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Peer Coaching: A Supplement to Administrative Evaluation

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PEER COACHING: A SUPPLEMENT TO
ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION

A Field Project

Presented to the

Department of Educational Administration and Supervision

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Specialist in Education,
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The presence of high quality instructional skills in classrooms is a primary goal for school systems. Too often this goal is addressed in a hit-and-miss way by administrators who either don't have the time or don't possess the skills to help teachers maintain or acquire quality teaching skills. Some research has been done in the area of peer coaching as a means to specifically target the area of improved teaching skills, but few studies have been documented to see actual results of this type of program.

In the last decade society seems to be more concerned than ever about how well the schools are preparing students--especially with the increasing presence of foreign influence on trade and industry. More so than before, schools are asked to be accountable for what is taught and how it is taught. Curriculums are being expanded to include more things deemed necessary to adequately prepare our students for today's society. Administrators have increased responsibilities as schools assume more duties and roles once attributed to parents. There seems to be less time for administrators and teachers to focus on instructional skills on their own. There is less time also for specific training in this area because of all the other demands that need that

time. Yet school personnel must not lose sight of the main purpose of schools.

Peer coaching is a way to focus on the maintenance and improvement of quality instructional skills. It offers teachers a way to receive direct, non-judgmental feedback from peers more frequently than they can receive feedback from an administrator. It allows teachers to analyze a colleague's teaching while strengthening their ability to assess their own instructional skills. It permits colleagues to view another's repertoire of teaching techniques to hopefully augment their own. It deals directly with the aspect of instructional skills and doesn't need to be concerned with other parts of the teaching structure like peer relationships, professionalism, and extracurricular involvement. It is not offered as a replacement for administrative evaluations, but as a supplement to them.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of peer coaching using volunteer teachers in math, English, and reading and to determine if the use of peer coaching positively affected a teacher's use of active participation throughout a lesson.

Delimitations

Members of the math, English, and reading departments of Millard Central Junior High were used in

this study. All received inservice training for the study and all served as peer coaches. The time frame for the study was the second semester of the 1987-1988 school year. The program began in January and concluded in May. There were only two persons outside of the school involved with the study-- Fran Mayeski and Linda Dawson. Their role was to analyze pre and post-tapes of the eight participants and to code them for absence or presence of active participation in teachers' lessons.

Limitations

Conclusions for the study are only applicable to Millard Central Junior High from January, 1988, through May, 1988. It was a volunteer sample of teachers from three departments. There was not a control group to measure the change in participants who had gone through the training but were not peer coached. There also was no measurement of how participants might have changed without any inservice training.

Hypothesis

Teachers who receive peer coaching will maintain or improve instructional skills in the area of active participation after peer coaching has taken place.

Assumptions

Use of classroom active participation is observable and can be measured. The use of scripting as an anecdotal record is an appropriate instrument to measure

use of active participation. Information presented to participants about active participation, peer coaching, and clinical supervision is an adequate basis to implement the study.

Methodology

In early January, the researcher met with interested teachers to briefly explain the study and the concept of peer coaching. After securing their willingness to volunteer, the researcher scheduled a brief meeting with the volunteers to explain the structure and the time line of the peer coaching program. Each of the eight volunteers did a pre-tape between mid-January and mid-February. Following the pre-taping the volunteers received an inservice about peer coaching which lasted approximately an hour. This portion of the program developed comprehension of the peer coaching process and served as a means to share research about it. Following that was an inservice on active participation. This was not a repeat of an earlier inservice given to all teachers, but a more in-depth one. The next two inservices were on scripting, analyzing data, and pre and post-conferencing. This portion of the inservice lasted between 2 and 2-1/2 hours so it was given on successive weeks. The participants practiced scripting, analyzing data, and conferencing with tapes before actually implementing the skills with their peer coach.

Each volunteer was asked to do two observations of his/her peer coach. The first observation took place in early to mid-March, and the second in April. Pre and post-conferences occurred with each of the four observations. A post-taping of all volunteers was scheduled in mid-April to early May.

Both sets of tapes were analyzed for active participation by Fran Mayeski and Linda Dawson. They coded the tapes using a set criteria sheet (Appendix A). The coding criteria was the same for both pre and post-tapes to measure any growth in instructional skills. Both Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson coded the first 20-30 minutes of the tapes for uses of active participation.

After receiving the coding sheets from Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson, the researcher begin analyzing the information to tabulate results. The individual columns were scored separately based on the four parts of active participation:

1. a match of a covert behavior to an overt behavior;
2. involvement of as many students as possible in the learning;
3. allowing at least three seconds of wait time before asking for a response;
4. the covert and overt behaviors have a one-to-one match to the objective.

Each of the four scores were added to give a total score ranging from 0 to 40.

The system of assigning points for each column was done on both the pre and post-tapes. Those points were used in a Wilcoxon test for two matched samples to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two times the teachers were taped or if the differences between the two times would have shown up because of random variation.

The participants in the study had access to the coding done by Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson. The pre and post-tapes were also available for teachers to review if desired.

Funds from the Millard Foundation in the form of a mini-grant of \$387.00 were used to help with the study. Each of the two outside individuals who coded the tapes received \$160.00 and the remaining funds were be used to purchase tapes and pay for other incidental expenses. The grant was received in May, 1988. A report of this study was presented to the Millard Foundation Board of Directors in the summer of 1988.

The eight volunteers were able to use this experience as one of the indicators for merit pay for the 1987-1988 school year because they would have participated in a building pilot. If the Millard School District incorporates peer coaching as a district-wide

project in the future, these people, along with this study, could play a significant part in the planning and implementing of some peer coaching strategies. There was no substitute money available for any release time for teachers to either attend input sessions or to observe and conference. That had to be done on their own time. The researcher was available to teach a class to give participants more time for observing and conferencing.

Definition of Terms

Peer Coaching. Also called peer review, peer evaluation, peer supervision, peer observation, or peer visitation -- the process of observing a colleague, noting teaching in some manner, then giving specific feedback to that person to help improve instruction.

Instructional Skills. Those teaching techniques used by a teacher in a classroom setting during a teaching episode.

