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President's Message

By: Beryl Rogers, FLCA President
Menendez High School Reading Coach/teacher
St. Johns County Public Schools

The role of a coach is changing in St. Johns County. Next year every school will have an instructional coach funded in part by the federal stimulus package. With the change in name from reading to instructional coach come new roles and responsibilities. But the role that will not change is that of being the primary provider of relevant, timely, differentiated staff development. The change in name and job description is the reason why it is important and timely for the State of Florida to offer an endorsement in coaching. The endorsement would raise the status as well as the professionalism of coaches throughout the state and creating a cadre of well-trained individuals who will provide staff development.

As our roles changes we need to continue to be vocal and promote what we do and why we do it, so policy-makers, district personnel, administrators and faculty will understand how vital coaching is to education. We need to be cheerleaders for coaching. In this budget-strained transitional time, we need to remind everyone how much we do to enhance instructional practice and promote student learning.

Beryl Rogers, President



Upcoming FLCA Events

Saturday, September 13

FRA conference
Orlando, FL

States: Pennsylvania &
South Carolina

By The Numbers

559 Current membership
61 Districts Represented
2 Other states represented

Coaching Corner

By: Beryl Rogers, Reading Coach
St. Johns County Public Schools



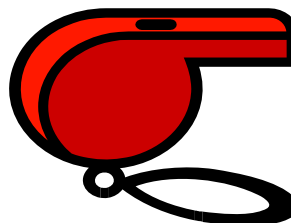
Have you visited the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse website www.literacycoachingonline.org? Check out this great resource sponsored by NCTE and IRA whose mission “to enhance the important work of literacy coaches, reading coaches, reading specialists, and instructional coaches as they strive to increase the quality of teacher instruction and student achievement” is one we should all believe in.

Budget cuts have affected everyone. In St. Johns County this year, part-time coaches had to find creative ways to provide meaningful staff development. You can reduce the role of a coach in a school but you can't reduce the coach's desire to work with teachers! Coaches had the aspiration and training to continue working with teachers promoting best practices. At Menendez High School, we implemented the Parade of Classrooms, an idea we first learned about at the FLARE Reading Leadership Institute last summer. A Parade of Classrooms is like a Parade of Homes only in schools not neighborhoods. Teachers visit each other's classrooms to observe great instruction. To facilitate this, we created a calendar accessible to all through staff email. Teachers entered the date and time of an event in their classroom and other teachers visited the class during their planning. We also created an easy-access blog for discussion and comments about the classroom visits. It was a great way for teachers to collaborate in tough economic times.

COACHES - WE READ

Submitted by: Stacie Kagel - Hothem, Reading Coach
Hillsborough County Public Schools

A core group of media specialists (Angela Russo, John Milburn, Lisa Hughes, Mike Segrest, Kim Howery, Kristin Burnside) and Elementary Media Supervisor, Barbara Rooks of Hillsborough County Public Schools developed a Comic Book Club as a motivational reading program targeting reluctant third, fourth, and fifth grader readers. Twenty three elementary school media specialists collaborated with their reading coaches to teach a five week unit of lessons that included text features found in comic books, the history of comic books, key vocabulary of comic books as well as shared readings of comic books. By the end of the year, the students will have authored their own comic strips. The students were just as excited as the media specialists and reading coaches implementing this project.



From the Front Lines The Advantage Having a Reading Coach

By: Patricia Rouse, Reading Coach
Leon County Public Schools

In 2004, I moved to Tallahassee to take a job as a Reading Coach. When I embarked on this journey, I did not have a clue as to how beneficial this job would be to teachers. I was fortunate to have a leader who instilled in me the importance of researching scientifically based reading programs, seeking reading endorsement and providing professional development for teachers. It was not long before we established a reading block in our school. This allowed every student to receive up to fifty-five minutes of reading instruction daily. It did not matter if the students were FCAT level 1 students or had already achieved level 5 status, we still offered them strategies in reading that would continue to hone in on their individual needs. During the reading block, I was busy meeting with teachers, students, and administrators on data, pacing, observing classrooms and monitoring individualized student progress. It did not take long for teachers across the curriculum to begin inviting me into their classrooms.

The key phrase in the latter sentence is “teachers across the curriculum began inviting me into their classrooms.” This opened the door to a powerful shift in the curriculum because now the most essential item in education (reading) was being shared with Math teachers, Science teachers, Social Studies teachers, Physical Education teachers and even Guidance Counselors. They were learning to infuse reading into their curriculum in an effort to enhance student performance. Reading is the essence of everything, and the teachers in my school were in the process of embracing the foundation of learning. They realized that if children were not taught certain reading strategies they would struggle regardless of the subject matter. For example, reading is a key element in math because performance tasks are an essential part of the 4th, 8th, and 10th grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). “Student responses to the FCAT Reading, Mathematics, and Science performance tasks are scored holistically by trained readers. The term holistic is used to emphasize the importance of the whole work, including the interdependence of its parts” (Holistic Scoring Methods, 2009).

