportunities for formative assessment of teacher learning needs.</i>	<i>"The teachers were going through the motions of the curriculum. They were using it, but they weren't digging in deep and really using it for what it can do."</i>	

Table 6 Relationships Component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
The LS consistently adopted a supportive and strengths-based stanced with teachers	<i>Coordinator notes use the words safe, positive, warm, and support to describe LS interacting with teachers. LS asks "What contributed to your success?"</i>	<i>"I always try to honor teachers' time by finding out what they already know before I design PD or start a coaching cycle."</i>	
Teachers began to reach out for support	<i>The coordinator noted that as relationships of trust developed, teachers reached out to LS more readily with concerns.</i>	<i>"I feel like there was a success in my coaching in this interaction before I even made contact with the teacher because it was the teacher who made the request for help!"</i>	<i>"I would like to see individual and group coaching continue."</i>

Table 7 Coaching Conversation Component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
The LS intentionally used a variety of strategies to support teacher learning	The coordinator scribed the following pieces of conversation: "I don't want to set a goal for you - you need to set a goal that is meaningful to you." "Where can I support you?" "What contributed to your success?"	<i>One of the more important things I learned this year was getting my client to reflect and speak first following my observation. I'd ask, "So how do you feel the lesson went?" ... Often, through her talking first, she would come to a solution, idea, or future modification to the perceived issue in her lesson.</i>	

Table 8 Strategic Design Component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
The LS incorporated a goal-oriented approach with teachers and for themselves	<i>The Coordinator noted that LS begin conversations by restating goals.</i>	<i>Goal for the week: fine-tune PD with K-w teachers</i>	

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
The LS maximized the use of existing structures and schedules to impact more teachers more often more effectively	<i>The Coordinators observed that LS impacted more teachers more often by facilitating grade-level PLC planning days, using coaching moves in ICAT meetings, creative scheduling of peer learning labs to avoid having subs.</i>	<i>I have started a group ICAT case with my coachee, so hopefully that will increase opportunity.</i>	

Table 9 Strategic Action Component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric

Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
LS maximized impact on K-2 teachers by coaching and facilitating teams of teachers rather than relying solely on one-on-one coaching. Peer learning labs were one structure for team learning.	<i>LS continually looked for opportunities to maximize impact on teachers. Peer learning labs allowed LS to facilitate the learning of one or more teams of teachers in a morning addressing data analysis, planning, teaching, and reflecting.</i>	<i>I've been able to conduct another learning lab with 1st grade.</i>	<i>The learning lab helped with Guided Reading.</i>
LS facilitated teachers' analysis and utilization of student data including reading records to plan responsive instruction.	<i>Coordinator noted that the LS demonstrates will not only in analyzing the reading record, but in the use of questions to help the teacher recognize possible teaching points.</i>	<i>During most of our coaching sessions we...looked at some type of student work. This was important as it guided our direction for future meetings.</i>	<i>Because of the training ...on using a students' ...reading record to direct [the] next teaching moves with that student or group, it made me more aware of how to move forward with the student/group.</i>
LS were strategic in their coaching and facilitation actions in response to teacher learning needs.	<i>Coordinator noted that where LS often chose effective actions initially, they became more intentional and strategic in those actions thinking about how different actions would impact teacher learning.</i>	<i>There is not a one size fits all approach. Every interaction whether it's whole staff, group, or individual needs to be right for the situation.</i>	

Table 10 *Coach as Learner Component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric*