Clinical Supervision. A method of supervising instruction which is formative in nature that has four parts: (a) pre-conference, (b) observation of a teaching episode, (c) analyzing the data collected in the observation, and (d) post-conference where specific feedback is given. The data are collected by scripting the teaching episode.

Scripting. A verbatim account of a teaching episode

noting both teacher and student participation.

Formative Evaluation. Specific feedback given to a teacher after the observation of a teaching episode for the purpose of improving instruction. It helps teachers maintain and improve skills.

Summative Evaluation. A judgment about a person's instructional skills which is usually used for the purpose of retention or dismissal. Little opportunity is provided for growth of instructional skills.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Research and Literature

Peer Coaching Defined

The process of observing a colleague, noting teaching techniques, then giving specific feedback to that person to help improve instruction, is known by a variety of names which are all synonymous: peer coaching, peer evaluation, peer supervision, peer review, peer observation, and peer visitation. Throughout this paper the process may be referred to by any of these titles, all indicating the same idea mentioned earlier. "Peer Review is a process in which teachers help colleagues establish instructional improvement goals and then provide valuable classroom feedback on progress towards those goals" (Elliott & Chidley, 1985, p. 102). Darling-Hammond stated:

Peer review, broadly defined, includes the various means by which professionals determine the content and structure of their work as well as the qualifications necessary for individuals to claim membership in their profession. It includes peer control over decisions that define acceptable practice as well as peer assessment of individual practitioners. (1986, p. 4)

Thompson (1979, p. 8) quoted Gray (1977, p. 4) when he said:

The essence of peer supervision in its present context is that the process is an adjunct to a broad-based program for instructional improvement, and that a part of the program be carried out by strictly teachers in a formal and clinical fashion. The function of the peer supervision model is to 'supplement the supervisory and evaluative practices currently carried on, not to supplant them.'

Rationale for Peer Coaching

One of the major responsibilities of a school administrator is evaluating teachers. Unfortunately, the purpose of these evaluations seems to be more for retention or dismissal decisions rather than instructional improvement. The literature indicated that administrative evaluations were not as effective as peer coaching to help improve instruction for three reasons: 1) the quality and quantity of observations, 2) the judgmental or summative aspect, and 3) the lack of collegiality.

Quality and Quantity

Darling-Hammond (1986) said that in the wake of state and federal concern over the quality of education, many districts are requiring more observations by administrators based on a fairly standard list of quality teacher behaviors. In general these types of evaluations don't do much to help improve instruction. They are

geared to what is acceptable and what is not with little room left for teaching ways to change the unacceptable types of behaviors. Increasing the number of evaluations won't increase instructional improvement according to Darling-Hammond. Schools are being scrutinized more closely than in past decades so they are less likely to give some of the evaluation responsibilities to non-administrators. Because of a myriad of duties, a principal may be in a teacher's classroom once a year which offers little feedback for continued growth (Darling-Hammond, 1986; Edwards, 1986; Elliott & Chidley, 1985; Grossnickle & Cutter, 1984; Joyce & Showers, 1982). The lack of knowledge of a particular subject matter may hinder this growth process, too, because specific suggestions can't be offered. If suggestions are given, subsequent observation with feedback is unlikely to occur because of time restraints.

Why are administrative observations alone not able to accomplish the goal of instructional improvement?

Grossnickle and Cutter (1984) listed four possible reasons:

1. Administrators may not possess the skills needed to observe, give feedback, and prescribe improvement techniques.
2. Administrators observe a minute portion of a teaching year during required evaluation times.
3. Because administrator observations are part of a summative evaluation, some teachers feel apprehensive and

therefore "put on a show" to gain a favorable evaluation.

4. Inexperienced administrators are at a particular disadvantage because of lack of skills developed to help teachers grow professionally.

They further quoted Hansen (1984, p. 57) who said administrators evaluate teachers for eight main reasons:

1. Improving teacher performance and behavior
2. Improving school and classroom climate
3. Enhancing student learning
4. Maximizing professional capabilities
5. Assessing innovation and curricular

implementation

6. Qualifying program and instructional programs
7. Implementing accountability
8. Determining retention and dismissal

Grossnickle and Cutter didn't feel administrators alone could accomplish all these goals. They felt using department chairpersons if a school has them and/or colleagues would fulfill these goals better than administrators alone.

So often teacher evaluations are used primarily as a means of determining who will be rehired for the next year rather than a way to improve instruction. Generally only two percent of teachers aren't competent according to a study conducted in the Orange County, Virginia, Public Schools from 1980 to 1985. The focus needs to be

on the 98% of competent teachers "to document and reinforce what teachers were doing right -- their effective teaching skills" (Edwards, 1986, p. 3). The lack of time prevents that reinforcement from happening as often as it should.

Grossnickle and Cutter stated:

All too often teacher evaluation is a hurried process that accomplishes little toward improving instruction. If the intent is to accomplish both summative evaluation and instructional improvement, new methods such as those using colleagues as evaluators -- should be explored and implemented.

(1984, p. 56)

Non-threatening

Barnett (1983) and Ferren and Geller (1983) stated that in order for teachers to improve their skills in the classroom they 1) must want to get better, 2) have specific areas targeted for improvement, and 3) have the backing of a knowledgeable source to assist them. By using peer coaching teachers are allowed to see a variety of techniques and methods used by colleagues while the support is provided by their peers and usually their supervisors. Because this is a non-judgmental type of feedback, i.e., one that will not affect a year-end evaluation to determine continued employment, peer coaching affords teachers a more objective type of

feedback. They can truly focus on specific areas without the pressure of wondering whether their teaching will measure up to set standards. Barnett felt, "teachers, constantly aware of the evaluation process, view the supervisor's role with anxiety and suspicion" (p. 30).

Collegiality

Peer feedback is viewed as more credible than an administrator's feedback. The communication between peers can be more open, honest, and direct because a peer has no say in the other person's continued employment. The peer feedback should be formative in nature while the administrator's would be more summative.

The administration of the Paradise Valley School District in Phoenix, Arizona, felt that both teachers and administrators should be involved in the evaluation process. Peers should focus on instructional aspects of teachers' performance and the administrator should look at things like professional involvement, following curriculum guidelines, and professionalism (Christen & Murphy, 1987). Those aspects of evaluation taken together would be geared to instructional improvement for teachers.