In the aforementioned quotation, the word interdependence is powerful because the student has to be able to decipher what the question is asking. “Sometimes the reasons students are unable to meet a target is because they lack foundational skills” (Success for All, 2008, p.68). Low reading skills can adversely affect the way a child interprets a question. Therefore, it does not matter how skilled they are in science class, *they have to be able to read the question*. The gist of this article is that any school with a full-time reading coach has an advantage over other schools for various reasons. Below are four key reasons reading coaches are advantageous to a school:

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1. Reading Coaches are trained experts in the area of reading. It is a part of their job description to figure out what went wrong with reading and offer solutions and feedback to all stakeholders.
2. Reading Coaches are professional development liaisons *within* the school. They curtail the need to hire outside consultants to inform the faculty on data, progress monitoring, and staff development.
3. Reading Coaches serve as quasi-administrative personnel when it comes to disaggregating data. They work side by side with the administrative team to extract trends in data that may be affecting the overall performance of the school.
4. Reading Coaches train beginning teachers, veteran teachers, and other faculty members on new reading initiatives.

While the list of the advantages of having a reading coach may be endless, the aforementioned reasons are enough for any district to begin to restore these positions in all schools in their district.

“Sometimes teachers are stronger or weaker in key parts of the cycle of instruction, and this may account for students’ failure to master key skills” (Success for All, 2008). For this cause, it is imperative that every school and every school district across the state and nation enlist the services of Reading Coaches in their organization. Finally, if an administrator or district decides to cut reading coaches or reduce them to part-time, they should seek to become informed on how devastating a blow this could be to student performance. Reading Coaches are the epitome of growth and success in the curriculum of every school because they are the subject area experts.

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Coaching for Improvement

By: Brian Dorman, Reading Coach
 Seminole County Public Schools

Schools must focus on learning and provide the assistance necessary for all students to reach their full potential (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). To achieve this goal, schools need to provide meaningful and relevant professional development. The most powerful, job-embedded, and authentic application of professional development is coaching (Fogarty & Pete, 2007; International Reading Association, 2006).

Recently, I had an opportunity to work with an Intensive Reading teacher working in a middle school in a Central Florida district. The teacher had been teaching using a district adopted reading program for three years. During the most recent observation, the teacher was classified at the routine stage of Level of Use (LoU) (See table). The stages of LoU were defined by the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of examining change in the school (Horsley & Loucks - Horsley, 1998).

Table: Levels of Use

Level of Use	Description
0 Non-use	No interest; no action; no plan to use the intervention
1 Orientation	Beginning to gather information and talk with others about the intervention
2 Preparation	Beginning to plan ways to use the intervention
3 Mechanical	Most concerned with how to teach the intervention; materials needed; affect on the teacher; messy lesson (feel like a new teacher with not much success)
4a Routine	Comfortable with the lessons and uses the intervention appropriately
4b Refinement	Begins to examine impact on student learning
5 Integration	Begins to collaborate with other teachers who have successfully used the intervention. Begins to look at ways to improve the intervention
6 Renewal	Begins to look at how the intervention can be used in other areas and new ways; Evaluates success of intervention

Adapted from Hall, G., & Hord S. (1987). *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

This teacher exhibited a routine LoU stage because clearly established classroom procedures were still driven by her use of the lesson guide for the reading program. This teacher had not moved into a more advanced level of use because there was no assessment of the impact on student learning taking place. Additionally, the administration felt that this teacher lacked motivation to improve her teaching abilities. This lack of assessment and a perceived lack of motivation led to the determination that this teacher could benefit from coaching.

Analysis

There was genuine concern for students' learning, but the teacher lacked a long term vision of success. The teacher also did not have a clear understanding of how this teaching assignment fit into the school-wide vision. Additionally, this teacher felt as though there was no responsibility to move outside of the program or try to find ways to improve the instructional practices. Many decisions were based on relevant data, but the teacher was not clear about how to implement necessary changes to improve learning. Furthermore, the teacher indicated the desire to move out of the routine level of use.

