A Close Look at Coaching Conversations in Reading Recovery

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Editor’s note: All names are pseudonyms.

Introduction
Today literacy educators who are interested in teacher professional development have access to an extensive body of literature detailing recommendations for creating high-quality learning experiences for educators. From this body of research, a number of key characteristics of high-quality professional development have emerged, with the following four appearing to be most salient.

High-quality professional development
1. is ongoing and sustained over time.
   (Borko, 2004; Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009; Gilrane, Russell & Roberts, 2008; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Richardson, 2003; Speck, 2002; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss & Shapley, 2007)

2. is grounded in real teaching experiences.
   (Borko, 2004; Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hill, 2009; Morrow & Casey, 2004; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Richardson, 2003; Speck, 2002; Yoon et al., 2007)

3. is differentiated to address the concerns and needs of individual learners.
   (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Richardson, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007)

4. often includes professional learning communities.
   (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Richardson, 2003; Speck, 2002)

Additionally, professional development initiatives that appear to impact student achievement positively often include outside facilitators (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Gilrane, Russell, & Roberts, 2008; Hill, 2009; Richardson, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007) or coaches (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Garet et al., 2008; Porche, 2012; Vernon-Feargans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsbeg, & Amendun, 2013).

As a Reading Recovery® professional, I find the four characteristics of high-quality professional development identified above apparent in Reading Recovery professional development at all levels of training. However, I have found that the existent literature lacks studies of the Reading Recovery professional development model that explore coaching, more specifically the language of coaching in the Reading Recovery context. Thus, I designed this study to address the gap. My goal was to explore and describe what happens within literacy coaching conversations with Reading Recovery teacher leaders-in-training in order to add to the conversation regarding high-quality professional development for teacher leaders and provide meaningful insights for Reading Recovery educators.

Purpose and Questions of Study
The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of the discourse in literacy coaching conversations within the context of training as a Reading Recovery professional. I investigated the language recorded during the literacy coaching sessions conducted by a university trainer with teacher leaders-in-training. Additionally, the teacher leaders-in-training recorded their conversations during their colleague visits, and this afforded the opportunity to explore peer coaching experiences. Importantly, I suggest that this study of coaching will allow Reading Recovery professionals serving as coaches at any level of professional development (i.e., training Reading Recovery or classroom educators and providing ongoing support to them) to glean insights into the important contributions coaching makes to a teacher’s thinking, decision making, expertise, and skill.
My original study was extensive and involved multiple data collection points across the entire academic year during the wide range of teacher leader training experiences. The current discussion focuses on one aspect of this larger study: the conversations and coaching occurring after Reading Recovery lessons taught by the teacher leaders-in-training. This report addresses two questions:

1. What is revealed in analyses of coaching conversations, or interactions, between a teacher leader in training and her university trainer/coach collected at multiple times during the training year?

2. What does an analysis of conversations about instruction between peers, two teacher leaders-in-training, reveal about the nature of peer coaching?

In this discussion, I explore the implications of the findings to offer recommendations for coaching in the Reading Recovery context.

Methods

Participants
Two teacher leaders-in-training volunteered to participate in this study. Catie had 3 years of experience as a Reading Recovery teacher and was training as a Reading Recovery teacher leader in a newly established Reading Recovery site. Jill had 6 years of experience as a Reading Recovery teacher and was training as a Reading Recovery teacher leader after being out of Reading Recovery for 5 years working as a literacy coach at the primary grade level. Sally, a university trainer, served as the coach of both teacher leaders-in-training. She had 20 years of experience training teacher leaders and volunteered to participate in this study.

Data collection and management
Data sources for this report included (a) audio recordings of coaching sessions, (b) transcripts of audio recorded coaching sessions, and (c) three extracts from conversations about instruction conducted by participants following Reading Recovery lessons. Two of the extracts include a teacher leader-in-training (Catie) and the university trainer (Sally); the third extract is a post-lesson conversation held by the two teacher leaders-in-training during a colleague visit (Catie and Jill). This conversation focused on their joint problem solving of issues related to their instruction of Reading Recovery children and is therefore referred to here as a peer coaching conversation.