A question of self-assessment can be raised as another means for instructional improvement (Barnett, 1983). Teachers would videotape themselves, then use a prescribed analysis instrument to dissect their teaching. A main drawback to this type of system is the limited

resources and objectivity available to those teachers. By using a peer(s), a more objective analysis can be obtained while providing persons observed with more variety in responses to their teaching efforts. Barnett also felt that when a non-judgmental type of feedback is used, teachers will feel less likely to tailor their teaching styles to fit what they perceive the supervisor wants to see. "Because this observation system accepts individual modes of teaching, teachers may improve within their own styles" (p. 31).

Peer coaching is also effective because it enables teachers to share ideas about teaching which helps improve instruction. A greater sense of collegiality would be established with this method because teachers would be encouraged to try out each other's ideas (Elliott & Chidley, 1985; Grossnickel & Cutter, 1984; Smyth, 1984; Thompson, 1979).

Implementation of Peer Coaching

Much of the research indicated that in order to have effective peer coaching, six main steps needed to be followed: 1) Information about the process and about effective instruction needed to be presented, 2) participants would practice the coaching skills using videotapes, 3) a pre-conference was arranged, 4) the observation with data collection took place, 5) the classroom data were analyzed and 6) a post-

conference with follow up was scheduled (Barnett, 1983; Edwards, 1986; Elliott & Chidley, 1985; Joyce & Showers, 1982; Smyth, 1984).

Training and Practice

Before peer coaching can take place, the teachers involved must have a theoretical background of a model of instruction. Effective teaching is identified or defined so teachers have a parameter within which to work. A common vocabulary can also be established in order to facilitate feedback. After this is established, peer coaches can be given training in data collection, analyzing the data, and giving feedback. Videotapes can then be used to practice these three skills so teachers can successfully employ the process when they begin observing in a classroom. If peers are used, providing little or no training in the instructional improvement process will do nothing to change the existing problems of evaluation. The person being observed must have some confidence in the observer's knowledge before he/she will feel this information is of any use. The person who is observing and giving feedback must be knowledgeable about good teaching and feedback if strategies are to be useful (Darling-Hammond, 1986; Lempeis, 1984).

Sometime prior to the observations, peer coaching teams need to be established. Several writers felt the teachers involved should be able to choose their own

partner/team. This generally is a person in a related field or one with whom they feel comfortable. This allows teachers to extend a repertoire of skills without a fear of judgment being involved. (Barnett, 1983; Ferren and Geller, 1983; Mikula, 1979; Smyth, 1984).

Pre-Conference

The peer coaching team meets during a pre-observation conference to discuss the objective(s) to be targeted. The team then decides what to look for in the teaching and ways to determine if the objective(s) is met. A suggestion by Mikula (1979) was that teachers choose a skill they already feel comfortable with at first to ease the awkwardness of the process the first time it is put into practice.

Observation

The observer then analyzes a teaching episode looking only for data that will meet the chosen objective of the observed teacher. This is often done by scripting which is a verbatim anecdotal record of the class proceedings. It is fairly easy to maintain objectivity when recording data if this process is used. The observer can consult the script taken during the lesson to pinpoint ways the teacher met the stated objective rather than trying to remember what was said or just given an opinion of the lesson (Barnett, 1983; Smyth,

1984; Thompson, 1979). Mikula (1979) also suggested that an observer be a nonparticipant during the class session. Being as unobtrusive as possible also helps maintain objectivity in the data collection. He said four to seven observations per semester will help achieve maximum instructional effectiveness. Thompson (1979) agreed with Mikula stating several observations are needed for the process to be effective, but he didn't specify how many.

Videotaping a lesson, then having the team view it together for analyzing and providing feedback is another option (Lichty and Peterson, 1979). A person's strong and weak points may be more easily isolated and either duplicated or corrected in this manner. They offered this as an alternative to actual classroom visits as a way to objectively view a teaching episode.

Analyzing Data and Post-Conference

After data is collected and analyzed, the two people have a post-observation conference as soon after the observation as possible. Both people discuss the lesson in terms of what was observed and what the teacher thought he/she was doing to accomplish the objective. The two people discuss whether they thought the objective was met, then they determine when the next observation cycle will be. At this point, the original trainer in the process becomes a type of coach who gives the peer coaching teams feedback about their conference and

observation/scripting skills (Edwards, 1986). This feedback enables the team not only to perfect their coaching skills, but helps each member to recognize good teaching skills that were observed in others so they can be adapted to his/her own classroom (Joyce & Showers, 1982).

Advantages of Using Peer Coaching

The literature about peer coaching overwhelmingly stressed the advantages of using it as a supplement to administrative evaluations. Joyce and Showers (1982) felt the coaching process addressed five main areas:

1. Companionship - building in camaraderie which is so often lacking in the teaching profession because teachers become isolated in their individual classrooms.

2. Giving feedback - on the absence or presence of skills to be practiced.

3. Application of the skill - how and when to use a newly acquired skill can be difficult to decide. Peers help in that decision making.

4. Adapting to students - students' reaction and adaptation to a new skill taught are important.

Sometimes the teacher is so intent on implementing the new skill appropriately and correctly, it is difficult to assess student reaction at the same time. A peer can provide feedback about student reaction.

5. Successful implementation - offering feedback

and support especially in the beginning stage of implementing a new skill is helpful to teachers.

In a peer review program established at Prospect High School, Mt. Prospect, Illinois, in 1983 which lasted during that school year, teachers were allowed to include the reports made by peers in their year-end evaluation. All but one participant chose to use that information. "Many teachers believed that they had improved their own instruction because of what they had learned in viewing a colleague's classroom methods" (Elliott & Chidley, 1985, p. 105).

A peer coaching project was started at the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF). The participants chose their partner(s) and all had the desire to improve instruction and/or extend their repertoire of teaching techniques. The people participating in the project were pleased with the results. They were impressed with the abilities of their colleagues, they felt they learned a great deal from their observations, and they concluded that collecting nonjudgmental data was not easy to do. All participants felt they were becoming better classroom teachers because of the peer observations. It was time consuming, but worthwhile, not only from the standpoint of improved instruction, but a greater sense of collegiality was fostered. These observations were not used as part of

the criteria to determine tenure or promotion (Ferren & Geller, 1983).

