CHAPTER 5

Providing Professional Support

Professional support is a *system* for enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers so that they can improve student achievement. It is purposeful and intentional, ongoing, and systemic. It has clear, worthwhile, and measurable goals. Those goals are appropriate for the school and supported by infrastructure and policy in the school. At its very best, professional support is both site-based and district-based, with integrated, coherent strategies that can be sustained (Guskey, 2000). The goal of this chapter is to describe a variety of strategies that coaches might employ in such a system.

In a call to action on the subject of staff development, Joyce and Showers (1996) begin:

> We have a vision of a comprehensive, job-embedded, staff development system, and we picture it as the most prominent feature of professional life. (p. 2)

They then describe an architecture for such a system, with interconnected initiatives at the individual, school, and district level. They call such a system "unusual" rather than difficult to initiate. Teachers link with one another in small teams; these small teams link with one another in larger collaboratives; and all participate in setting the district agenda for building professionalism, sometimes by using the expertise of existing personnel and sometimes by seeking outside consultation. Imagine how much easier their system would be with the services of a school-based coach! Given the resources devoted to making coaching happen, we have even more responsibility to make coaching work. Coaching can only work when it is a vehicle for coherent and responsive professional support.

HOW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AFFECTS ACHIEVEMENT

None of the aspects of this model is optional for the coach. Guskey and Sparks (1996) navigate the distance between professional support and improvements in

student achievement. The road is not a direct one; it is depicted in Figure 5.1. They start with high-quality professional support, guided, in part, by the same concepts that inform the NSDC standards we shared in Chapter 2. These standards stress the importance of content, process, and context. In order to plan professional support, content matters. The focus of the initiative must be research-based and realistic so that it can be reliably predicted to improve achievement and so that all teachers can actually adopt it. Once an appropriate focus has been chosen, the processes used to develop it matter. Think back to Chapter 2, in which we discussed adult learning and adult education; without attention to the needs of the learners, even the best idea will not yield improved achievement. Finally, the context matters. If an initiative does not intentionally adapt to the constraints of the setting (e.g., the time, personnel, and materials) it is unlikely to produce any change. In fact, it is unlikely to be adopted at all.

Guskey and Sparks point out that even high-quality professional support in these three areas does not yield direct benefits for students. This is because other factors are at work in any school setting, such as the administration. High-quality professional support builds administrator knowledge and influences administrator practice. Specifically, it encourages administrators to engage the support of professional developers and to tie their own teacher-evaluation processes to the school-level curriculum and instruction targets. This emphasis from the principal surely influences teacher buy-in. At the same time, though, teachers are also
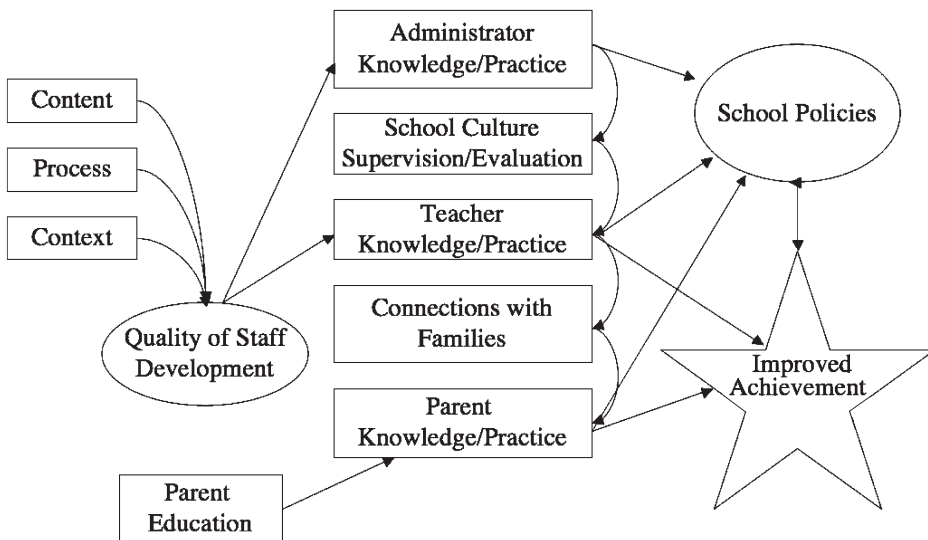

FIGURE 5.1. From staff development to student learning. Data from Guskey and Sparks (1996).

influenced directly by the professional development. Thus, they experience dual effects supporting implementation. Because of this, they are likely to engage in "translation," sharing what they are learning and doing in parent conferences, thus building parents' connection to the initiative. They are also likely to engage in effective conferences with students. These connections build parent knowledge, skills, and support.

In this system, principals, teachers, and parents are equipped to make policy improvements, influencing the real world of teaching and learning. They might make curriculum changes, organization and scheduling changes, or grading changes. These policy changes might improve student achievement, especially since they are paired with improvements in teachers' direct work with students and with parents' support. The road is long here, and winding. But this time, there is a coach to monitor progress. And that coach is a literacy coach, with specialized skills and knowledge about literacy, and with a mandate and professional responsibility to a particular set of teachers.

There has been a sea change in the literature of professional support to inform literacy coaches since we first entered the fray. Namely, there are more and more descriptions of professional development systems designed by literacy professionals to support literacy achievement. Federal support (e.g., Reading Excellence Act, Reading First, Striving Readers) surely has influenced this growing commitment, but there are loud calls for even more work (Doubek & Cooper, 2007). We are always on the lookout for models, and they are appearing more and more often. What we find (not surprisingly) is that they all seem to converge on and support the concepts from adult learning literature—they just apply them specifically to the area of literacy. We choose two to summarize below because they were both published in *The Reading Teacher;* you can read the full articles if you have back issues, or you can order the individual articles via the IRA's website.

Mesmer and Karchmer (2003) implemented a homegrown professional support system in two schools enacting Reading Excellence Act reform. They describe the staff development model they used as recursive, with traditional staff development followed by supported classroom implementation and then reflection sessions. In this 2-year initiative, they learned that they had to contextualize their work (even differentiating between the two schools). Their candor in reporting the ways in which they came to take their preplanned focus and make it more adaptive to the schools' and teachers' specific needs is helpful for those literacy coaches doing the same type of work.