Audio recordings. The conversations that took place during the instructional coaching sessions were audio recorded. The conversations between Catie and Sally include two interactions regarding a Reading Recovery child’s lessons. One lesson occurred and was recorded within the early weeks of the teacher leader’s training year, and the second was recorded after almost 20 weeks of training. The third recorded conversation analyzed and reported here was a peer coaching conversation between the two Reading Recovery teacher leaders-in-training, following a Reading Recovery lesson taught by Catie.

Transcripts. Each of the coaching conversations was recorded by the participants independent of me. Upon receiving the audio files, I used Inqscribe to transcribe the audio recordings, resulting in verbatim transcriptions. I saved the transcripts as Microsoft® Word documents in a folder on my computer. When I completed all verbatim transcripts, the audio files and the verbatim transcripts were both uploaded into ATLAS.ti™ — a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software package used to manage such data. They were synced and remained available for the analyses.

Tools applied to examine the coaching conversations
Reading Recovery professionals are members of a “discursively mediated community” where concepts such as best practices in literacy instruction, the effective teaching of struggling readers, and the establishment of one’s identity as a Reading Recovery professional are socially constructed (Hruby, 2001, p. 51). For this study, I applied three tools to examine the coaching conversations and to look deeply at these naturally occurring interactions. These included discursive psychology, the Discursive Action Model, and conversation analysis which are described below.

Discursive psychology is concerned with events of everyday life and the social interactions between people that take place in both natural and institutional settings. Discursive psychology is a version of psychology that frames psychological concepts as discursive practices (Potter, 2012). Within discursive psychology, individuals make meaning through interactions with others. Ontologically, discursive psychology focuses upon what is made visible through interaction, and not what might reside internally for individuals. Thus, the focus in discursive psychology is
on talk as action and not on cognitive constructs. According to Potter (2012), talk, or discourse, is the primary means of human understanding and action.

The Discursive Action Model focuses on how individuals use language for a variety of functions including supporting their versions of events and managing accountability (Edwards & Potter, 1992). I chose to analyze my data using this model because both Reading Recovery and the model’s focus on accountability and responsibility.

Conversation analysis focuses on how talk is organized and allows for close examination of discourse, attending not only to what is said, but how it is said. Conversation analysts attend to micro aspects of speech such as pausing, intonation, rate of speech, and overlapping speech (Jefferson, 2004) to look for patterns within conversational interactions. I applied this technique to my analyses to allow further discoveries.

Data analysis
My data analysis was guided by the Discursive Action Model, conversation analysis, and attention to my two research questions. My analysis included the following phases: (a) repeated listening to audio recordings; (b) verbatim transcriptions of audio recordings; (c) open noticing and annotation of chunks of conversations, or statements; (d) memoing and coding of transcripts within with attention to the Discursive Action Model, conversation analysis, and the research questions; and (e) selecting extracts to include in this discussion.

Completion of the initial data analyses processes (open noticing and annotation of chunks of conversation, or statements) revealed 136 different codes and 525 instances of coding. The process of memoing and coding the 136 identified codes involved grouping like terms to form categories of related codes. Through this process, I discerned five categories of data: Questioning, Accountability, Fact and Interest (Discursive Action Model), Research Process, and Other. Finally, for this discussion of results, extracts representative of the category of Accountability were selected and analyzed further. This analysis included indicating very specifically my observations of the various speech aspects apparent in each person’s dialogue. As is typical in studies with a discursive psychology framework, I have used the symbols of Jeffersonian transcription to highlight particular aspects of speech including emphasis, volume, elongation of sounds, rate, and pauses (Jefferson, 2004).

These symbols are displayed in Table 1, and the interpretation of these features are shared in the discussion of the extracts. It is suggested that noting the meanings of the symbols before reading the extracts will enhance interpretation of the dialogue.