Action Plan

Literacy coaches are able to help other teachers become more reflective and thoughtful in their teaching (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). Coaching was defined as "a service that enhances curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, resources, intervention, and community engagement to improve reading, writing and content learning" (Moxley & Taylor, 2006, p. 9). Coaches help teachers achieve success in (a) behavioral change, (b) professional development, and (c) learning agility which was defined as the ability to be aware of one's own learning as learning is taking place (Ting & Hart, 2004).

Working with this teacher, coaching focused on addressing the needs of the teacher to better utilize various resources to improve instruction and student learning (Northouse, 2007). By helping this teacher set individual goals that supported the school-wide vision, coaching helped overcome the obstacles in making minor adjustments in instructional practices (Ting & Hart, 2004). These minor adjustments led to an increase in student engagement and learning. The individual goals also helped the teacher understand the school-wide vision and increased the understanding of the larger paradigm through improved communication between the teacher and the administration (Nannus, 1992; Northouse, 2007).

Coaching also helped the teacher develop the cooperative skills necessary in working in collaborative group (Bass, 1990; Nannus, 1992). Nannus further reported that coaching was shown to empower teachers and promote teamwork. When teachers are able to work together in teams, instruction can move rapidly from a routine level of use to one of refinement. The dialog that is necessary to move into the refinement level is that much more powerful when it is conducted in a collaborative environment (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003).

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Literacy Coaching Summit The Best Little Conference in Texas

By: Linda Tuschinski, Area Coordinator
FLaRE/ UCF

When the announcement/invitation to attend “The First National Literacy Coaching Summit & 13th Annual TAMUCC Reading Conference” April 2 through 4, 2009 Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi arrived, I knew I had to attend. My decision proved to be a very wise one as seldom is one fortunate enough to be exposed to so much information among so many knowledgeable experts in just a few days. The summit was co-sponsored by the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the TAMUCC’s College of Education among other sponsors. Dr. Jack Cassidy, writer for IRA’s *Reading Today* publication, was an enthusiastic and efficient committee.

The conference began with a sold-out pre-conference workshop on “What’s Hot and What’s Not” facilitated by Dr. Cassidy and Drew Cassidy based on their research reported in IRA’s *Reading Today* journal (February/March 2009). Dr. Cassidy has been a columnist in RT since 1997. Literacy leaders such as Richard Allington, Timothy Rasinski, Timothy Shanahan, Kathryn Au, Donna Alvermann, to name just a few, had been surveyed for this project. The results provided some surprises but some were no surprise. Attendance so surpassed what had been anticipated that additional chairs and tables were needed, but the atmosphere of a small learning group sustained. As attendees, we were treated to ongoing information about the latest research and trends in literacy, and this was just the beginning of a great weekend.

The next day’s conference kicked off with a keynote by Dr. Nancy Shanklin discussing the importance of literacy coaching and the efforts of many through research to prove its value. It was reassuring to hear that the coaching movement is indeed nationwide and positive results are being researched and recorded --- and it’s here to stay.

Attendees then proceeded to one of the best selections of break-out sessions evidenced at any state, national, or international conference, and unlike at other events, not over-crowded. Florida’s ReLeah Cossett Lent was among these learned presenters and in her session on the “Power of Literacy Learning Communities” delivered a thought-provoking discussion on the responsibilities of educators and the need to teach kids to not just read across the curriculum, but also think across curriculum. This theme of thinking across content areas was continued in several sessions including Patti Martinez and her “thinker’s process.”

Literacy coaching and Response to Intervention (RTI) was a recurring theme throughout the conference. Viewpoints, research, and implementation from various parts of the United States were presented in breakout sessions. “Coaching RtI Considerations and Challenges” by Dr.

Barbara Marinak from Penn State University was one of the most comprehensive and valuable as she shared what she has found in her travels and studies with coaching around the U.S. Other sessions represented coaching in content areas such as math, science, and electives. The importance of data for instructional decision making was another area represented in various sessions as was the coach as a consultant and collaborator as well as a coach.

One of the most informative coaching sessions was by Mary Catherine Moran and Elizabeth Powers on differentiated literacy coaching and the coaching continuum. It's important to mention that Ms. Moran has published a book on the subject: *DIFFERENTIATED LITERACY COACHING, Scaffolding for Student and Teacher Success*. In her book, on page 148, she pays tribute to the state of Florida for being "the first state to form a statewide association for literacy coaches, *The Florida Literacy Coaches Association*..... and how the association is a partnership between a select group of literacy coaches from around the state and the Just Read, Florida! office." (Moran, 2007, p. 148) She talks of the mission statement and gives the web site for downloading for those wanting additional information.