In order for instructional improvement to take place, a teacher must feel a need to change or grow. Peer coaching can help foster improved instruction while also increasing a person's self concept and allowing a person the chance to observe a variety of teaching techniques in practice. This formative type of evaluation is viewed as less threatening because peers are observers, not an administrator or supervisor (Singh, 1984). "By carefully providing descriptive, non-evaluative feedback and by encouraging teacher self-analysis based on objective data, the system soon loses any taint of evaluation and becomes a useful provocative growth experience" (Barnett, 1983, p. 32).

Disadvantages of Using Peer Coaching

Time Commitment

There are some drawbacks to a peer coaching program, the main one being the time commitment necessary to make the program effective (Grossnickel & Cutter, 1984; Lempeisis, 1984; McIntyre, 1978; Mikula, 1979; Thompson, 1979). The responsibilities of a classroom teacher along with the responsibilities of the person used to train the peer coaching teams are many. Finding the time to do initial training and practicing, then scheduling pre and post-conferences plus observation time

having administrators evaluate teachers in a pre-college setting. She felt college teachers observed by peers would either "put on a show" or do a less effective job of teaching because of tension felt. Levine also felt that the observer might be biased because of sex, personality, or teaching style differences. She felt too, that some observers would be less critical than others, so their evaluations of peers would be more favorable than these who were harsher judges. It seemed as if there was a very subjective set of criteria used in this college setting which would help account for the discrepancy in the ratings of these college professors.

When peers evaluate each other in a college setting, McIntyre (1978) saw two other drawbacks to using peer coaching beside the time commitment. If colleagues are using peer evaluations as a part of a teacher's total evaluation process for tenure or dismissal, can the sense of a non-threatening, collegial atmosphere remain? He also wondered if peers can effectively evaluate each other if their knowledge of another's subject matter is limited.

Lichty and Peterson (1979) concurred with the first reason stated by McIntyre plus they felt a colleague in a classroom observing the teaching could be seen as "disruptive". It was also thought that when a teacher is observed several times by a peer, the peer evaluator may

compare the visits to each other rather than viewing each classroom visit separately. They also questioned the data collection system used as not being especially objective. It seemed that a formal type of data collection like scripting was not established.

Mikula (1979) did feel that peer observation should be used for university teachers, but it should not include evaluation. It should be used strictly for the purpose of improving instruction. He didn't feel that observation combined with evaluation did much to better a person's teaching. Frequently, a peer who is a friend of someone being evaluated is very hesitant to say anything negative so their evaluation won't be an objective measure of the other's capabilities. He further said that some individuals may feel peer observations were an invasion of privacy and that professors wouldn't trust others who were observing them if there was an evaluation aspect tied up in that observation.

Conclusions

As the requirements for entering the teaching profession are increased, we will see fewer people wanting to be teachers. Therefore, the focus must be on those people already in the profession to assure and maintain excellence (Edwards, 1986). Administrators will need to be concerned with continuing to motivate and challenge experienced teachers and to help them maintain

job satisfaction. Peer coaching may be one way to address both issues (Elliott & Chidley, 1985).

Measuring the effects of peer coaching is difficult. Student achievement may be one indicator. The new skills learned or the improvement of weak ones is another indicator. A personal feeling of being more effective can be used (Mikula, 1979). Until more research has been done and programs established and evaluated, it won't be known whether this idea of peer coaching can work extensively with teachers or teacher candidates (Thompson, 1979).

There are some things to keep in mind when using peer coaching:

1. Participants must be able to choose their own goals and how they wish to attain them.
2. The district must support the program.
3. Some release time needs to be granted for pre-training and actual observations to adequately carry out the plan.
4. It is formative, not summative.
5. There is some time allocated for sharing of thoughts, feelings, ideas.

The research did not say that peer coaching should supplant the administrative evaluation, but should supplement it. One of the biggest advantages of using peer coaching is the formative, non-threatening aspect of

it. There needs to be some summative process used to terminate those teachers whose teaching skills are inferior and whose efforts to change have not produced desired results. The administrative evaluation can be used partially as the vehicle for this process, and partially as a way of helping improve instruction for those teachers who are competent. The use of peer coaching should aid administrators in the improvement process. The literature overwhelmingly indicated that peer coaching is a valuable tool to aid instructional improvement.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

To implement the study of the effects of peer coaching, the researcher used volunteers from Millard Central Junior High School. It was judged that the mind set of volunteers would be more open and positive toward peer coaching than that of randomly selected individuals. On January 14, 1988, a memo was sent to all teachers proposing the idea, and scheduling an informational meeting for January 18, 1988, (Appendix B). At that informational meeting, 14 people expressed an initial interest in finding out more about the concept of peer coaching and the time commitment involved. Each interested person was given a time line and breakdown of time commitments for the study (Appendix C). Of those original 14 people who expressed an interest, 11 committed themselves to work with peer coaching. About two weeks into the study, 3 of the 11 decided not to participate because of personal reasons. That left eight volunteers who selected a peer to coach them. Some chose a partner from their same teaching field; others chose someone outside of their field. Each of the eight volunteers was then given a schedule of when the four inservices would meet (Appendix D). Each inservice was scheduled twice per week to make it easier for the participants to fit these meetings into their schedules.

A few individual sessions had to be set up for people who were unable to attend either session.

A description of the eight volunteers is as follows:

Teacher A: A male 8th-grade English teacher who has taught for 17 years. He had a desire to continue to improve his teaching skills in the area of active participation and peer coaching because his department head title requires him to observe and give feedback to all department members throughout the year. His education level is BA + 36 hours.

Teacher B: A female 8th-grade math teacher who has taught for 11 years. She has worked extensively with cooperative learning in her classroom and desired to exchange ideas with another math teacher also using cooperative learning to extend active participation through that avenue. Her education level is MA + 9 hours.

Teacher C: A female 8th-grade English teacher who has taught for 8 years. She has targeted active participation as an area that needs extending in her teaching and felt observation of, plus feedback and ideas from a fellow English teacher would help in that area. Her education level is BA + 18 hours.