Results
To detail results of this study, three areas of findings are presented. First, key, relevant observations revealed by consideration of all transcripts analyzed are presented to establish initial understandings. Second, this discussion is followed by display and discussion of extracts collected both early in one teacher leader’s training year and then again later in the training year to explore changes observed over time in the instructional/coaching experiences shared by the teacher leader in training and the trainer coach. And third, one transcript of peer coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Jeffersonian Transcription Symbols and Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Brackets indicate overlapping talk and sections of overlap are aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑ Vertical arrows indicate an increase in pitch and are presented prior to pitch deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Underlining indicates emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP Uppercase letters denote loud speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>° Degree symbol before and after a selection notes quieter speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= Latching, or unbroken talk, is indicated by equal signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.) Indication of a pause shorter than .2 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.5) A longer pause with the length in seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; &lt; Greater than and less than symbols indicate sped up talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt; Less than and greater than symbols indicate slowed down talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? A question mark indicates rising intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heh Heh indicates laughter without words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Laughter within a word is noted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me:: Colons note extended sounds</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

in the context of a colleague visit shared by the two teacher leaders-in-training is presented. To facilitate this discussion of results, the teacher leaders-in-training are referred to as teachers, representative of their role as teachers of Reading Recovery children, and the university trainer is referred to as a coach.

**General observations**

The analyses of the recorded coaching conversations revealed that the discourse of coaching conversations within this Reading Recovery teacher leader training context categorized as *Accountability* focused on teacher decision making which included teacher responsibility taking.

Within the overall finding of teacher decision making, I found that coaches often probed for teachers’ rationales for decisions. Teachers also offered their accounts of decision making and rationales in response to comments made by a coach, and sometimes, they offered rationales spontaneously, without being prompted by questions or comments.

These findings, reflecting the larger discourse analyses of the data collected during this study, are also observed in the following extract discussions.

For the purposes of this discussion, I present specific extracts of coaching conversations from the large data set to explore teacher-coach interactions and the potential of coaching to support and extend teacher proficiencies in both decision making and instructional moves. Before each extract is presented, I provide minimal but necessary contextual information. After each extract is presented, I offer a line-by-line analysis of the language of the coaching conversation (discourse analysis), highlighting the accountable talk of the teacher, discursive resources employed by the participants, and noted aspects of speech. I share implications and reflections on the coaching experience.

**Extract 1**

*Coaching conversation following a lesson*

The first excerpt (Figure 1) is drawn from a coaching conversation held following Catie’s lesson with a Reading Recovery child, a lesson that occurred early in Catie’s training year and within the first weeks of the child’s series of Reading Recovery lessons. The coach, Sally, and Catie are discussing the actions Catie took to ensure that the student wouldn’t incorrectly build the word can as she worked with magnetic letters during the breaking portion of the lesson (Clay, 2016). The magnetic letters are used so that students have opportunities to construct words letter by letter. This task for the child involves correct letter orientation, correct sequencing (the word is constructed with the initial letter first, the middle letter next, and the final letter last), and correct directional movement (the word is constructed left to right following the constraints of printed English). In this extract, Sally asks a series of very direct questions that require Catie to articulate rationales for the multiple teaching actions she applied.

**Discourse analysis**

In Line 1, Sally asks Catie to think about specific actions she took to help the student construct the word can correctly with magnetic letters. Sally uses the question words of “can you” and “what.” She also signals that the teaching was effective by saying “make sure she couldn’t go wrong” (Lines 1 and 2). After a brief pause, Catie offers one action she took (Line 3). In Line 4, Sally offers “yeh” which in this case serves as a continuer (Schegloff, 1982). Catie’s continuation of her turn of talk in Lines 5 and 6 serve as confirmation of “yeh” as a continuer. In this turn of talk, Catie highlights the action of the student in response to her teaching action. In Line 7, Sally agrees that the teaching action taken by Catie was “helpful.” She then prompts Catie for another example of teaching that helped the child in “getting it correctly” (Lines 8 and 9). Catie pauses slightly before, with rising intonation that is common when asking a question, she offers another example of her teaching that contributed to the student’s success (Line 10). According to Schriffin (1987), the rising intonation from a speaker is a solicitation for recognition from the hearer. Sally provides that recognition on Line 11 and there is some overlapping speech. Overlapping speech can occur when one speaker is ending a turn and another is beginning a turn (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) and shows participants’ attention to the turn-by-turn nature of talk (Jefferson, 1988). In this case, the overlap seems to indicate the receipt of the information from Sally, while Catie says “or” which might mean she is going to offer another teaching decision.