Larger-scale efforts are also trickling into the professional literature. The state of Ohio has a well-articulated system for state-level professional support in literacy pedagogy (Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, & Grogan, 2006). The domains that organize the content of the initiative are knowing, planning, teaching, and assessing. In addition, the following design principles, distilled from the literature of professional development, are inherent in the system:

1. The initiative is connected to student learning goals.
2. The sessions involve active learning for adults.
3. The work is embedded in real schools and classrooms.
4. The initiative is ongoing.
5. The initiative allows teachers to focus on their own learning, their students' learning, and the characteristics of instruction.
6. The initiative plans for coherence.

Those who are coaching without such state-level support and structure are on the front line already, constructing their own systems. We know that their work is complicated. Scaling up such work to the district or state level is even more complicated, and we are glad that the successful efforts of state and university partnerships to do such work are being included in our professional literature.

To say that high-quality professional support is complicated is not to say that it is impossible; in fact, once we share this potentially overwhelming orientation to the field of professional support, we advise coaches to "just get started." We rely on a cyclical process that we have adopted from the work of Joyce and Showers (2002). Cycles are helpful because they repeat. Figure 5.2 presents one way to think of the continuous cycle from theory, to demonstration, to practice, and to feedback. In this case, coaches can make different choices based on their experiences in each cycle. In the sections that follow, we provide very specific examples of those choices.

THEORY

We use Joyce and Shower's term, *theory*, to acknowledge the contribution that their work has made to our thinking. However, there are some ways that the
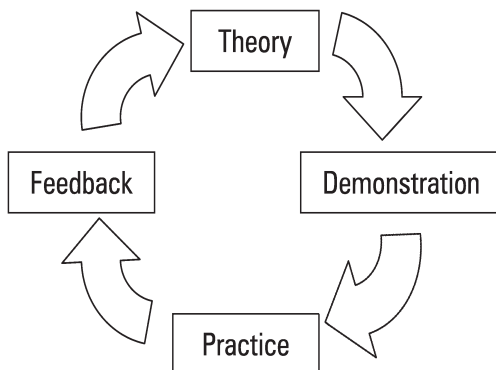

FIGURE 5.2. Professional support cycle, based on Joyce and Showers (2002).

term might be misleading. We looked it up and found definitions of *theory* to range widely: A theory might be a group of principles used to explain a complex phenomenon; it might be an unproven conjecture; it might be a system of rules or principles. When we think of professional support systems, we think of theory as the complex web of knowledge, developed *outside* the classroom, that informs the complex decision making required for teaching *inside* the classroom. Knowledge is at the heart of theory, but we think there are specific areas of knowledge building that together drive a well-articulated professional support system. These include knowledge of curriculum materials, research, and achievement. In Chapter 2, as we described the needs of adult learners and strategies for coaches to use in serving them individually, in small groups, and in large groups, we provided guidance for formal presentations. Formal presentations are one strategy that a coach likely uses to help teachers develop theory. In the sections that follow, we present other possibilities, each of which is more interactive than a formal presentation.

Understanding Curriculum Materials

We choose to begin with curriculum because, broadly speaking, it is the chief tool that teachers find when they enter their classrooms each fall. All teachers work within certain constraints; they are hired to teach a particular subject in a particular place with particular materials and goals. They are also charged with preparing students to meet standards, either immediate or long-term, regarding knowledge, skills, and strategies.

We also begin with curriculum because we find that many coaches assume that working directly with curriculum materials is not professional support but merely technical assistance. They are wrong. We think that this stance may come from their experience in graduate school, where they learned generic (hopefully research-validated) procedures and constructed lessons on their own to demonstrate their understanding. Such is not the work of real schools. Most teachers have (and use) core commercial programs in the language arts; most content-area teachers have (and use) textbooks. An important part of professional support is making time and establishing collaborative procedures for developing deep understanding of the tools that teachers are provided to accomplish their work. Teachers appreciate coaching that provides time and opportunity for them to accomplish tasks that are directly and immediately useful to them.

Understanding curriculum deeply also implies, for us, taking a critical stance. We recommend content analysis, which is simply a page-by-page examination. Teachers can work in groups to identify exactly what the curriculum designers expect them and their students. The most rigorous content analyses come from comparing the scope and sequence of knowledge and skills and the practice activities provided for students with an external set of standards (Walpole & Blamey, 2007b). This critical comparison allows teachers to work together to measure the overall

quality of the tools they have, and it guides their decisions about how to use and supplement these tools. In *The Literacy Coach's Handbook: A Guide to Research-Based Practice*, we provide a set of external standards for curriculum examination for K–3 reading materials. There are other sources, though, to consider. State and district curriculum standards are especially important. Literacy coaches should consider this procedure, perhaps accomplished over two sessions:

1. Select an appropriate external metric (e.g., set of standards, curriculum framework, or research review).
2. Arrange a meeting of teachers who use the same curriculum materials.
3. Provide an overview of the external metric.
4. Divide the teachers into pairs.
5. Ask each pair to read the teacher's manual for one theme or unit and to report to the group anything from the metric that is not included or treated poorly.
6. Make a plan for how to supplement in areas not already included in the curriculum.

In *Differentiated Reading Instruction,* we argue that in core materials provided for the elementary school reading curriculum, the actual scope and sequence of knowledge and skills may be hidden among many potentially distracting activities. If coaches work with materials like that, they are well advised to work with grade-level teams to simply list the objectives for each target area (e.g., phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, spelling patterns, high-frequency word recognition, oral vocabulary development, comprehension skills and strategies) in order, week by week. This skeleton scope and sequence helps teachers to evaluate the design of the curriculum and to make informed choices about how to pace, differentiate, and enrich their instruction, and how to design practice and extension activities. It also helps them to integrate additional materials (e.g., trade books, read-alouds), because it helps them to know which ones would enhance other parts of the instructional plan.

Understanding Literacy Development and Pedagogy

Although we have presented strategies for understanding curriculum first, that is only because curriculum is immediate in the life of a teacher. Coaches starting their professional support system there are likely to earn appreciation from teachers anxious to complete their lesson planning for the start of the school year. The heart of the theory building in the professional support system, though, must come from selection and analysis of relevant research. In literacy, those findings include research on literacy development and on specific instructional materials and practices associated with positive outcomes for students.