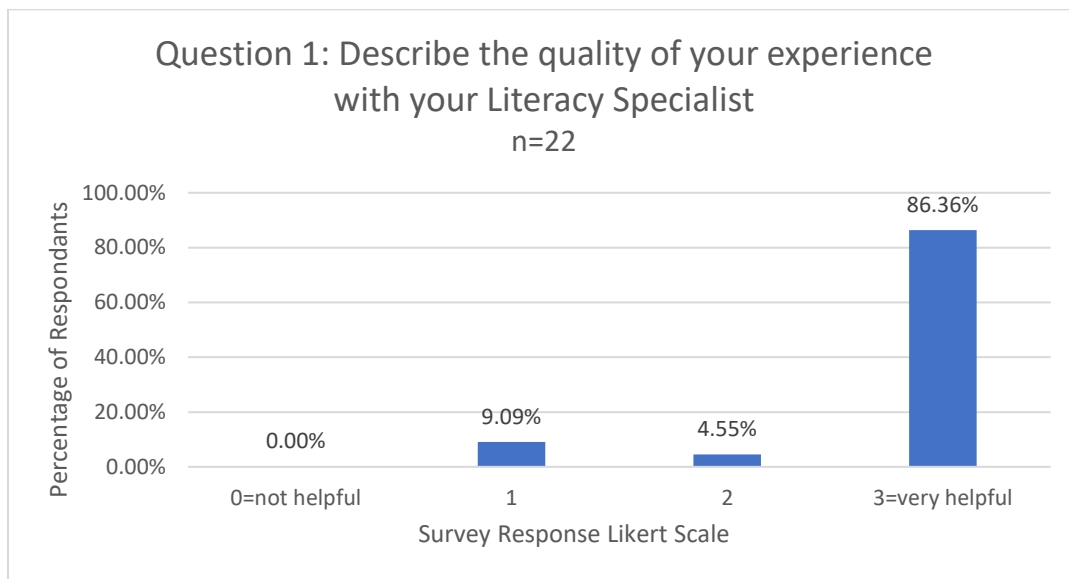
Theme	Source: NNRPDP Coordinators' Notes	Source: Literacy Specialists Reflections & Interviews	Source: Classroom Teacher Surveys
LS engaged in consistent and deliberate reflection on their coaching practice noting two related ideas - they have grown a great deal and there is so much more to learn.	<i>LS were open to and often asked NNRPDP for feedback and were open</i>	<i>The rubric was an excellent tool for me to use as a reflection piece at the end of this school year. I have learned so much through the work with NNRPDP, but I feel I'm just starting to put it together. I sincerely hope this work continues; though the work is challenging, it pushes me to grow.</i>	
LS consistently and purposefully collaborate with other coaches	<i>LS expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet weekly with other coaches.</i>	<i>I feel like my geocaching toolbox has expanded and that I have support! In the past, I felt like I was on an island by myself when it came to coaching. Now I feel like there is a team of people that are there for me to reach out to.</i>	

The Literacy Specialists completed a self-assessment using chosen components of the Transformational Coaching Rubric at the beginning of the intervention and again mid-year. The Literacy Specialists rated themselves on a scale of one to five with one indicating “beginning”, two indicating “emerging”, three indicating “developing”, four indicating “refining”, and five indicating “modeling.” In the two areas related to literacy -- guided reading and reading records - the Literacy Specialists rated themselves with scores of four (refining) and five (modeling). In the remaining skill, all related to coaching, Literacy Specialists’ self-assessment scores note growth in almost every area, rating themselves with beginning scores mostly ones and ending scores mostly threes, with frequent increases of two or more levels. The Coordinator observed Literacy Specialists growth across all components and skills with notable growth in the areas of strategic design and strategic action.

Objective Two

Classroom teachers demonstrated an increased ability to use the curricular materials with greater skill and professional judgment including guided reading and reading records as measured by a teacher survey and Literacy Specialists' observations. Twenty-two of thirty-seven teachers solicited completed the six-question survey as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 2 *Question One: Describe the quality of your experience with your Literacy Specialist*



Question Two

When you think about GUIDED READING or other FPC systems [district-selected curriculum], what is one thing you are doing differently as a result of either individual or group coaching with your Literacy Specialist?

Forty-two percent of teachers surveyed indicated that as a result of Literacy Specialists coaching, they are more intentional and responsive in their teaching including analysis of reading records, use of professional judgment, and purposeful planning. Other teachers indicated affective components of confidence and excitement.

Question Three

How do you think that change in your teaching practice around GUIDED READING or other FPC systems [district-selected curriculum] has/will impact student achievement?

Teacher responses included phonics, fluency, and comprehension as well as meaningful conversations, overall student achievement, and higher level thinking. Other responses addressed the affective component of student reading achievement including enjoyment of reading and comfort level with reading.