Just after the overlapping talk, Sally asks a specific question about an action Catie took (Lines 11 and 12). In Line
13, Catie responds by providing the specifics of the action. The rest of Catie’s turns (Lines 15 and 17) are agreements with the summary offered by Sally (Lines 14 and 16). Sally ends the exchange with a compliment (Line 18).

**Discussion**
In this extract, Catie articulates specific instructional moves she made in her responses to the direct questioning and the confirmations of the coach. In naming her specific teaching actions, Catie is taking responsibility for her teaching decisions. She articulates clear thinking about her teaching actions as she responds to the coach; and, Sally used a variety of questions and prompts to engage Catie in reflecting on the child and her teaching. In Reading Recovery, effective teacher decision making is highly valued. If coaching conversations are a means of improving teacher decision making by allowing teachers to talk through their decisions and take responsibility for their decisions, this type of interaction appears to have been effective with Catie.

Catie’s responses represent accountable teacher talk. I suggest that not only is she taking responsibility for her teaching; she demonstrates knowledge of the theory and procedures detailed in Clay’s (2016) text, *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Even though she does not attempt to quote the text in this conversation or to reference specific theory, her teaching and comments reflect her grasp of Reading Recovery theory and procedures, and the coach does not discuss procedures directly as it does not appear necessary.

In their article, “Fostering Teacher Learning Through Dialogue in Training Sessions” (2006), Forbes and Briggs highlight various dialogue techniques used to foster socially constructed learning: clarifying, challenging, directing/redirecting attention, eliciting, extending, shaping language, linking, instructing, reinforcing/affirming and summarizing (p. 43). Sally’s comments and questions in the extract above clearly demonstrate these techniques. In Line 4, Sally says “yeh” in response to Catie’s decision to provide a model. Her comment serves as a reinforce-
Catie's confidence in sharing her thinking and concerns discussing lessons with Sally appear to have established the focus of this coaching conversation. Catie leads this interaction, and the coach, Sally, is contributing. The teacher, Catie, is leading the conversation by sharing her re-evaluation of the child's reading grade-level materials strategically. In her response, Catie does some hedging (“well,” “I hope so,” “um”) and pausing. Her use of “well” at the beginning of the turn is setting up a contrast, or dispreferred response, to the earlier statement made by Sally (Pomerantz, 1994). Sally’s comment related to Amanda being ready to leave Reading Recovery might be in contrast to Catie’s assessment, as evidenced by Catie’s hesitations and hedging.

In Line 3, Catie refers to the type of text the child was reading (“she was in some 14s” — meaning Level 14 text). In response to how the child was reading the text, Catie comments (Lines 3 and 4) on the action she felt she needed to take as a teacher: “I felt like I just needed to slow it down a little bit.” This comment was offered spontaneously and suggests the teacher is taking responsibility for her decision.

In Line 5, Catie mentions the influence of “something we talked about in class.” The mentioning of this connection to the formal graduate classes she is engaged in may be an effort to support her earlier teaching decision (of needing to “slow it down a bit”) and add credibility to her decision. As Edwards and Potter (1992) discuss, building consensus and collaboration is a way of “warranting the factuality of a version” (p. 163).