Teacher D: A female 8th-grade reading teacher who has taught for 15 years. Because she works with many low skilled readers, she was looking for ways to involve

those students who frequently are unmotivated and reluctant to get involved in the learning. She has a Doctorate Degree. She was paired with Teacher A.

Teacher E: A female 7th-grade reading and English teacher who has taught for nine years. She also had a desire to improve uses of active participation in her classroom along with extending ways to constructively involve a group of students who frequently displayed immature and inappropriate behaviors. She has a Master's Degree.

Teacher F: A female 7th-grade math teacher who has taught for six years. She, too, worked frequently with cooperative learning in her classroom and was paired with Teacher B. She wanted to extend and improve active participation through cooperative learning. She has a BS Degree + 31 hours.

Teacher G: A female 7th-grade English and social studies teacher who has taught for 7 years. She was seeking ways to increase students' involvement and input into the learning and decrease her vocalizing throughout a lesson. Her education level is BA + 30. She and Teacher C were partners.

Teacher H: A female 7th-grade reading teacher who has taught for 12 years. Paired with Teacher E, she was also looking for ways to increase active participation as a means to decrease immature and inappropriate behaviors

from her students. She has a Master's Degree + 6 hours.

All pre-taping was scheduled prior to the inservice on active participation on February 3 and February 5. The participants stated their objective(s) for the lesson, the student activities, and teacher activities to achieve the objective. The entire 50 minute lesson was taped by either the media specialist or the researcher. Most of the participants also viewed their own tapes after the lesson was taught.

For the first input on background of peer coaching, participants were given some history and reasons for the evolution of peer coaching. The main points can be summarized as follows:

1. It offers a way to receive feedback on ideas from inservices or classes.
2. Administrators don't have adequate time to give feedback to teachers about instructional skills.
3. It offers a way to have follow-up on staff development ideas.
4. Teachers frequently have more expertise in a particular field than administrators, and they usually can observe fellow teachers more often than an administrator.

Peer coaching and peer analysis were then defined to clarify any misperceptions about the meaning of the two ideas. Following that were some prerequisites for effective implementation (Appendix E). Peer analysis and

peer coaching were explained in greater depth with the sub-phases of each explored (Appendix F). During this part of the input, some of the participants felt they might be uncomfortable with the actual coaching part at first. It was agreed that if they wanted to just do the analysis or do the analysis for the first observation and feedback and then do actual coaching for the second one, that would be acceptable. Some were uncertain of how difficult the coaching part would be to implement until they actually did it.

The final portion of the first input on peer coaching was about the benefits gained from peer coaching. At this point the teachers appeared excited about the program and eager to begin the process.

The second input of the study took place on February 10th and February 11th. It went into detail about active participation. The input centered around the four attributes of active participation:

1. All kids are processing mentally (covert behavior).
2. Some observable indication of that processing is elicited (overt behavior).
3. Students are involved in the learning the maximum amount of time.
4. There is a match of the covert and overt behaviors to the objective.

Participants then brainstormed words to use when eliciting covert and overt behaviors. A list of additional ideas was then presented to them.

Main categories of overt responses were discussed.

They are:

1. sampling
2. signalling
3. private responses
4. choral responses.

Participants discussed ways to use each of these four methods to get kids involved. A tape narrated by Dr. Madeline Hunter entitled "Checking Their Understanding" was recommended as a way to see all four of these methods being used by secondary teachers in actual classroom lessons. Several watched the tape and commented favorably.

After listing some pros and cons for using active participation in the classroom, the input was closed with some statistics gathered by Mary Budd Rowe about the need for at least a three second wait time between covert and overt responses.

The final two inputs were on pre-conferencing, data gathering, and post-conferencing. Because that session would last about 2 hours, it was divided into two separate times. Time one was scheduled for February 17th and February 19th. Time two was given on February 23rd

and February 26th. Time one dealt with four components of the observation process:

1. pre-conference
2. observing a lesson and recording data about active participation
3. analyzing the data for uses of active participation
4. post-conference.

The pre-conference should last about 10 minutes. Its purpose is to learn the objective(s) for the lesson and to label the activities that will be used to achieve the objective(s). Participants were given a sheet of sample questions that could be used during a pre-conference to prepare the observer for the lesson. Some of the partners labeled which questions they would both use as they looked at the list.

The next part of the observation cycle was to discuss data collection during a lesson. Participants were introduced to the idea of scripting to record the exact words a teacher uses. Scripting virtually eliminates the chance of memory lapse when the partners sit down to conference after the lesson is observed because the actual transcript of the lesson is written down.

Analyzing the transcript of the lesson was the next phase. The observer looks back through the scripted

notes to determine if the teacher's lesson contained activities that met all four attributes of active participation learned in a previous input.

The observer then plans the post-conference to give feedback to the teacher. At this point the observer decides whether he/she will do just peer analysis or whether he/she will move through all five phases into peer coaching. The post-conference should take place no later than 2 days after the lesson is observed.

The last inservice on peer coaching allowed the participants to practice scripting and analyzing data gathered during an observation. This was done by watching video tapes of teachers in the Millard district. Participants watched three tapes: a high school English lesson, a 4th-grade test-readiness lesson, and a 1st-grade music lesson. As portions of the tape were viewed, the eight participants scripted for uses of active participation. The researcher scripted the tapes also. At the end of the length of tape chosen, the participants and the researcher compared the scripted notes to check reliability of wording. As a group, covert and overt behaviors were labeled, whether they matched the objective, whether the teacher waited for at least three seconds for a response, and how many students were involved in the overt behavior. A mock post conference was planned to practice giving feedback after the

teaching episode.

Video tapes of elementary and secondary teachers were purposely chosen to give the participants as much variety as possible in seeing how active participation can be used in a classroom. Those three tapes and others were available for teachers to view if they felt they needed more practice in scripting and analyzing data. Several teachers took advantage of that opportunity to practice those skills.

At that point the eight volunteers were free to schedule their observations and feedback whenever they wished. Most of them scheduled one observation/feedback apiece in March and the other in April. Millard's spring break was scheduled for the last week in March, so the days available to observe during that month were limited.