Question Four

When you think about analyzing and using READING RECORDS to inform your teaching, what is one thing you are doing differently as a result of either individual or group coaching with your Literacy Specialist?

Sixty-eight percent of participants indicated that, as a result of individual and/or group coaching with the literacy specialist, they are now intentionally analyzing reading records to inform teaching and respond to student needs. Increased collaboration was also mentioned as was frequency of collecting and using reading record data.

Question Five

How do you think that change in your teaching practice around the use of READING RECORDS has/will impact student achievement?

Eighty-six percent of teachers surveyed indicated confidence that the practice would promote student achievement, growth, and affective elements such as engagement and love of books.

Question Six

Do you have any recommendations to improve either the individual or group coaching you received from your Literacy Specialist?

Thirty-six percent of teachers surveyed provided recommendations to the literacy specialists including more support, modeling, more individual and group coaching, and more time.

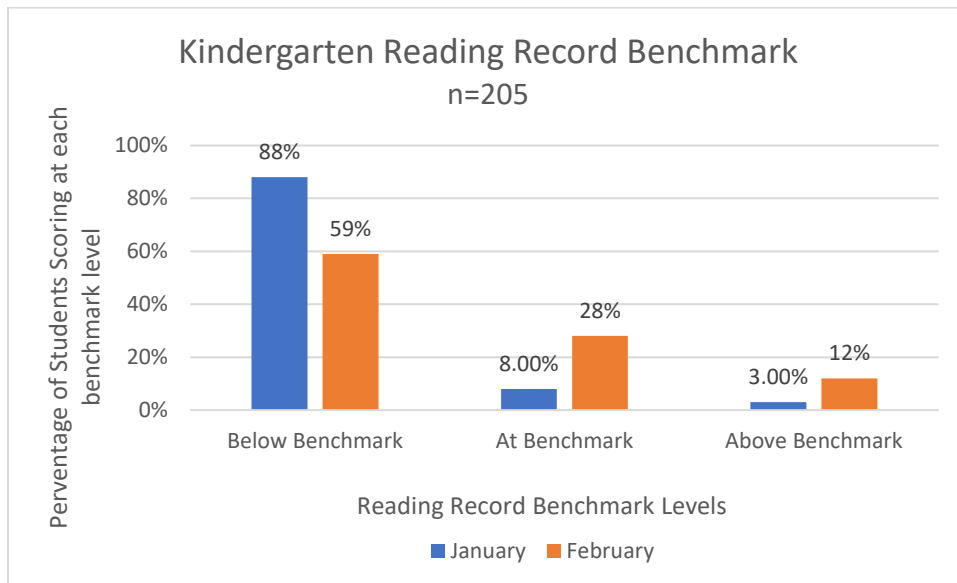
Literacy Specialists' Observations of Changes in Teacher Practices

When asked if they noticed changes in teacher practice as a result of coaching, the Literacy Specialists focus group noted that teachers “were starting to ask better questions” and that teachers “were being more reflective in their planning.”

Objective Three

Students will demonstrate increased growth and achievement in literacy. Teachers began collecting reading record data on kindergarten students in January. Figure 10 shows a comparison of January to February indicating that the number of kindergarten students below benchmark in January decreased significantly, the number at benchmark increased as did the number above benchmark.