Catie’s turn of talk in Line 5 ends with her voice trailing off in laughter. For Catie, the laughter may be attached to her vulnerability around her teaching decision now being linked to new information she gleaned in class. According to Glenn (2003), when a first speaker offers “laughables” it may be in a self-deprecating way and may indicate a speaker’s ability to laugh at oneself (p. 104). In Line 6, Sally takes up the invitation to laugh from Catie and laughs as well. Glenn (2003) notes that laughter is sometimes an indication of agreement. In Line 7, Catie highlights an action the child took, and that is: “using her finger to do the whole” (Line 7 and 8). Sally seems to be offering another descriptor of the same child action in Line 9. Sacks (1992) offers an explanation of this type of feature, i.e., a description from one individual eliciting further description or an extension from another. More specifically, this interaction demonstrates the joint nature of this conversation in which understanding is being built by both participants. The teacher, Catie, is leading the interaction, and the coach, Sally, is contributing.
In Lines 10–12, Catie highlights two problematic student actions (“really slow” and “looking at me”) and the decisions she made in response to the problematic action (“I had to say what can you do to help yourself” and “baby her through this”). In response to Catie’s comments, Sally offers “yeh” which serves as an invitation for Catie to continue (Schegloff, 1982). In Line 14, Catie does continue by commenting on her thoughts and what she wants the child to do. Interestingly, she uses the pronoun “we” in this comment, saying “this is not what we want.” Catie seems to be speaking of the Reading Recovery “we,” as the type of student dependency she describes is not what is valued or endorsed in Reading Recovery instruction. Catie then demonstrates responsibility taking by offering what she wants the child to “know.” In her turn of talk on Line 16, Sally adds to Catie’s comments about what the child needs to do by saying “do it.”

In Line 17, Catie begins her turn of talk by repeating what Sally has just stated. This interaction between Catie and Sally on Lines 14–17 displays more joint construction and agreement around teacher decision making and goals for student action. In Line 17, Catie continues her list of actions that she wants the student to take “to know if she is right or wrong,” “needs to change it,” and “move on.” In Line 18, she offers her thoughts regarding her decision making and takes responsibility by deciding to “make it a little easier.” She also reports that she is still “questioning” her teaching (Line 19). In Line 20, Sally asks a clarifying question about what Catie is questioning (“whether it’s still too hard”) and Catie, in Line 21, takes it up as a question and answers affirmatively that she is still questioning if it is too hard for the student to “do the work.”
Discussion
This extract allows consideration of Catie’s development over time as this post-lesson/coaching conversation occurred almost 20 weeks after the coaching conversation presented in Extract 1. In this instance, Catie is clearly directing the coaching conversation and operating with a higher degree of confidence; willing to share her reflections, her observations, her doubts, and her next moves rather spontaneously. Sally does not ask many direct questions but encourages Catie to reflect on her teaching and clarify her thinking and the student’s instructional needs. Their interaction suggests that Catie may now view Sally as a colleague to collaborate with in her problem solving. As Jones (1995) has noted, such relationships are concomitant with increased independence and autonomy displayed by the teacher who is being coached. Catie exhibits the traits of a reflective teacher able to evaluate and direct her instructional decisions and actions independently.

Extract 3
Conversation between peers following instruction
Figure 3 displays a conversation shared by Catie and Jill, peers in teacher leader training. During their training experiences, the two engaged in many opportunities to teach for one another and problem solve instructional challenges together. When sharing lessons, their conversations created peer coaching experiences. In this extract, Catie has just taught her Reading Recovery student and Jill is serving as her coach. Interestingly, as the postlesson sharing unfolded, Jill shifted the focus of the conversation to her own recent teaching and the difficulties she had experienced. At this point, Catie responded as a coach and the extract displays her coaching of Jill.