Volunteers were then asked to schedule a post-taping as soon as their two observations and feedback were completed (Appendix G). The second taping was completed by the end of the first week in May. Duplicate copies of the pre and post-tapes were made. The eight tapes were then sent to Mrs. Mayeski along with two sets of coding sheets to be analyzed. Both Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson received two sheets for each participant. One had the pre-tape objective and taping date; the other had the post-tape objective and taping date on it.

The instructions given to Mrs. Mayeski were to send the tapes and the other set of coding sheets to Ms. Dawson when she was finished viewing the tapes. Mrs. Mayeski's coding sheets would be sent directly to the researcher so Ms. Dawson wouldn't have access to her coding; thereby, helping maintain objectivity in the study (Appendix H).

After receiving the coding sheets from Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson, the researcher began analyzing the information to tabulate results. To come up with a numerical score, the researcher looked at the covert behavior column and the overt behavior column in Appendix A. The total number of covert responses elicited was counted, then that number was divided into the total number of overt responses elicited. The percentage of covert responses that had a corresponding overt response was calculated. That percentage was given a rating of 1-10 with each of the numbers representing 10%. Rounding the covert/overt percent was to the closest 10 value.

In the column labeled number of students involved, the two coders labeled whether one, few, most, or all students were involved in the learning. The number value given to each was 1, 2, 3, or 4 accordingly. The total points for student involvement was added and then divided by the total number of overt behaviors elicited. That score was multiplied by 2.5 to range between 1-10. It

then was added to the 1-10 rating given for matching overt and covert behaviors from columns one and two.

The fourth column was coded for wait time. It measured whether a teacher waited for more or less than 3 seconds between the time the covert behavior was elicited and the overt response was asked. A rating of 0 was given for less than 3 seconds; a rating of 1 was given for more than 3 seconds. The points for each wait time were added and then divided by the number of overt behaviors elicited and then multiplied by 10. That score ranging between 1-10 was added to the other 2 scores.

The last column measured whether the covert and overt responses asked matched the objective for the lesson. A rating of 0 was given if it didn't match; a rating of 1 was given if it did. The total of that column was divided by the number of overt responses and multiplied by 10 to give a score between 1-10. That last score was added to the figures from the last four columns to give a total score that could range between 0-40. The higher the number, the more consistently and correctly active participation was being used; the lower the score, the less effectively it was being used.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Measures of correlation are used in the behavioral sciences to help determine if two samples of data used from the same population, are closely related. In this study, the researcher needed to determine how closely the two raters' scores were related. This determines a statistical measure of agreement for the study and for the reliability of the instrument used to code the tapes. The researcher used the Pearson product-moment test of correlation for both the pre and post-tape scores of both raters. The raters' scores are seen in Table I.

Table I

Mean Active Participation Rating of Participants

	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Ms. Dawson	Mrs. Mayeski	Ms. Dawson	Mrs. Mayeski
Teacher A	24.60	30.37	27.11	30.16
Teacher B	22.61	29.78	24.48	31.17
Teacher C	16.63	27.75	28.57	25.16
Teacher D	22.33	19.88	22.65	20.92
Teacher E	27.42	35.77	29.35	39.00
Teacher F	27.24	23.65	25.26	27.25
Teacher G	27.35	31.96	25.24	28.39
Teacher H	22.47	26.22	19.80	30.28

The disparity between many of the scores is easily seen in Table I. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for the pre-tape was .3363 and for the post-tape was .3740 indicating low correlation of the two raters' coding.

After receiving the coding sheets of both Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson, they were analyzed and rated according to the procedure described in the previous chapter. Each teacher used in the study was given a cumulative score for both the pre and post-tapes. Those pre and post-scores for each teacher by each rater were charted, then an average of the two raters was calculated. In Table II the average of the two raters' scores for the pre-tape is seen in column 1; the average of the two raters' scores for the post-tape is found in column 2, and the difference between the two scores is seen in column 3.

Table II

Mean Active Participation Pre-Post Ratings

	Pre-Tape	Post-Tape	Difference
Teacher A	27.48	28.63	1.15
Teacher B	26.19	27.98	1.79
Teacher C	22.19	26.86	4.69
Teacher D	21.10	21.78	.68
Teacher E	31.59	34.17	2.58
Teacher F	25.44	26.25	.81
Teacher G	29.65	26.81	-2.84
Teacher H	24.34	25.04	.70

To determine the significance of these ratings by Mrs. Mayeski and Ms. Dawson, the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test. This test is often used in the behavioral sciences to determine if the difference between two related samples of data is statistically significant or not. It measures both positive and negative differences. The results of the test for significant differences were as follows in Table III:

Table III

Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test Results

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean Score	25.9975	27.1900
Standard Deviation	3.5535	3.5142
Number of Positive Differences	7	
Number of Negative Differences	1	
Number of Non-zero Differences	8	
Wilcoxon Test Statistic	7	

CRITICAL VALUES FOR THE WILCOXON TEST
Level of significance for a two-tailed test

N	.10	.05	.01
5	0	--	--
6	2	0	--
7	3	2	--
8	5	3	0
9	8	5	1

According to the critical values for the Wilcoxon test, a score of seven indicates no significant difference between the scores for the pre-test and the scores for the post-test.

Because each teacher's score on active participation was composed of four separate components, it was possible to compare scores of the four parts used (Appendix A). When analyzing the columns from the coding sheets used, it is interesting to note the wide range of differences in the scores of the four areas. By totaling the scores of both raters for each of the four columns and then taking an average, the results are as follows in Table IV:

Table IV

Mean Active Participation Component Scores

		Average Score =====
Columns 1 & 2	Match of covert to overt behaviors	3.38
Column 3	Number of students involved	5.42
Column 4	Approximate wait time	7.89
Column 5	Match to the objective	9.66

The differences in performance among these four attributes of active participation will be discussed in the final chapter.