The question for a coach is where to start. What research is relevant? Which books and articles are useful? One strategy is to begin with a research synthesis. We live in an era of such documents, and they have much to recommend them. First, good syntheses have a transparent strategy for how research was selected; literacy coaches can evaluate the match of the selection processes used with the characteristics of their school. For example, a synthesis that systematically excludes studies involving ELLs might not be highly relevant to a school that serves large numbers of children with limited English proficiency. Second, these syntheses are available for download on the Internet; they are free for coaches to examine and for distribution to teachers. And third, these syntheses are brief, appropriate for presentation in full faculty meetings or in grade-level team meetings. In addition, most begin with an executive summary so that a quick examination of the utility of a particular synthesis is possible. Figure 5.3 lists some current syntheses that we think could be useful. We have organized them by topic and provided their websites. You will see that visits to these websites open many additional avenues for choosing resources for professional support.

We recommend that a research synthesis be used to get the theory building

Elementary school instruction

Moats, L. C. (1999). *Teaching reading IS rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do.* Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers. Retrieved from *www.aft.org.*

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from *nationalreadingpanel.org.*

Partnership for Reading. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from *www.nifl.gov.*

Torgesen, J. K. (2006). *A comprehensive K–3 reading assessment plan: Guidance for school leaders.* Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction. Retrieved from *www.centeroninstruction.org.*

Middle and high school instruction

Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from *www.all4ed.org.*

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high school—A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from *www.all4ed.org.*

(cont.)

FIGURE 5.3. Recent research syntheses.

Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from *www.all4ed.org*.

Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescents and literacy: Reading for the 21st century.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from *www.all4ed.org*.

Lewis, K., McColskey, W., Anderson, K., Bowling, T., Dufford-Melendez, K., & Wynn, L. (2007). *Evidence-based decision making: Assessing reading across the curriculum interventions* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007—No. 003). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from *ies.ed.gov/ncee*.

English language learners

Gersten, R., Baker, S. K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide* (NCEE 2007-4011). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from *ies.ed.gov/ncee*.

Short, D. J., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners—A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from *www. all4ed.org*.

Struggling readers

Francis, D. J., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Research-based recommendations for instruction and academic interventions.* Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction. Retrieved from *www.centeroninstruction.org*.

Scammacca, N., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Edmonds, M., Wexler, J., Reutebuch, C. K., et al. (2007). *Interventions for adolescent struggling readers: A meta-analysis with implications for practice.* Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction. Retrieved from *www. centeroninstruction.org*.

FIGURE 5.3. *(cont.)*

rolling; it can guide in the selection of additional resources, and it can also be one external source used in the curriculum examination described above.

Once a coach has chosen a general focus for this theory-building work, the coach has to accept two challenges: the first is to be willing to engage, over time, in deep technical reading, either alone or with other leaders. In doing that, the coach is trying to stay a step ahead, modeling the personal commitment to go the extra mile as a learner. In addition, taking on such a challenge builds the coach's professional library so that those resources can be used to provide answers to teachers' questions. We may be old-fashioned, but we recommend that the library begin with books. Journal articles are also useful, but they are sometimes harder for coaches to get their hands on. In Figure 5.4 we have provided a starter set from

which a coach might begin to build a professional library. We think our list has something for everyone, and these texts are ones that we have actually used in our own efforts to coach coaches. Having texts to consult keeps coaches from simply imposing their own theories on teachers. Instead, coaches can serve as reference librarians.

Theory building in the area of research and development through the coach's own study is important, but it is not the actual stuff of the professional support system. The second challenge lies in providing texts for teachers to read, as well as time and structure. The first step for a coach in this area is to select texts that are appropriate. They must be written well, in a voice that is accessible to teachers, and with a focus on issues that are actually timely in the school. For that reason, we

Baumann, J. F. & Kame'enui, E. J. (2002). *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

Bean, R. M. (2004). *The reading specialist: Leadership for the classroom, school, and community.* New York: Guilford Press.

Block, C. C., & Pressley, M. (2002). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices.* New York: Guilford Press.

Breznitz, Z. (2006). *Fluency in reading: Synchronization of processes.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gambrell, L. B., Morrow, L. M., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Best practices in literacy instruction* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Gillon, G. T., (2004). *Phonological awareness: From research to practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

Moats, L. C. (2000). *Speech to print: Language essentials for teachers.* Baltimore: Brookes.

Pressley, M. (2006). *Reading instruction that works: The case for balanced teaching.* New York: Guilford Press.

RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica CA: RAND. (Available at *www. rand.org/pubs/ monograph_reports/MR1465/*)

Rathvon, N. (2004). *Early reading assessment: A practitioner's handbook.* New York: Guilford Press.

Stahl, K. A. D., & McKenna, M. C. (Eds.). (2006). *Reading research at work: Foundations of effective practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

Strickland, D. S., & Kamil, M. L. (Eds.). (2004). *Improving reading achievement through professional development*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Sweet, A. P., & Snow, C. E. (Eds.). (2003). *Rethinking reading comprehension*. New York: Guilford Press.

Wagner, R. K., Muse, A. E., & Tannenbaum, K. R. (2006). *Vocabulary acquisition: Implications for reading comprehension*. New York: Guilford Press.

Walpole, S., & McKenna, M. C. (2004). *The literacy coach's handbook*. New York: Guilford Press.

FIGURE 5.4. Books for coaches.

recommend that coaches gather several books on the same topic and ask teachers to select the one they would most like to study. In addition, we recommend that coaches facilitate more than one specific book club at a time, on two different topics, allowing teachers to join a club matched to their own interests. This combination of selection within and between study groups allows coaches to adjust to the needs of their adult learners for choice and voice in the professional support system, and still maintain its focus on the school's plan. Figure 5.5 provides a list of texts that we have found to be appropriate in work with teachers; of course, it is not exhaustive, but it might give coaches a starting point.

Once you have formed a study group and selected a book for study, the next

General sources on elementary instruction

Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2007). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Diller, D. (2003). *Literacy work stations: Making centers work*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

McKenna, M. C. (2002). *Help for struggling readers: Strategies for grades 3–8*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tyner, B. (2004). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for beginning and struggling readers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Tyner, B., & Green, S. E. (2005). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for intermediate readers, grades 3–8*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Walpole, S., & McKenna, M. C. (2007). *Differentiated reading instruction: Strategies for the primary grades*. New York: Guilford Press.