Other learned literacy keynote speakers included Drs. Rita Bean and Mary Ellen Vogt, and author Gary Soto. With these speakers, luncheons provided, a poster session which included wine and cheese, and the many awe-inspiring and knowledge-providing break-out sessions in such a beautiful venue, *The First National Literacy Coaching Summit & 13th Annual TAMUCC Reading Conference* had to be a success, and a must to attend next year!

Reference

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FCAT Update

By: Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner of Education
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, FL

The following information is from a memorandum distributed by the Florida Department of Education and the State Board of Education to all the school district Superintendents regarding changes to the FCAT in 2009 and beyond.

March 31, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner of Education

RE: Changes to FCAT in 2009 and Beyond

As you are aware, all aspects of education are facing budget reductions, and the statewide assessment program is no different. In 2008-09, we eliminated the FCAT NRT, the FCAT Parent Network, and the summer 2009 FCAT retake administration. The purpose of this memorandum is to explain the necessary cuts that have been made for the remaining FCAT administrations, the assessments that are being developed based on the new standards, and end-of-course assessments. You may have already heard of some of these changes as we have been discussing them with groups of educators across the state. Below you will find a description of the planned changes for the program's foreseeable future. Attached is a chart that will assist you in understanding the schedule of events as we begin the transition period between FCAT and the new standards assessments.

Please note that no changes are being made to the 2010 FCAT Reading and Mathematics tests. They are being developed based on the current standards, will continue to be administered as in past years, and will be included in the accountability systems consistent with the current implementation. Also, no changes are being made in the FCAT administration schedule for 2009-10: the Writing assessment will be administered in February 2010, and assessments in Reading, Mathematics, and Science will be administered in March 2010.

Changes to the Existing FCAT Program

- **FCAT Retakes:** All summer FCAT retake administrations will be eliminated beginning with summer 2009.
- **FCAT Science:** Performance tasks (constructed-response items) for FCAT Science will be removed beginning with the spring 2010 test administration. No changes need to be made to the scores reported or use of these scores in the school accountability system.
- **Handscoring:** Although no changes are being made to the FCAT Writing, Reading, and Mathematics tests themselves, we can no longer afford to have every response scored by two readers. All responses to reading and mathematics performance tasks at grades 4, 5, 8, and 10, and writing essays at grades 4

and 8, will be scored by one reader. All tenth grade essays will continue to be scored by two readers. The quality statistics for performance task scoring (e.g., interrater agreements) have been consistently high; therefore, we don't anticipate any negative effects on student or school average scores. We will continue to double-score 20% of all responses to demonstrate that the quality of the scoring process is not different from previous years.

Adjustments will need to be made to the school grading procedures for Writing to accommodate this change. Under the current school grades procedures, schools earn points for Writing based on the percentage of students scoring a 3.5 and above on the essay. Without two readers, a student score of 3.5 will no longer be possible. To accommodate this change for school grades, we propose using the average of the percentage of students scoring a 3 and above and the percentage of students scoring a 4 and above. So, for example, if a school had 80% of its students scoring a 3 and above on Writing and 60% scoring a 4 and above on Writing, the school would earn 70 points $((80+60)/2)$ for the Writing component of school grades. We will be including this proposed rule change during the rule development processes for high school grades that are anticipated to occur in May.

- **FCAT Support Materials:** Except for sample test materials and test administration manuals, all previously published support materials will be eliminated, including *Keys to FCAT*, *Lessons Learned*, *Understanding FCAT Reports*, and *Florida Reads!, Writes!, Solves!, and Inquires!* Because sample test materials are intended to provide students with information about the types of questions on the test prior to taking it, they will still be produced and used as prescribed. The test administration manuals are essential to ensure that all persons involved in test administration complete tasks in the standardized manner prescribed in the manuals. Some previously printed documents will be prepared and posted on the Department's Web site only (e.g., item specifications and sample test answer keys).
- **FCAT Printed Reports:** School and district reports will not be provided in print, but will be available for download from a secure Web site as soon as the accuracy of all results is approved. Printed reports will continue to be distributed for students/parents and will be shipped to districts for distribution.

New FCAT Program

- **Continue Previous Reductions:** All reductions made for 2009 and 2010 will continue for the new FCAT to be implemented in 2011 and beyond.
 - The FCAT Parent Network will no longer be available (printed reports for students/parents will continue to be provided).
 - Summer retakes will no longer be administered.
- **Performance Tasks:** Performance tasks (constructed-response items) will not be included in the new FCAT Reading, Mathematics, Science, or end-of-course exams. As we move the testing schedule later in the year (see the attachment) and administer end-of-course exams in the last two weeks of each semester, this elimination of performance tasks will allow a more rapid turn-around time for reporting and an easier transition to computer-based tests.
- **End-of-Course Exams:** The plans for end-of-course exams are still being finalized. Florida will develop and administer exams in Algebra I beginning in 2010-11, Biology beginning in 2011-12, and

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American History beginning in 2012-13. The timeline and studies for additional end-of-course exams are still under development, but these exams will likely be a combination of assessments developed in Florida, existing published exams purchased from vendors, and existing exams administered through cooperative agreements with other organizations (e.g., Algebra II with the American Diploma Project).