Discourse analysis
This extract opens with Jill sharing with Catie her concerns about a lesson she taught previously, and this prompts Catie to assume the role of coach. Jill uses the phrase “you know” which brings Catie into a shared knowledge experience (Schriffin, 1987). She refers to her lessons as “really awful” (Line 2). Catie responds with a ‘why’ question (Line 4). In her response to the question, Jill’s pitch is elevated and she emphasizes the word “because” (Line 5). In this instance, both “Why” (the first part) and “because” (the second part) are an adjacency pair (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Jill pauses before offering a reason for why the lesson was awful. There is some laughter in her response (Line 5). This laughter may serve to soften the discomfort involved with acknowledging a mistake in teaching (Glenn, 2003). Catie’s turn of talk in response to Jill’s statement is laughter (Line 6), so she may be joining in the laughter to ease Jill’s acknowledgement. Jill continues her explanation (Line 7) to which Catie offers a comment in agreement that sounds somewhat sarcastic in its tone. Having books that are too hard would make the reading very difficult for a Reading Recovery student, and her sarcastic comment is also minimizing the difficulty a bad book choice would create. In her turn of talk beginning on Line 9, Jill discusses her planning for the text and her understanding that her book choice was “horrible.”

When describing her student, Jill uses a three-part list, as she describes her student with “vim and vigor and awesomeness” (Jefferson, 1990; Potter & Edwards, 1992). This discursive device denotes completion (Jefferson, 1990) and lends credibility to her fact construction (Potter & Edwards, 1992). Jill takes responsibility for her teaching actions, as she describes the behavior of her student in response to the text choice and her acknowledgement that “it wasn’t good” referencing her book choice and her student’s subsequent reading of the text. In a lower tone, she reports looking on the back of the book to see the level 4. She is laughing as she mentions the action she will take as a result of this experience (Line 13). Catie responds with laughter again (Line 15) and then repairs when discussing the notion of “fault” (Line 17) (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). The use of laughter in both instances may be smoothing over the difficulty of the notion of fault (Glenn, 2003). Catie concludes (Line 17) and Jill agrees (Line 18) that the poor reading by the student due to the bad book choice was Jill’s “fault.”

Discussion
In this extract, the two teacher leaders-in-training display comfort sharing their perspectives and questions, and Jill responded to all questions posed by Catie in a productive way. Without hesitation or seeming discomfort, Jill offered several examples of her teaching decisions and discussed her responsibility in making the reading difficult for the child, and that was due to her text selection. According to Heritage (1997), the symmetry in their relationship (i.e., both are teacher leaders-in-training) may have allowed Jill to respond with little hesitation, explain her actions, and take responsibility for her teaching decisions.
The interaction above reinforces the importance and potential of teacher colleague visits to support teacher’s professional learning and development. With their peers, it appears that teachers take responsibility for their actions, provide explanations for their decisions, and share important questions. Colleague visits allow teachers the opportunity to problem solve collaboratively and bring alternative perspectives to conversations focused on multiple aspects of teaching and learning. These observations align with Clay’s (2016) suggestions of the power and importance of colleague visits.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The goal of this study was exploration of coaching in the context of Reading Recovery training, a professional development model recognized for high quality. Discourse analysis techniques were applied to recorded coaching conversations to discern implications revealed by examination of the language used by both a coach and those in training. The results include specific findings that may have important implications for those engaged in coaching practices to enhance the professional development of any educators.

Implications of this study are limited in that the teachers studied were Reading Recovery teacher leaders-in-training and they had prior experience as Reading Recovery teachers. This suggests that they entered their current training with more knowledge of procedures and theory than one would expect of a teacher engaged in any level of Reading Recovery training for the first time. Likewise, they would have had previous experiences being coached both during their training year and during subsequent professional development opportunities. This experience may have contributed to their engagement in and their contributions to their current training and coaching situation. Nevertheless, this study revealed the multiple ways a coach