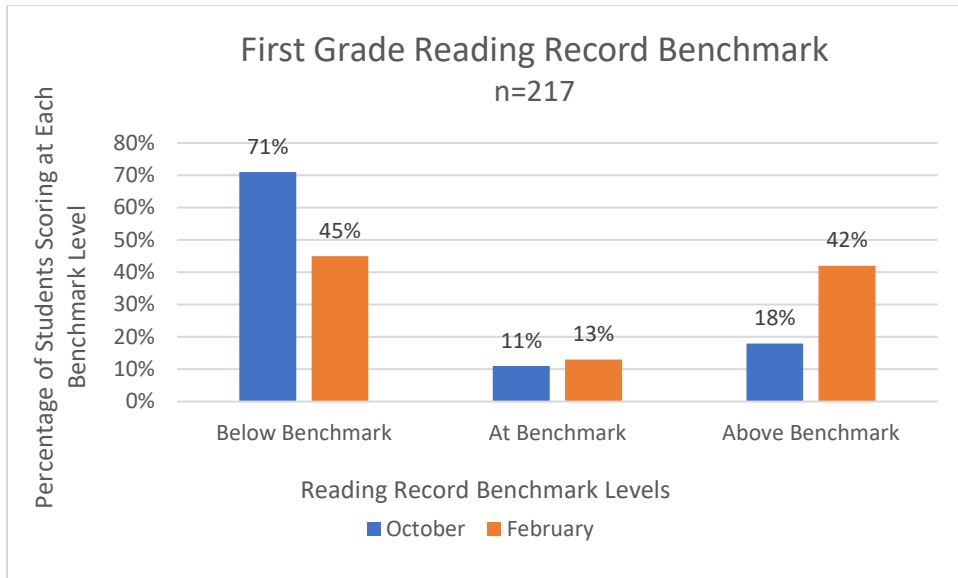
Figure 3 *Reading Record Data*



Note. Unmatched pairs were discarded.

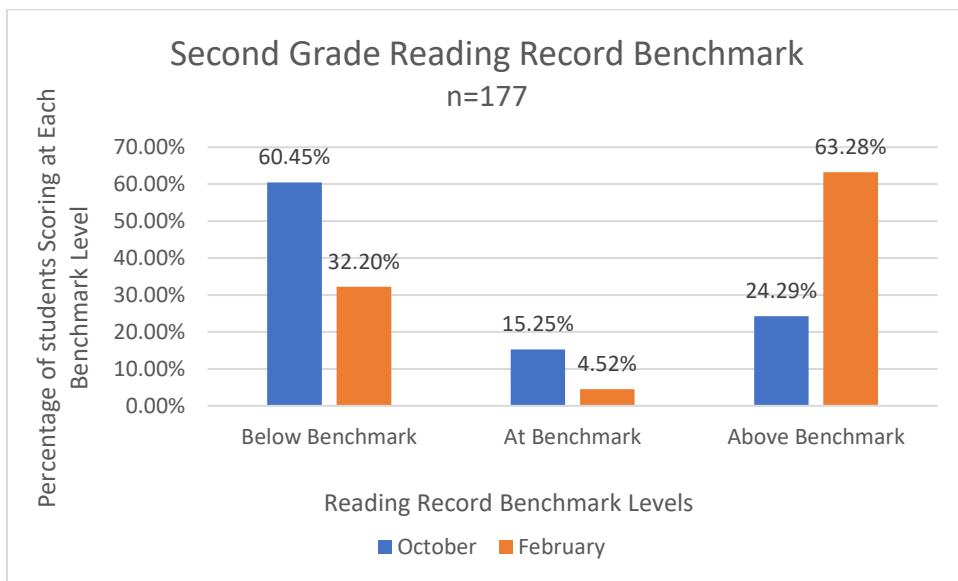
First grade reading record data collected in October and February shows a significant decrease in the number of students scoring below benchmark, a slight increase in the number at benchmark, and more than twice as many students above benchmark as noted in Figure 11.

Figure 4 *First Grade Reading Record*



Second grade reading record data shown in Figure 12 indicates that half as many students scored below benchmark in February, far fewer students scored at benchmark, and more than twice as many students scored above benchmark.

Figure 5: Second Grade Reading Record



MAP reading scores

MAP assessment data for first and second grades compare fall-to-winter scores as the global pandemic and resulting suspension of all statewide assessments by the Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction for the spring precluded the intended comparison between

fall, winter, and spring. Kindergarten scores are not included as the students only completed one MAP assessment in winter.

First grade MAP scores in Figure 13 show a fairly static percentage of students in each percentile band. The Coordinator originally intended to use MAP data from fall and spring extending the learning time between assessments. Negative growth on the winter MAP assessment can be due to a relatively short interim between fall and winter assessments.

Second grade MAP scores shown in Figure 14 remained static across percentile bands in fall and winter. The Coordinators originally intended to use MAP data from fall and spring extending the learning time between assessments. However, due to the global pandemic, spring MAP scores were unavailable.