Phonological awareness

Ericson, L., & Juliebo, M. (1998). *The phonological awareness handbook for kindergarten and primary teachers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Lane, H. B., & Pullen, P. C. (2003). *Phonological awareness assessment and instruction: A sound beginning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Phonics

Beck, I. L. (2005). *Making sense of phonics: The hows and whys.* New York: Guilford Press.

Fox, B. J. (2007). *Word identification strategies: Building phonics into a classroom reading program* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

O'Connor, R. E. (2007). *Teaching word recognition.* New York: Guilford Press.

Fluency

Rasinski, T. V. (2003). *The fluent reader: Oral reading strategies for building word recognition, fluency, and comprehension*. New York: Scholastic.

Rasinski, T. V., Blachowicz, C., & Lems, K. (Eds.). (2003). *Fluency instruction: Research-based best practices.* New York: Guilford Press.

FIGURE 5.5. Books for teachers.

Rasinski, T. V., & Padak, N. D. (2007). *From phonics to fluency: Effective teaching of decoding and reading fluency in the elementary school* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Vocabulary

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Stahl, S. A. (1999). *Vocabulary development*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Stahl, S. A., & Nagy, W. E. (2005). *Teaching word meanings*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Comprehension

Duffy, G. G. (2003). *Explaining reading: A resource for teaching concepts, skills, and strategies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Boardman, A. (2007). *Teaching reading comprehension to students with learning disabilities*. New York: Guilford Press.

Assessment

Hosp, M. K., Hosp, J. L., & Howell, K. V. (2007). *The ABCs of CBM: A practical guide to curriculum-based measurement.* New York: Guilford Press.

McKenna, M. C., & Stahl, S. A. (2003). *Assessment for reading instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Writing

Buss, K., & Karnowski, L. (2000). *Reading and writing literary genres.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Buss, K., & Karnowski, L. (2002). *Reading and writing nonfiction genres.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Graham, S., MacArthur, C. A., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Best practices in writing instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

FIGURE 5.5. *(cont.)*

step is to facilitate and focus the group work. This entails making a schedule, or syllabus, collaboratively to allow your adult learners to participate in decisions about the time they are committing to read and the time they are committing to discussion. We have consistently tried to plan for the "reading" to happen during the study group session (by actually handing out the texts and asking participants to read the day's portion immediately). We have done this for two reasons: (1) it demonstrates our commitment to professional support *during the school day*, and (2) it ensures that everyone has done the reading before the discussion. Some of our colleagues, though, resist this approach, mainly because there is not enough time to accommodate the reading preferences of all; some would prefer to read much more slowly, taking time to digest ideas, contending that their needs are not met in the time allotted. Coaches have to weigh their decisions in this area and be flexible when they are not successful.

The second step is to set procedures for discussion. Study groups for the purpose of theory building in professional support systems are not the same as book clubs formed to engage adults in collaborative responses to literature; they simply must have more structure than that. Remember that adult learners filter new ideas through their personal experience. Sometimes this means that they will gloss over ideas from professional readings, taking the stance that they already do all of the things that are recommended. Our goal is first to facilitate deep discussion and understanding of what the author means. Only after that can we move to discussion of ways in which the ideas are consistent and inconsistent with current practice, and to use the author's ideas to improve it.

We have used three specific formats for guiding study-group discussions after participants have read. As you read about each, you will see that they offer choices that may help you fit the format to the nature of the group and the structure of the book.

Discussion Starters

With *discussion starters,* the coach identifies key passages directly from the text, distributes them to individuals or pairs, provides a short time for discussion, and then asks each group to summarize the concept that they were assigned and describe how it fits into the broad argument that the author makes. Presentation of these ideas by the participants keeps discussion focused on text ideas and prevents the coach from taking on a didactic role.

Reading Guides

The second strategy used for study groups is formal reading guides. For groups with substantial background knowledge about the ideas in the text, reading guides speed their work. *Reading guides* are simply questions designed to direct participant attention to specific concepts and to ask them to summarize, respond, or react. The guides can be used in small groups, and they allow teachers to work through important text ideas with their peers. These are not to be confused with the reading guides sometimes used to support students as they make their way through challenging text (e.g., Wood, Lapp, & Flood, 1992). They are simply tools for helping busy professionals focus as they read and for organizing discussions that follow.

Jigsaw

The last study group format that we have used combines the reading guide format with a *jigsaw* discussion. In this case, participants read in advance, are divided into groups, and complete reading guides for a specific chapter or portion of the

text. After time for discussion, they present their shared understanding to the other groups. In this format, then, all participants discuss one chapter deeply with peers and then get an overview of the discussion in which the other groups took part. We have chosen this strategy in an effort to nurture teacher leaders, not just to facilitate the processing of new content. Our hope is that teachers choose to read additional chapters later, their interest piqued by their colleagues' presentations.

Whichever strategy is chosen for engaging in comprehension of the text, the coach must build in time to consider ways to use new knowledge to make improvements. This work can take place individually, as the coach guides specific teachers to commit to specific goals, or collectively, as the study-group team commits to collaborative work. The research in the text, though, has to begin to make its way into classroom practice.

Understanding Achievement Data

We have encouraged you to focus on building theory by formal presentation, by critical examination of curriculum materials, and by book study. Those are not your only choices. In fact, as we mentioned in Chapter 4, we cannot imagine any coaching efforts to be effective without the use of data to identify concerns and evaluate the success of efforts to address them, and there are many different ways to go about it. Data examination is another form of theory building. It takes place outside the classroom, and it provides guidance for work inside the classroom. We see data as a tool in individual coaching, in small-group coaching, and in large-group coaching.

Given the demands of the NCLB Act that schools make adequate yearly progress on state-designed measures, most schools now engage in school-level data analysis. Such sessions are useful to guide thinking about the success of the previous year's plan; they are also useful for identifying groups of students for special attention. We support the use of disaggregated data to accomplish such tasks, and we have seen principals and coaches working together to depict data in ways that are understandable. In large-group theory-building sessions, visual depictions are especially important. We see these sessions as useful in garnering support for new initiatives and in providing public recognition of the collective efforts of a group of teachers striving to improve achievement.