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**Figure 3. Extract of Conversation Between Peers Following Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Turns of Talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jill but I you kno:w when I’m sitting there (.) like in my lessons (.) my really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>awful lessons on Thursday or whenever it was Tuesday or yesterday it seems like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>forever ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Catie why did you say that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jill ↑ because (.) first of all(h) my basket of 3s were reall(h)y 4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Catie heh heh heh heh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jill so three out of the four (.) books =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Catie = that could make some things challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jill were way too hard even though I’d planned for em and I looked through em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>(.) when I did the first one and I was like oh my gosh this is horrible and my little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>girl who is full of vim and vigor and awesomeness when ugh and I’m like OK OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>right there I knew this is not good and oh it wasn’t good and then * I looked back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>it said = heh so guess what I am going to check all the books heh from now(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>on(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Catie heh heh heh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jill and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Catie well that was partly not your fault I mean it was your fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Jill well it was ugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Catie but that I mean was just a miss (.) whatever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(university trainer) and teacher leader-in-training (teacher) engage and benefit from coaching experiences in relation to decision making and accountability. I therefore suggest that such understandings are of benefit to all Reading Recovery professionals engaged in supporting the professional learning of any teacher through coaching.

Contributions of the coach during post-lesson conversations
Reflecting on the discourse of the coach participating in this study, specific techniques were found to promote teacher reflection, decision making, and responsibility-taking. These coaching techniques reflect the dialogue techniques offered by Forbes and Briggs (2006) discussed previously as well as

- engaging teachers in sharing their observations of student's responses and behaviors;
- restating teacher's comments and linking observations to theory;
- seeking the teacher's reasons for specific instructional procedures;
- reinforcing responses by agreement or by offering extensions;
- extending teacher’s comments with links to procedures;
- confirming teacher’s observations; and
- validating teacher’s thinking and contributions.

When considering evidence of changes in coaching conversations over time, it was apparent that the coach studied assumed a shared, positive, problem-solving stance with the teacher leader-in-training and this was most clearly revealed in the coaching conversation occurring after multiple weeks of training, and therefore after multiple coaching opportunities. At this later time, the coach honored her teacher's independent decision making and responsibility-taking and followed the teacher's lead without the need to pose questions to direct her thinking or engagement.

The data, gathered at two points during the training year, do not allow documentation of the precise changes that may have occurred incrementally during the intervening coaching experiences. However, with this evidence we might hypothesize that this coach was effective in supporting the development of teacher leaders-in-training who became more effective observing their students, analyzing instructional needs, considering the implications of theoretical understandings, and adjusting instruction independently and effectively. It appears that the coach and those in training built a level of trust that allowed them to grow together and resolve any challenges that arose.

Contributions of the teacher leaders-in-training during post-lesson conversations with the coach
The examination of the discourse of the teacher leaders-in-training during post-lessons coaching conversations were observed engaging with their coach by

- explaining actions and decisions;
- stating understandings of appropriate instructional procedures;
- linking instruction and decisions to theory demonstrating understandings of connections between theory and practice;
- building on their understandings by referencing specific reader’s behaviors;
- demonstrating accountability by identifying their mistakes;
- sharing confusions, seeking advice, asking questions;
- leading the conversation after multiple experiences; and
- demonstrating autonomy.

In summary, this analysis of accountable talk identified in the conversations of two teacher leaders-in-training confirms the power of coaching to impact and support decision making and responsibility-taking. Not only did the coaching experiences lead to their efficacious engagement in professional problem solving with their coach; their experiences with their coach led to more insights, more self-awareness, and more possibilities. Finally, the important benefits for those in training to share peer coaching and problem-solving opportunities afforded by colleague visits was apparent. Colleague visits afford peers opportunities to further explore theory and teaching procedures in order to improve opportunities for children's learning.
This study confirms that coaching involves two-way communication that is powerful in enhancing the thinking, professional growth, and problem solving of both the teacher leader-in-training and the coach.

In conclusion, this study adds some clarity to our understanding of coaching in the context of Reading Recovery and more specifically in the context of teacher leader training. It confirms that coaching involves two-way communication that is powerful in enhancing the thinking, professional growth, and problem solving of both the teacher leader-in-training and the coach. This realization adds nuanced understanding of the high quality ascribed to Reading Recovery professional development model at all levels of training.

References