The average scores indicated that seven out of eight participants maintained their skill level of active participation from pre-tape to post-tape. Although the Wilcoxon test indicated no significant gain, the researcher concluded that the hypothesis stated earlier is valid because the peer coaching process helped teachers maintain their skill of using active participation in a classroom.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Without some type of feedback, teachers can't be expected to effectively improve instructional skills or implement ideas learned in staff development training. A traditional source of feedback has been from administrators, but limited time or limited knowledge can narrow the chances of improving skills. Peers can be a source of feedback in addition to administrators. Not only can instructional skills be a target, but collegiality can also be increased through the use of peer feedback. This study used eight participants to determine the effects of peer coaching on active participation in their classrooms. The results indicated that although there was some increased use of active participation, the results overall were not significant. The correlation of the two raters' scores was also found to be low.

The Pearson product-moment test of correlation showed a low correlation between the ratings of Ms. Dawson and Mrs. Mayeski in both the pre and post-tests.

The results of the Wilcoxon signed ranks test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in the use of active participation in the post-lessons taught by the eight participants. Table II shows that 7 out of the 8 teachers had an increase

in their score from pre-tape to post-tape. 3 of those 7 had very small increases; one participant had a decrease in her score. It is possible to suggest several reasons why the difference of the two tapes was not significant.

In two recent studies, the effects of peer coaching were found to be more substantial where the coach was a person high in technical skills (Billmeyer, 1988; Mayeski, 1988). This technical coach could function as a part of a group, as the coach and the trainer, or just as a single coach giving feedback on a lesson. The emphasis is on the technical skills possessed by the person doing the coaching. Unless the coach is knowledgeable in the particular area being coached, the assistance given through coaching will be minimal.

In this study, the researcher functioned as a trainer only and was available as a technical assistant on an as-needed basis. The eight participants did not ask for technical assistance after the initial inservices about the program. Of the eight participants, all had a high degree of commitment to improving their teaching skills, but there was a range of competence that went from a middle level to a fairly high level. The person(s) with the higher level of technical skills could offer more than the person(s) with some technical skills. During a feedback session after all post-taping was

finished, one participant said she was still a little uncertain about what to discuss during the post-conference. Another said she only felt comfortable doing the peer analysis of the lesson and didn't actually get to the peer coaching aspect. Had the researcher continued to be a technical coach along with being a trainer, the difference in growth of instructional skills of the teachers may have been significant.

Another factor limiting the growth of instructional skills was the time involved. The observations and feedback took place over a 2 month period of time with each participant observing and post-conferencing twice. Several participants felt that the second semester was too busy to fully concentrate on the peer coaching. First semester was suggested as a better time to begin the process. This would allow the peer coaching to be more on-going throughout the year allowing for more chances to observe colleagues and give feedback.

A third possible reason for the limited change in the participants might have been a lack of readiness to begin actual observations. More practice using videotapes could have helped build up skill levels of recording and analyzing data. The tapes used had very clear cut examples of active participation so participants could easily identify the examples. Perhaps

using tapes of clear cut examples plus tapes of both subtle examples and poor examples of active participation should be used.

When observing the average score of each of the four columns used to tabulate the teachers' scores, there is a wide range from 3.38 (matching a covert behavior to an overt one) to 9.66 (matching the overt behavior to the stated objective for the lesson). As a trainer, it is clear which parts of an active participation input needed more emphasis than others. Most participants scored very low in eliciting a covert behavior before asking for an overt behavior to check understanding. Most teachers did not ask for any kind of thought process prior to asking for an answer; they would merely ask the question. A trainer might also concentrate on ways to help teachers involve as many students in the learning as often as possible. A rating of 5.42 indicates teachers not always calling on one student at a time for an answer, but it still shows a need to involve more students more often. The wait time score of 7.89 seems a strong indication that teachers are allowing at least a 3 second wait time for answers most of the time. The highest score of the four columns shows that the participants plan their learning activities to match their chosen objective throughout the lesson quite well. In future peer coaching inservices, the trainer could more heavily

concentrate on the first two areas mentioned and use less time to focus on the last two areas because the first two are probably the most difficult skills to master.

In the feedback session with the eight participants, they named several advantages of participating in a peer coaching program. Some of the plusses were:

1. Teachers felt their skill in the use of active participation had increased.

2. They enjoyed seeing another person teach and would like to see more teachers teach.

3. Some were glad they stayed within their own discipline to get more ideas about that subject; others enjoyed working with someone in a discipline different from their own.

4. One person stated it made her think more about her teaching.

5. All agreed that working with a peer was a low pressure situation.

6. Several were more appreciative of a colleague's abilities after seeing him/her teach.

7. A sense of camaraderie was established which helped break down some barriers of isolationism.

8. Several tried new ideas in their classroom after seeing a colleague use a technique.

9. Observing another person also helped some to

recognize parts of their own teaching style.

They also spoke of a few drawbacks other than ones mentioned earlier in this chapter. They were:

1. Use a large block of time to do all the inservices instead of several shorter sessions.
2. Sometimes when a colleague wanted to observe, that particular lesson did not lend itself well to observation such as a test, or a play, or individual reading time.
3. Observations and feedback were not always easy to plan because of varying schedules.
4. Having articles available to read about the skill to be observed would be helpful. These articles could focus on research and classroom techniques.

A future peer coaching project would be more effective if several ideas were implemented. Beginning the process in the fall semester would allow more time to implement and improve strategies. Starting in the second semester limits the time available. The peer coaches themselves need more technical training to make their feedback more valuable or the trainer of the peer coaches needs to have an ongoing relationship to "coach the coaches". Without a solid background in the skill(s) that is/are being practiced, limited growth in that skill area will take place. Using a larger and more random sample of teachers would give the study more

significance. If a study were done rather than a staff development program implemented, a trainer could use a control group that received no peer coaching to compare rate of growth in skills used to a group that received peer coaching.

A peer coaching program is not one that is easily created and implemented. It takes time, training, and a commitment to improved instruction. It needs participants who are skilled in the area being coached and a highly skilled trainer to insure quality of information and feedback given.

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Objective:

Name of Teacher _____

Date: _____

Pre-tape: _____ Post-tape: _____

Name of Coder _____

Listen for evidence of teacher elicited covert and overt behaviors. Script those. Approximate the wait time and the number of students who were involved overtly. Label yes or no for match to the objective.