In small groups, data-based discussions are even more powerful. Our best efforts have been guided first by sharing data with the grade level as a whole, combining all data as if students were in one classroom. This procedure communicates collective responsibility for achievement and avoids singling out specific teachers whose students may be making less progress. Such data can be easily summarized with three specific, simple, mathematical procedures: frequencies, percentages, or averages. *Frequencies* (sometimes called *counts*) tell how many and what kind. They are appropriate for reporting numbers of children meeting benchmarks, for

example. *Percentages* sometimes make frequencies come alive; they help display the relative progress of the group and can be represented through pie charts or colored bar graphs. We tend to use both frequencies and percentages together because, when the sample is small, percentages can be misleading—in a group of 15, three individuals constitute 20%. Figure 5.6 presents two depictions of the same grade-level data.

The data constitute state-level fall achievement in basic alphabet and phoneme awareness skills on Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) subtests: Letter-Name Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Each subtest is interpreted by placing children in categories of risk, based on prediction studies (low risk, some risk, and high risk). In the left panel, counts are given. In the right panel, frequencies and percentages are reported with the support of a visual. Numbers of individuals in each of the three categories are large, so the percentages, depicted in the right-hand panel, are meaningful.

Figure 5.7 depicts averages. These averages come from curriculum-based measures of oral reading fluency. They are average words per minute for students in four second-grade classrooms. By the end of the year, on average, students had met the goal; that is not to say that all students met the goal. Remember that when you consider average performance, very high-scoring students (or very low-scoring students) can skew the results.

Both of these charts were actually used by literacy coaches to build theory through data examination. In both cases, the coach was working with groups of teachers, and the data that were shared publicly were summarized. In both cases, though, individuals had copies of their own data. In the first case, literacy coaches could compare percentages of their own first graders meeting the fall benchmark to the state data; this helped them to reflect on the relative success of kindergarten instruction. In the second case, individual teachers could look at the mean words
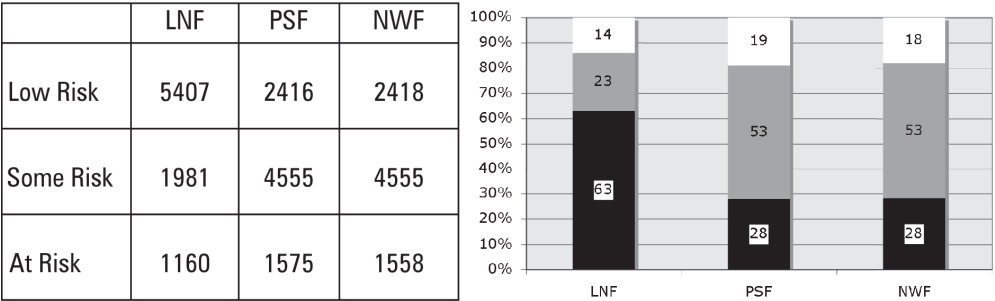
	LNF	PSF	NWF
Low Risk	5407	2416	2418
Some Risk	1981	4555	4555
At Risk	1160	1575	1558

FIGURE 5.6. Sharing percentages and frequencies.

Reading rate: grade 2				
1st 9 weeks	2nd 9 weeks	3rd 9 weeks	4th 9 weeks	Goal
58 wpm	79 wpm	85 wpm	96 wpm	90 wpm

FIGURE 5.7. Sharing averages.

per minute for their own class, compared with the status of the grade level as a whole.

A teacher knowing how his or her students are doing compared with others does not necessarily influence achievement directly in any way. In our experience, though, it does foster discussion of what is working well and what is not. Coaches must be cautious of not singling out teachers whose data stand out. Teachers with lower achievement than their peers will be embarrassed by such treatment, and, surprisingly, so will teachers with high achievement. Instead, coaches can share data and ask general questions to the group.

Our experience has been that small-group data sharing sessions lead to individual ones; namely, teachers whose students are struggling come to the coach for help. These can be the most productive theory-building sessions that a coach facilitates. They play into the adult learning literature because they are entirely problems-based and immediate. They also allow for collaboration because there are other settings in the same school environment where achievement profiles are different. Coaches can either describe instructional strategies they have seen used in other classrooms, or, if teachers are willing, they can arrange for peer observations.

Another way to share data is to take a case-study approach. In such a session, teachers can bring data for a student whose achievement is troubling them. Together, with the coach and with peers, they can brainstorm new ideas, specifically suited to their examination of the data. Student-focused coaching (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007) is an individual coaching model that has been used to address literacy achievement and also behavior concerns in this way. Data are used first to identify and specify the concern, then to plan a solution, and finally to measure the success of the teacher's efforts. As students respond (or fail to respond) to efforts to improve instruction, both teachers and coaches build their understanding of teaching and learning.

To sum up, theory can be built through formal presentations, curriculum examinations, book study, or examination of data; such sessions can be large group, small group, or individual. The important issue here is that the coach begins by building theory, but the theory-building effort is not followed by another one. Instead, theory must be followed by demonstration.

DEMONSTRATION

When we speak with coaches about demonstration, they automatically consider classroom modeling. In fact, classroom modeling is a very powerful form of demonstration, but there are others. What they have in common is that they all take the theory into the classroom, as close to actual practice as possible.

Modeling

If you are constructing your own vision of coaching as you read, you may have just made a simple calculation. You may be working with 20 teachers at four different grade levels. You would have to spend at least several hours with each group in theory-building sessions; perhaps you could accomplish that in a week's time. But then, if you were to model next (and do nothing else) you would be planning at least four different lessons and implementing them five times each. Given the realities of schools, that would take at least 2 weeks to accomplish.

There are ways to make modeling more efficient. One way is to use lesson planning as a proxy for modeling. After theory-building sessions (or at the end of the sessions), you can make a direct connection to practice by facilitating creation of a specific lesson plan, embodying the characteristics of the theory. You can further ensure success by having a planning template and materials ready for teachers to use. That way, teachers will leave their session with a concrete idea to try in their classroom.

Another possibility is to use role-playing as a proxy for modeling. At the end of theory building sessions, you can role-play instruction. If you are careful about your time and planning, you can first model the lesson or strategy yourself, with the teachers acting as students. Then you can let them model for one another. These two forms of modeling make a direct connection to practice, but not the powerful connection that one-on-one modeling affords.