Figure 6 *First Grade MAP Scores Fall to Winter 2019*

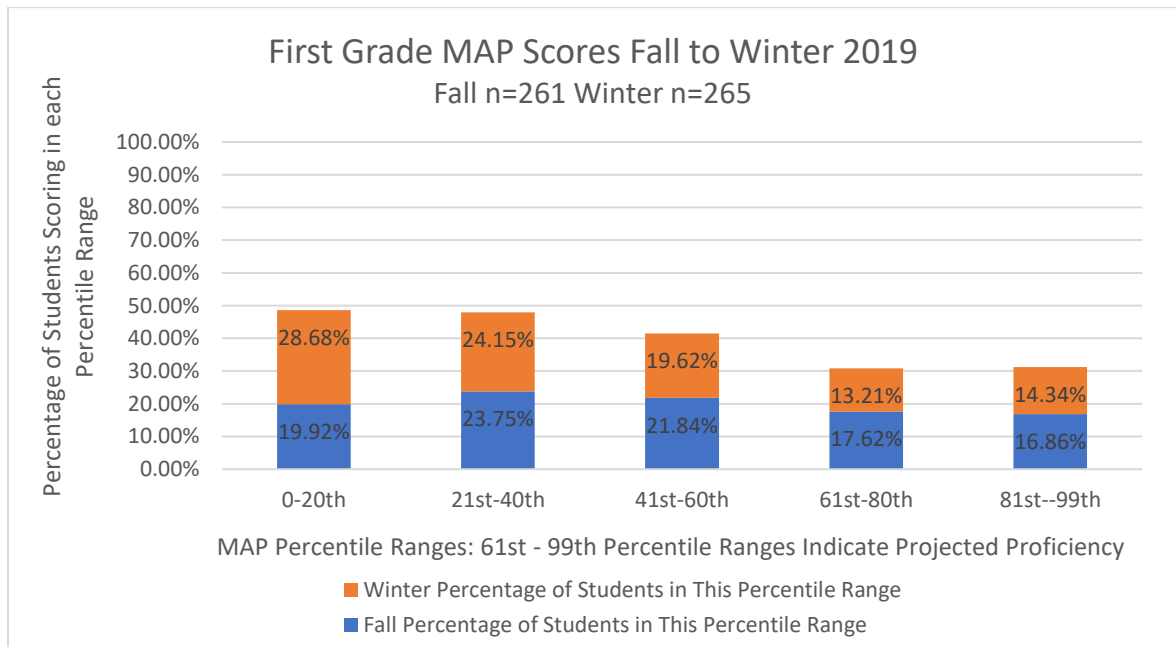
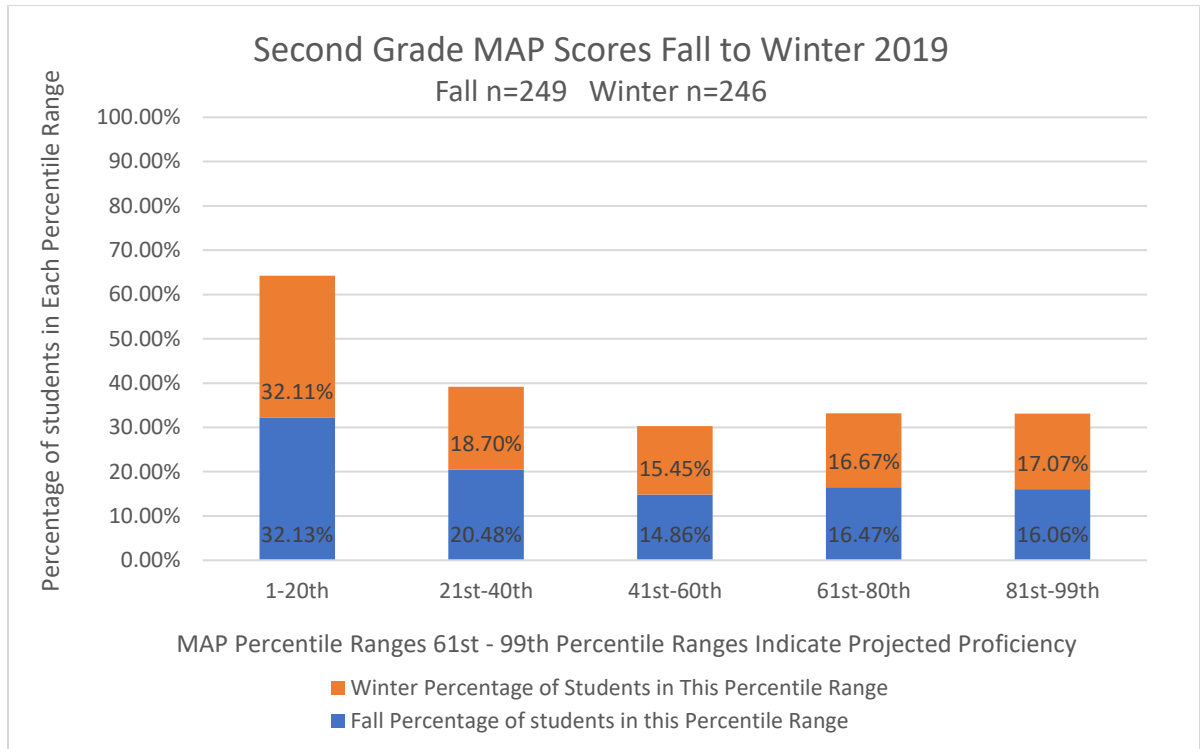