Covert Behaviors Elicited	Overt Behaviors Elicited	Number of Students Involved one/few/most/all	Approximate Wait Time >3 sec. <3 sec.	Match to Objective yes/no

January 14, 1988

TO: All Staff
FROM: Mary Pat
RE: Peer Coaching Opportunities

Most of the teachers in our building have taken classes or attended workshops in an effort to grow professionally and work toward improved instruction.

Many of you have expressed a wish that you could receive more feedback about ideas you try in your classroom learned from these classes and workshops.

One way to do that is through peer coaching which is a process where teachers observe another teacher's classroom, note specific teaching skills, then give positive feedback about those techniques observed. The two peers can also brainstorm about other ways to implement that skill in the classroom. It also offers a way to grow professionally and work toward improved instruction.

As a way to strive for continued school improvement, I would like to initiate a peer coaching program that would involve interested people at our school. This would be a time commitment of about 10 hours spread out over a 2-1/2 to 3 month period. If you are interested in participating in a program like this or would like more information, there will be a short informational meeting on January 18th at 11:00 in the conference room. I think it will prove to be a worthwhile time commitment.

PEER COACHING

<u>TIME LINE</u>	<u>TIME COMMITMENT</u>
Late January	
- inservice on peer coaching	1 hour
- inservice on active participation	1 hour
Early February	
- inservice on pre-conferencing, data gathering, analyzing data, and post-conferencing techniques	2 hours
Early February - mid-February	
- pre-tape a lesson you teach	
Mid to late February	2-1/2 hours
- first pre-conference, classroom visitation, post-conference	
Mid to late March	
- second pre-conference, classroom visitation, post-conference	2-1/2 hours
* Late March - early April	
- post-tape a lesson you teach	
* Depending on the team, you may schedule more visitations and conferences if you desire. However, a minimum of two is needed to benefit the peer team.	

January 27, 1988

TO: Ron Hromadka Ann Thomsen
 Barb Lacey Joan Phillips
 Barb McKenna Linda Ray
 Debbie Jones Jean Lewandowski

FROM: Mary Pat

RE: Peer Coaching Schedule

I have set up the following times to meet to get information needed before you begin actual peer coaching. I tried to give people a choice of two times for each session. If you can't make either one, let me know and we'll arrange a time the two of us can meet.

Background on Peer Coaching:

February 3 or February 5 3:15-4:00 - library

Active Participation Input:

February 10 or February 11 3:15-4:00 - library

Input on Pre-Conference, Data Gathering, Post-Conference

(Part I) February 17 or February 19 3:15-4:00 - library

(Part II) February 23 or February 26 3:15-4:00 - library
 (This part will take about 2 hours so I broke it up into two shorter sessions instead of one long one.)

Before the 10th of February you will need to set up a time to have a class videotaped. You can set that up with either Virginia or me. It needs to be done before the active participation input.

PEER ANALYSIS - COACHING

PEER ANALYSIS:

- giving specific, objective feedback to a person with the same job description or authority base.
- about the presence and/or absence of a given skill, concept, or strategy

NOT: quality judgment of good or bad

PEER COACHING:

- giving specific, objective feedback to a person with the same job or authority base
- about presence and/or absence of a given skill, concept, or strategy
- about areas of strength and areas needing refinement
- generating options for refining skill or concept or strategy.

NOT: an inquiry model

PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

1. Both people should agree on the same criteria for their observations; have a common frame of reference for the discussion, i.e., motivation variables, active participation, discussion skills, thinking skills.
2. This process should be voluntary.
3. Teachers should have a voice in selecting their own partners.
4. There should be a well thought out process for problem solving.
 - content
 - process
 - people
5. The process needs the support of the building principal.

PHASES OF PEER
ANALYSIS/COACHING

ANALYSIS

Phase 1

- people look for examples of skills that are present
- benefits that accrue because of the use of the skill

Phase 2

- people look for examples of skills that are present
- evidence that it helped

Phase 3

- people look for examples of skills that are present
- evidence that it helped
- generate a variety of ways to do the same thing

COACHING

Phase 4

- people look for examples of skills that are present
- evidence that it helped
- people look for examples of skills not there or abused
- evidence that it was needed or if abused that it interfered with the learning

Phase 5

- people look for examples of skills that are present
- evidence that it helped
- people look for examples of skills not there or abused
- evidence that it was needed or if abused that it interfered with the learning
- generate a variety of optional strategies

April 20, 1988

TO: Ron Hromadka Ann Thomsen
 Barb Lacey Joan Phillips
 Barb McKenna Linda Ray
 Deb Jones Jean Lewandowski

FROM: Mary Pat

RE: Peer Coaching Post-tapes

How are things going? Some of you are finishing up the last observations or getting close to finishing. When you and your partner have finished your two observations and feedback and are ready to be post-taped, let me know. Virginia or I will come in to post-tape you. I need to send the tapes to the two outside people around the 1st of May so they'll be back around the 1st of June. The coding sheets will be available for you to see at that time. Some time in May I would like to gather together for a little thank you breakfast/feedback time on the process. I will let you know when.

Thanks again for your participation.

Dear Fran and Linda,

Here are the tapes at last plus coding sheets. I have taped the whole class period for both pre and post-tapes, but it is not necessary to code the entire length of class time. If you choose a segment, let the other person know so she will code the same segment. I feel a 20 to 30 minute time segment is certainly sufficient.

Please let me know the cost of sending the tapes to G.I. (Fran) and to Omaha (Linda). I will reimburse postage costs. I do have a copy of both sets of tapes if something should happen to the originals.

My final copy of my paper needs to be in to UNO July 15th in order to graduate in August. Since I will be working in Kansas City the first 2 weeks of July, I plan to have the finished product in by July 1st. I will be writing up results of the coded tapes in June. As quickly as you are able to do these tapes would help me immensely.

Fran -- you are receiving the tapes first. When you are done coding will you send the tapes to Linda and the coding sheets to me. That will help the study in 2 ways: 1) your analysis will not be seen by Linda to keep the study cleaner, 2) I can begin tabulating results of your coding right away.

Linda -- After you receive the tapes from Fran, watch and code them, then send tapes and coding sheets on to me.

Thank you both for helping me with this study. I will send results to you after all is completed.

Mary Pat