Finally, coaches can simply model in individual classrooms. The power of such efforts comes from the fact that they directly challenge the claim that "this will not work with my class." The class in question *is* the teacher's class, so that challenge can be answered directly. Coaches must remember that they should think through the needs and personalities of individual children before modeling, and that they should be prepared not to be perfect. Our caution about one-on-one modeling comes not because we think it won't be effective; we just worry that it won't be feasible. There are organized ways to include direct modeling with children, though, in group formats. In the sections that follow we examine some possibilities.

Lesson Study

An interesting model for instructional improvement has been developed in Japan. The approach is called *lesson study* (Lewis, 2002). It assumes that instructional improvement comes from deep analysis of instruction. Modeling is an important

part of the cycle. In a lesson-study cycle, a group of teachers meets together to identify goals and then construct a lesson plan to enact the goals. One member of the planning team volunteers to implement the lesson, while the rest of the team watches the lesson, collecting evidence of its effectiveness in addressing the goal. The team meets to discuss the evidence and to improve the lesson, sometimes reteaching the revised one and returning through the steps in the cycle.

American coaching models have used versions of this team-based modeling cycle effectively. In Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL), a model used in Boston public schools, teachers work in teams to study aspects of reader's and writer's workshop (Schwartz, McCarthy, Gould, Politziner, & Enyeart, 2003). They establish a lab site, a classroom where team members demonstrate workshop lessons for the rest of their cohort, meeting afterwards to debrief. Although all members of a CCL course take turns modeling at some point, the system also provides continuous direct application of theory, witnessed by the entire team.

Model Classrooms

An even more intensive modeling approach is used in the reform program, America's Choice (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003). Interestingly, as in CCL, the goal of this reform model is to implement reader's and writer's workshops. In this case, though, the coach begins by borrowing a classroom for 6 or 8 weeks and teaching the workshops directly. Once the coach is comfortable, teachers at that grade level can come and watch the coach teach. This procedure ensures that the coach has direct expertise in teaching the curriculum at each grade level, and provides a running model of implementation that is accessible to teachers. It means, though, that the coach can only serve one grade level at a time.

Using Video

All of the approaches to demonstration that we have described can be enhanced and made more efficient through the use of video. In fact, whenever coaches model, they should consider collecting video evidence, because those videos can bring work inside the classroom to sessions outside the classroom. We find adults somewhat reluctant to be taped, so we make the following commitment to them: We will only use the tape if they approve afterward. We view this kind of virtual modeling as a reasonable choice for coaches who work with multiple teachers and want to bring theory into real classrooms with real children. Advances in digital camcorders have made it relatively inexpensive to capture clear footage with good acoustic quality.

PRACTICE

After theory building and modeling, teachers need time to mull over new ideas and practice new techniques. This simply makes good sense; if you ask teachers to do

something as complex as improving instruction in an environment as complicated as real classrooms, with their own specific climates and procedures, they need time to get comfortable. It is somewhat embarrassing for us to report that we neglected this fact; we often expected our adult learners to build theory with us, watch demonstrations of its utility, and then enact it for us immediately back in their schools. Besides the general tension such a system engenders, it is unlikely that any products (assessments, work samples, observations, or reflections) collected in such a system represent the true potential of the adults to internalize and use the new ideas. Rather, such a system is only a test of wills, and is likely to provide only shallow implementations.

We have learned to avoid such mistakes. Our general strategy is to be more interactive at all levels of the cycle. We build time and strategies for checking understanding during theory building. We construct various demonstrations and allow for our participants to ask questions after watching them or participating in them. And then we ask them if they are ready to try the new ideas. If they say *no*, we return to theory and demonstration. If they say *yes*, we ask them how long they would like us to wait before providing feedback.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is essential to a professional support cycle. At first, coaches must acknowledge that although they are very excited to watch teachers teach, and although they have strong relationships with their teachers, teachers might be anxious. This anxiety has many sources. First, teachers might be anxious to please coaches, anxious to show that they are competent. Second, they might be afraid that the opposite is true, that someone will "catch them" and uncover their inadequacies. They might be anxious that they could be embarrassed in front of their peers, that the coach will tell other teachers about their weaknesses. Finally, they might be anxious that the coach will report information to the principal, influencing their formal evaluations. Coaches must anticipate each of these anxieties and make overt efforts to relieve them.

Feedback about teaching should take a before–during–after structure. Coaches should interact with teachers *before* providing feedback, telling them exactly when, why, and how they will observe them. They should elicit input from a teacher, inviting the teacher to indicate specific areas of concern that the coach should attend to. And the coach should review procedures that will be used both *during* and *after* the observation.

We conduct many observations of teaching, and we have learned to use formulaic language beforehand to attempt to reduce anxiety. Here is an example:

"I am excited about my observation time tomorrow. Remember that I am observing so that I can evaluate the success of my own professional development in _____. I know that you are working hard to implement the ideas, and I am interested to see how they work in your classroom. I am really only going to be looking for _____. Are there any specifics that you want me to focus on? While I am in your room, I will be taking notes. I will try to stay out of your way; I won't talk to you or to the children. I will stay for _____. I will give you feedback about what I saw _____. Then we can plan next steps together. If this lesson is going well, we can work on something new. If not, I will help you by modeling, coplanning, or arranging for you to visit another teacher. Either way, the only person that I will talk to about this observation is you."

This preobservation meeting can be very brief, perhaps lasting only 5 minutes, but it is not optional. It serves the important purpose of reviewing and specifying the contract the coach has with the adult learner; it cements and focuses procedures; it provides the teacher a chance to participate. It directly addresses, out loud, all of the anxieties that the teacher might have.

"Getting into classrooms to observe more" is one of the concerns that we hear from the coaches with whom we work. While some schools and districts must negotiate the specifics of observations with their teachers' collective bargaining units, we tend to answer that professional support is impossible without feedback—both to the adult learners and to the coach. We also contend that observations must be conducted for every teacher, at regular intervals, and only later repeated for those who request or need additional feedback.

Observations

While we see the preobservation meeting as essential for all observations, coaches have choices to consider for what they do *during* the observation. In order to plan professional support in meaningful ways, coaches must have feedback on the relative success and failures of their work. They must receive that feedback, though, as measures of the quality of their own work rather than of the work their teachers are doing.