Figure 7 *Second Grade MAP Scores Fall to Winter 2019*



NNRPDP Evaluation Completed by Literacy Specialists

All three Literacy Specialists completed the NNRPDP Evaluation form (see Appendix B). On all eleven questions using a Likert-scale from one, not at all to five, to a great extent, all three Literacy Specialists rated the training with a five, to a great extent. Among the results, the Literacy Specialists indicated that the training matched their needs, provided opportunities for interactions and reflections, and that the [Coordinators'] experience and expertise enhanced the quality of the training.

All three Literacy Specialists responded to the open-ended questions with positive comments including:

[NNRPDP Coordinators] have been working with me pretty much the whole year around improving my skills as an ELA coach. I cannot say enough about the work that I have done with them this year. I have grown so much and especially in my coaching skills. They have helped me with one-on-one coaching, coaching and PD with small groups, and coaching and delivering PD to whole staff!! Because of the work that I have engaged with from Trenea and Ketra I have been able to more confidently engage teachers and staff in the area of ELA.

I've been attending professional development learning workshops/classes for the past twenty-six years and this experience through NNRPDP with Trenea and Ketra has been one

of the most beneficial professional development opportunities I've participated in as a teacher. I've grown in my ability and confidence to coach fellow colleagues while strengthening my relationships with the other literacy specialists in my district through the careful and thoughtful facilitation/leadership of Ketra and Treena. My hope is that we'll continue to be able to work together during the upcoming school year. The coaching I learned this year will support teachers which will then support student learning (NRPDP Evaluation Form).

Discussion

From an Evidence-Based Intervention (ESSA) standpoint, the intervention shows Promising Evidence at Tier Three.

Goal

There is substantial evidence that the overall goal of the intervention was met. Literacy Specialists were provided safe, non-judgmental opportunities to receive high-quality professional development related to coaching teachers to utilize curricular materials and components including guided reading informed by reading records.

Objective One

The intervention objective that Learning Specialists will demonstrate an increased ability to provide coaching for classroom teachers in utilization of components of the literacy materials including guided reading and reading records was achieved. Evidence suggests that the Literacy Specialists' knowledge and skill advanced in every component of the Transformational Coaching Rubric. While acknowledging notable growth, the Literacy Specialists themselves argue that there is a need for "coaching 2.0."

Objective Two

Evidence indicates that significant progress was made on objective two -- teachers increased their ability to exercise professional judgement and responsive teaching while utilizing the district curriculum. Many teachers attested to their growing ability and confidence to analyze reading data and use formative data to inform responsive instruction. Some expressed appreciation for the Literacy Specialist and attributed their growth to the work the Literacy Specialists did to help them improve.