- **Computer-Based Tests:** All end-of-course exams will be administered in computer-based format only, except for limited paper-based versions administered to accommodate students with disabilities. Additionally, the new FCAT will begin transitioning to a computer-based format beginning in 2011-12.

There is a strong commitment by the Florida Legislature and the Department of Education to maintain the kind of quality testing and accountability system that has produced national achievement success for the children of Florida. Even though we have made adjustments to the testing program and may need to make future adjustments, you can be assured that the quality of the assessment system will not be compromised. We will keep in close communication and will notify you of any additional changes as they are known. If you need any clarifications about the attachment describing the transition period between FCAT and the new assessments, please contact Victoria Ash (victoria.ash@fldoe.org) or Cornelia Orr (cornelia.orr@fldoe.org) at 850-245-0513.



Legislative Update

By: Jan Russo
Legislative Advocate
Foundation for Florida's Future

Legislative Update: Proposed budgets cut reading funds and allow them to be used for other purposes

The Senate and House Pre K – 12 appropriations committees recently released their proposed budgets for this session. Reading coaches are primarily funded through “supplemental reading instruction” funds which were instituted under the Just Read, Florida! initiative to ensure our students are reading properly. The proposed budgets cut these funds by 8 percent and allow districts to use the funds for purposes other than reading.

Currently, we at the Foundation for Florida's Future are urging lawmakers to protect reading funds and make sure they are dedicated to reading. As a reading coach you can help! You can contact your local legislators and let them know all the great things these funds do for our students' reading and how vital they are to our children's education.

It is crucial that we use these reading funds on the purpose they were created for—to ensure that Florida's students are reading properly.



Open Letter to Governor Crist and State Legislators

June 1, 2009

Dear Governor Crist and Florida State Legislators,

The Florida Literacy Coaches Association was founded in 2005 to unite literacy coaches across the state and to support and advocate for the literacy needs of all stakeholders in schools across Florida. In this time of financial hardship, if districts and administrators decide to reduce or eliminate coaching positions from schools, what will instruction in schools look like? We advocate for continued funding of the coaching model and want to explain to everyone what reading coaches do.

In a school without coaches, who will do the following?

- Maintain and support beginning teachers
- Implement on-going differentiated professional development for teachers
- Maintain best instructional practices
- Encourage professional collaboration
- Continue content area reading initiatives
- Provide in-service training for state mandates and the reading endorsement
- Facilitate Individual Professional Development Plans
- Help teachers develop and align curriculum maps
- Provide follow through for teachers, coaching for change in education
- Co-teach to improve instruction
- Assist content teachers to develop instructional strategies to help students use and build their own literacy skills.
- Oversee the Reading Leadership Team
- Align literacy goals with the school improvement plan
- Disaggregate and analyze student data
- Supervise and implement progress monitoring
- Share on-going diagnostic reading data with staff
- Ensure proper placement of students and screen new students for correct placement
- Manage reading materials
- Communicate with all stake holders -- principal, D.O.E., district, and teachers
- Maintain databases
- Develop relationships and partner with teachers so their voices can be heard
- Write grants to fund innovative literacy instruction

Since the inception of coaching in 2003, Florida has been one of only five states in the nation that significantly improved reading and math scores, according to the NAEP. Instead of abandoning the coaching model – which has been proven to work – we need to continue to keep literacy coaches in place to build for the future. Some stakeholders state that Florida can't afford to fund coaching; the members of the Florida Literacy Coaches Association contend that Florida cannot afford not to fund coaching. Constituents want the best education for their children. Florida was the literacy trendsetter. Don't let Florida take a step backwards. Literacy coaches support teachers in every aspect of their classroom practice. We need this for Florida's future. Please don't jeopardize our futures by not financially supporting literacy coaches in every school in Florida. Our futures depend on you!

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Areas 12, 13 & 14 – Open

Please note:

In order to maintain our high quality standards of the Florida Literacy Coaches Association Newsletter during these tough economic times the FLCA Board of Directors decided to publish the newsletter quarterly in March, June, September and December.