To go beyond our own experiences with observations, we have examined formal observation tools used in early childhood settings (Walpole & Blamey, 2007b). This work has identified several common strategies that coaches can adopt to make their observations more focused. They include checklists, scales, quality rubrics, and open-ended procedures. If a coach is designing and implementing a reflexive professional support system, each of these tools can actually be designed collaboratively, with teachers contributing dimensions of teaching they think are important. Such a construction helps to focus the coach and also communicates to

the teachers that the purpose of the observation is specifically linked to the content of the theory and demonstration.

Checklists are relatively low-stakes observation tools. They document the presence or absence of specific characteristics of the classroom environment (e.g., children's literature is displayed; leveled texts are organized; centers are present) or instructional procedure (e.g., the teacher names and models the strategy; the teacher provides guided practice; the students engage in independent application). Checklists might be an early strategy for observation; if they are constructed with and given to teachers in advance, all teachers can feel empowered to earn a perfect score. The problem, though, is that checklists are not useful for capturing or reflecting on quality.

Scales go a step further than checklists, but they are still fairly safe, controlled tools. Scales can identify specific areas of focus and then provide documentation of how often they are observed. For example, in a professional support cycle focused on increasing explicitness in teacher-directed instruction, a scale might include individual items targeting modeling, use of manipulatives, use of physical gestures, every-pupil-response techniques, and paired-practice techniques. Each of those could be identified as present *never*, *somewhat*, or *often* during the observation period. Slightly more information is provided, but that information is still more about surface-level implementation than real instructional quality.

More open-ended tools and procedures are necessary to focus attention on instructional quality, but totally open-ended observation procedures are not advisable. They demand incredible skills on the part of the coach and provoke unfocused feedback to the teacher. Rather, an open-ended observation can be more focused; it can be derived directly from the lesson plan that was developed from theory and used for demonstration. For example, if teachers are learning to implement Tier-Two vocabulary instruction (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002), they can use the characteristics of that instruction to make an observation framework. Figure 5.8 provides an example.

During observation with such a frame, the coach simply collects evidence in each of the categories in the frame. The trick here is for the coach to be entirely present and attentive to what *is* happening rather than concerned about what *could be or should be* happening. Later, just after the observation, the coach can reflect on the quality, taking care to be constructive and to offer assistance.

After conducting any type of focused classroom observation, coaches must provide feedback to their learners. Teachers might worry about what the coach observed, so we think that timing is important. In fact, the sooner the feedback can come, the better. Otherwise, we find coaches spending too much time on the form (rather than the content) of the feedback and teachers forgetting too much about the instruction to really benefit. The important thing is for coaches to be honest, specific, and supportive, both of the teacher's efforts and about next steps.

Observation frame: Teaching Tier-Two words
The strategy requires teachers to choose 3 to 4 Tier-Two words from a children's literature read-aloud. I noticed
The strategy requires that you say the word, and children repeat. I noticed
The strategy requires that you tell how the word was used in the text. I noticed
The strategy requires that you tell a child-friendly definition. I noticed
The strategy requires that you give examples of the word used in multiple, unrelated contexts. I noticed
The strategy requires that you invite children to construct an example. I noticed
The strategy requires that you have children repeat the word. I noticed
Overall, I noticed
Here are some questions that I had:

FIGURE 5.8. An example of a focused, open-ended observation template.

Over time, a coach can develop many focused observation frames, specifically tied to work accomplished outside the classroom. The coach can use multiple frames, observing gradually longer and longer portions of instruction, once many different instructional strategies have been attended to in professional support cycles. To maintain momentum, it is important to communicate to teachers that items from previous cycles continue. A first observation might include only one instructional procedure. A second observation might include the first one and a new one. Gradually, a coach can develop frames and even choices of frames that together constitute full, quality implementation of the entire initiative.

School Walkthroughs

The observation strategies we have described are time intensive. There are times when coaches might need to initiate some changes more quickly; there are also times when coaches need to gather insights about the relative quality of the entire curriculum as it is currently being enacted across classrooms. We recommend school walkthroughs as strategies to accomplish this. School walkthroughs, like checklists used to guide observations, are opportunities to reflect on the presence or absence of items, or the general quality of the instructional environment. They are not appropriate avenues for directing intensive personal feedback to teachers.

One strategy we believe to be especially useful, when applied at periodic intervals in an instructional-improvement initiative, is the *standards-based walkthough* (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003). A standards-based walkthrough builds community and collaboration, and, although it involves every single classroom and teacher in a school, it is quick and relatively low-stakes. The reason for this is that the walkthough itself happens when children are not in the building and no one is teaching—it happens after school or on a building-level professional development day. The purpose of the walkthrough is for teachers to visit classrooms to look for evidence that the curriculum is being implemented there. Coaches (or principals) form cross-grade teams and provide them a checklist or format to focus their attention. These teams take a tour of the school, all at the same time, and come to a consensus of the many ways that the curriculum is visible. Since the teams comprise teachers from different grade levels or content areas, each has specific insights to offer the others about why certain classrooms might be organized differently. After the walkthrough, each member of the school faculty can commit to improving his or her classroom environment in specific ways.

Other walkthroughs take other specific forms. We have been developing a specific walkthrough form using a procedure called *innovation configuration* (Roy & Hord, 2003, 2004). An innovation configuration is a type of rubric, designed for a specific setting, where individuals implement a complex innovation in different ways. What better way to describe a coaching model! The designer of the innovation

first describes its components implemented in an ideal fashion. Then the designer visits real settings where the innovation is being tried (in this case, classrooms) and collects information in the form of actual descriptions. Finally, those descriptions are ordered, from least-like the ideal to most-like the ideal, and they constitute a realistic road from very-weak implementation to very-strong implementation. For example, the "ideals" column for an innovation configuration that we are using to guide our own walkthroughs in Reading First schools is provided in Figure 5.9. When we use it, we get feedback on the extent to which our professional support system for these schools is working, and we use that feedback to consider our next steps.