Objective Three

Evidence from reading records benchmarks suggests that progress was made on objective three --student growth and achievement in reading. Data from reading records shows positive statistical significance in all three targeted grade levels -- kindergarten, first, and second. MAP score evidence did not show student achievement or growth in alignment with the third objective; however, it is unknown if this finding can be considered reliable as students did not complete the third assessment in the spring due to the global pandemic.

The intervention was successful overall with a positive impact on Literacy Specialists' ability to coach and facilitate teachers' learning, on classroom teachers' ability to utilize the literacy materials provided by the district while responding to student learning needs, and on student literacy growth and achievement.

Conclusion

Coaching is a professional learning model that, particularly in concert with other effective structures such as PLC and peer learning labs, is clearly promising (Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018). However, many teachers are hired as coaches with no clear path for acquiring the andragogical skills, strategies, and dispositions that will make them successful. The intervention implemented by NNRPDP Coordinators was intended to chart a path to support Literacy Specialists in Humboldt County School District to gain knowledge of coaching and facilitating adult learners and to apply new knowledge in authentic settings. The premise of the intervention was that gaining and applying these skills combined with broad literacy knowledge and experience, Literacy Specialists would impact all K-2 classroom teachers at their school site to be better equipped to utilize curricular materials in literacy with professional skill and judgment and that student achievement and growth would increase.

Evaluation of the first year of implementation of support for Literacy Specialists suggests positive implications for Literacy Specialists, for classroom teachers, and for students. The positive trends noted in this report suggest that continued implementation would positively affect students. As Literacy Specialists continue to develop and refine coaching and facilitation abilities, they will impact teachers' continued improvement in practice, thus leading to an increase in students' reading growth and achievement.

While the basic structures of this intervention could be replicated with success in other settings -- monthly coaching institutes, weekly PLCs, and just-in-time coaching support, a critical theme of the work was the idea of reciprocal responsive teaching and learning. Coordinators were responsive to the learning needs, interests, and goals of the Literacy Specialists. Literacy Specialists were responsive to the learning needs, interests, and goals of classroom teachers. And classroom teachers were responsive to the learning needs, interests, and goals of students. These needs, interests, and goals, must be ascertained and plans negotiated to work within existing school structures and contexts.

A large part of year one of this intervention included breaking through barriers in attitudes toward coaching. In the education profession, coaches have often been assigned to ineffective, struggling, or new teachers or even as a means of documenting poor performance in order to remove a teacher. Shifting toward the belief that everyone can benefit from coaching, carefully creating cultures of coaching and of improved practice, is not achieved overnight and the work, as Literacy Specialists and teachers alike noted, was in the initial stage. Thus, continued momentum in the intended direction is necessary to further evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Should the intervention continue next school year, it would likely be necessary to consider ways to support the work of Literacy Specialists, classroom teachers, and students in online, blended, and face-to-face settings with a plan for smooth transitions. Because of the global pandemic, the intervention was cut short and the ways in which NNRPDP provides professional learning for educators and the ways educators provide instruction for students will likely change significantly in the upcoming school year. Modifications may be needed particularly in the delivery of the implementation since much of the work took place in face-to-face settings. For instance, coaching institutes may need to move to a virtual platform.

If time and other resources allow, a next step, which would facilitate evaluation at a higher level, could include tracking the progress of classroom teachers who work closely with the Literacy Specialists opposed to a control group, possibly in a similar district or school, who do not receive this targeted coaching support. The intervention could also be tried in a content area other than literacy to determine whether the intervention is transferable in that way.

It is the hope of the Coordinators that the intervention continues into year two and beyond in order to maintain the momentum achieved in year one. Year two could build on current foundations already in place: first, Literacy Specialists' increasing ability to coach and facilitate the effective professional practice of classroom teachers; second, with individual and team coaching structures in place at school; and third, a growing culture of accepting and embracing coaching as individuals and teams. Thus, continuing the intervention into year two would include the benefits of additional time, experience and professional learning that would further increase the positive impact on K-2 teachers and students.

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