MAINTAINING COHERENCE

Unfortunately for coaches, the proof of professional development is in the pudding. That pudding is made from an untested recipe, stirred by multiple chefs, and cooked on a stove with an unpredictable heating element. Struggling schools, especially, get feedback about whether their efforts are effective, and that feedback comes with state-mandated test results and reports of adequate yearly progress. The likelihood of success is greatly improved when the professional development system is coherent, pooling time and talents rather than dissipating them. Cobb (2005) contrasted a failed initiative with a successful one. The real difference was coherence. In the unsuccessful school, the services of a consultant and a new curriculum were hastily contracted; in the successful one, a school-level leadership team examined data, chose a focus, arranged for support on their own terms, and coordinated the support so that all professional learning for the staff was coherent and linked directly to the needs of the school evidenced in its data.

This is not always the case, especially for teachers working in high-risk, high-needs schools. In fact, those schools are very likely to suffer multiple externally controlled initiatives, some from the federal government, some from the state, and some from the district. Teacher time might be fragmented among many required professional learning sessions—perhaps about science, technology, literacy, and safety all in the same week. Coaches work with principals and district and state staff to protect teacher time and allow for a coherent focus on the school's professional support goals in order for teachers to really benefit from a professional support system. Figure 5.10 is an innovation configuration that we have used to document the collective efforts of principals and coaches working in reform-oriented elementary school initiatives.

This issue of coherence applies very specifically to the coach's own choices about using time. Reports that coaches spend a large amount of time on administrative tasks (e.g., Deussen et al., 2007) trouble us; if a coach is to enact a coherent professional support system with attention to theory, demonstration, modeling,

Physical environment
The classroom is neat, clean, and organized so that the teacher can monitor all children and accomplish whole-group and needs-based instruction and so that children can get the materials they need. Wall space is used to display student work and curriculum-related materials that children need to accomplish tasks.
Curriculum materials
There is one core reading program in active use. There is physical evidence of text-level and word-level skills and strategies targeted in the classroom environment. Texts and manipulatives for whole group, small group, and independent practice are organized and available.
Children's literature
There is a large classroom collection of high-quality children's literature deliberately organized and in active use that includes narratives, information texts, and multicultural texts.
Instructional schedule
There is a posted schedule inside and outside the classroom to define a diet of whole-group and needs-based instruction; teacher and student activities correspond to the schedule.
Whole-group instruction
Whole-group instruction is used to introduce new concepts and to model strategies. Children have multiple opportunities to participate and respond during instruction.
Small-group instruction
Small-group instruction is used to reinforce, reteach, review, or extend. Each child spends some time in a small group each day; small-group instruction is clearly differentiated. Children have multiple opportunities to participate and respond during instruction.
Independent practice
Children work alone, in small groups, or in pairs to practice skills and strategies that have been previously introduced. They read and write during independent practice. They do this with a high level of success because the teacher organizes independent practice so that it is linked to whole-group and small-group instruction.
Management
The classroom is busy and active, but focused on reading. Classroom talk is positive and academic, including challenging vocabulary. Children know how to interact during whole-class, small-group, and independent work time. Very little time is spent teaching new procedures.

FIGURE 5.9. Ideal descriptions of components of a specific elementary school initiative.

Instructional materials			
4	3	2	1
There is clear evidence that the leaders in this building made thoughtful choices to purchase commercial curriculum materials to meet school-level needs.	There is evidence that the leaders this building are in the process of choosing commercial instructional materials to meet school-level needs.	There is evidence that commercial materials were purchased, but no evidence that these decisions were made based on school-level needs.	There is no evidence that new commercial materials were purchased for this project.

Word identification and fluency strategies			
4	3	2	1
There is evidence that the leaders have chosen noncommercial instructional strategies and implemented them fully.	There is evidence that the leaders have chosen noncommercial instructional strategies, but they were not fully implemented.	There is evidence that the leaders are considering noncommercial instructional strategies.	There is no evidence that new noncommercial instructional strategies were used in this project.

Oral vocabulary and comprehension strategies			
4	3	2	1
There is evidence that the leaders have chosen noncommercial instructional strategies and implemented them fully.	There is evidence that the leaders have chosen noncommercial instructional strategies, but they were not fully implemented.	There is evidence that the leaders are considering noncommercial instructional strategies.	There is no evidence that new noncommercial instructional strategies were used in this project.

Study groups			
4	3	2	1
The leaders in this project reflectively designed professional development to include both formal knowledge building and collaborative study groups.	The leaders in this project reflectively designed professional development, and it is partially implemented.	The leaders in this project have conceptualized a comprehensive professional development system, but it is not implemented.	The leaders in this project delivered professional development, but there is no evidence that it was comprehensive or adapted to the school's needs.

(cont.)

FIGURE 5.10. Innovation configuration sample for principals and coaches.

In-class support			
4	3	2	1
The leaders in this project provide systematic and regular support to all teachers, based on their level of expertise, through modeling and observation.	The leaders in this project are implementing a system to support most teachers through modeling and observation.	The leaders in this project are implementing a system to support some teachers through modeling and observation.	There is no evidence that the leaders in this project provide systematic and regular support to teachers through modeling and observation.
Use of assessment to drive instruction			
4	3	2	1
The leaders of this project have designed a comprehensive assessment system that teachers use to differentiate instruction.	The leaders of this project have designed a comprehensive assessment system, but teachers do not yet use it to differentiate instruction.	The leaders of this project have designed a partial assessment system that teachers use to differentiate instruction.	There is no evidence that the leaders of this project have designed a comprehensive assessment system that teachers use to differentiate instruction.
Leadership support			
4	3	2	1
There is clear evidence of cohesive support for this initiative as the only one guiding literacy instruction.	There is some evidence of cohesive support for this initiative as the only one guiding literacy instruction.	There are competing reforms that specific leaders support.	There is evidence that building- or district-level leaders actively hinder this initiative.

FIGURE 5.10. *(cont.)*

and feedback, there is no time to lose. Dole and Donaldson (2006) urge new coaches to employ three standards as they think about how to use time: focus all of your attention on your goal, spend the majority of your time inside classrooms, and build the confidence of your teachers that you can help them to improve. Such a laser focus is necessary if coaches are to realize their potential to manage high-quality professional support systems.

MAINTAINING YOUR SANITY

This chapter is long and complicated. We wrote it that way to demonstrate that you have many choices, and you can make different choices over time. Professional

development systems that work are actually elegant solutions to problems in the real life of teachers; they are informed and reformed by real life. Remember the big idea: Professional development systems progress through multiple cycles of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback. Coaches have choices to make in each of those areas. The important thing is to make a choice, live it out, and evaluate it before making another one.