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A Case Study Analysis of the Impact Peer Coaching Has on Assisting First and Third Grade Teachers in the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment.

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A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT PEER COACHING HAS
ON ASSISTING FIRST AND THIRD GRADE TEACHERS
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by
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August 1997

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mother, daughter, friends, and colleagues who helped and encouraged me in this endeavor.
Acknowledgments

The completion of a project such as this required the support and patience of many people. Here, I thank just a few of the many people who have helped make this dissertation possible.

Dr. Earl Cheek and Dr. Jan Stuhlmann have been particularly helpful as I have conducted this research and written this report. I am especially appreciative of their assistance, wisdom, and professional experience. Thanks is also due to Dr. Pete Soderbergh, Dr. Gary Rice, and other committee members for their support. I would like to thank the principals and teachers who participated in this study.

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Abstract

In this period of controversy and uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of our public schools, educators face many problems in teaching today's children. One specific area of concern relates to assessment.

An increasing number of teachers have turned to the use of portfolios to document the literacy growth of their students. If teachers are to use portfolio assessment to measure student achievement accurately, effective staff training is necessary. The purpose of this study was to observe six teachers, in grades one and three, as they implemented portfolio assessment with the assistance of two peer coaches. This study describes the peer coaching experience, evaluates its impact, and makes recommendations for implementing portfolio assessment using the scaffolding tool of peer coaching.

This study focused on aspects of peer coaching as it related to the implementation of portfolio assessment. These included the characteristics and conditions that were conducive to being an effective coach, and the impact a peer coach has on the implementation of portfolio assessment at the first and third grade levels. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was used to determine each teachers' use of portfolio assessment and her concerns during implementation. By examining these aspects of peer coaching, this study contributed to the body of research related to peer coaching, provided additional information on these aspects of peer coaching which worked best in implementing portfolio assessment, and reinforced the findings of others studying the implementation of innovative instructional methods.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Portfolio assessment has gained in popularity as one alternative to traditional standardized testing. An increasing number of teachers have begun to use portfolios to document the literacy growth of their students (Johns & Van Leirsburg, 1992). Portfolio assessment is the process of developing, reviewing, and evaluating portfolios of students' work. Portfolios consist of work developed over a period of time which represents a purposeful collection of students' work, records of progress, and evidence of achievement (Valencia, 1990). The portfolio process must include student participation in the selection of portfolio content, the establishment of criteria for selection and the criteria for judging merit, and the evidence of student self-reflection (Arter, 1990).

Aschbacher (1992) asserts that innovative methods of assessment alone will not automatically improve student achievement and instructional reform that are desired in education. He further asserts that “There is a strong consensus today that schools are not succeeding at their primary purpose: to train students to use their minds well” (Aschbacher, 1992, p. 51). In order to adopt any type of change in the classroom, educators need to be prepared in the necessary skills and attitudes associated with the innovation (Fullan, 1991). Without adequate training in portfolio assessment, problems for teachers can result which may have an adverse effect on their students (Stiggins, 1988).

According to Stiggins (1988), success in utilizing portfolio assessment in the classroom involves understanding what is to be evaluated and using an established set of criteria by which to judge students' performances. Therefore, if teachers are to accurately measure student progress over time, they need effective training in the utilization of portfolio assessment. Ellis, Cooley, and Thompson (1988) contend that effective staff development can assist teachers in implementing new teaching methodologies, resulting in educational improvement.
The provision of sustained teacher support is a critical element of successful and effective staff development. One collaborative technique that can be used to provide substantial support during the change process is peer coaching. Peer coaching involves two or more professional colleagues working together to reflect on current practices, to expand, to refine and build new skills, to share ideas, and to solve problems in the school (Robbins, 1991). According to Neubert (1993), peer coaching is on-site assistance for a teacher who is applying a new instructional method. The role of the peer coach is to assist teachers as they transfer new skills into their teaching repertoire.

**Purpose of Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how peer coaches in two elementary schools assisted teachers in the implementation of portfolio assessment. The secondary purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and conditions conducive to peer coaching.

**Historical Perspective: The Setting**

The sites of this study were two elementary schools, Applegate and Bayside, located in two school districts in north Louisiana. Each school had a total student population of approximately 650 students. The student populations of both schools were representative of the socioeconomic spectrum, ranging from at-risk minority neighborhoods to affluent neighborhoods.

**Applegate Elementary School**

Applegate School is the oldest educational facility in this north Louisiana rural school district. Applegate School is a large, old, somewhat dilapidated two-story, red brick, white-columned school. The school's hand painted sign, “Applegate - Home of the Trojans” located in the front yard of the school, is faded and barely readable. It appears that little has been done to the landscaping with the exception of the grass being mowed. A few unkept, old bushes are located along the cracked sidewalk leading to the
school. A visitor walking toward the school is drawn to the cracked steps on the front porch, water dripping down from window air conditioner units, and white paint peeling off the walls and ceilings.

Once inside the school, however, there is a totally different feeling. An inviting feeling of warmth and homeliness overcomes visitors like an old-fashioned welcome when they enter the main hallway that opens into a large center hall. The center hall is approximately the size of six modern-day classrooms and has a tall ceiling and a wooden floor. Soaking in the ambience, visitors might feel as if they had stepped back in time. A quilt, made by the students, is located on one wall and an old fashioned, floor-bolted student's desk is located at the other side of the entry hall. A tree with seasonal decorations made by students is located to the right of the door alongside a list of students currently on the Honor Roll. The center hall frequently has tables set up displaying outstanding academic work and class projects of students at Applegate School.

Despite the dirty, cracked paint peeling off the walls and the tiles hanging from the ceilings of the classrooms, one senses there is a great deal of pride in the school. In the center hall of the school, green plants and trees extend a heart-felt welcome along with hand-painted wall murals depicting school scenes. Continuing through the school, one is drawn to the various class displays, exhibits, and room decorations.

Little has been done to update Applegate School which dates back to 1908. Applegate School is located in a poor rural parish in northwest Louisiana where schools historically have had little financial public support. This past winter, Applegate School was closed for four days, because the old boiler broke and parts had to be made in order to repair it. Overall, the staff at Applegate has made the best of an old building where the district provides little maintenance for its schools.
The state determined that 92% of the students at Applegate were at-risk because of their socioeconomic status. Nearly 50% of the students came from single parent homes. This school district had the fifth highest number of children in the state living in poverty.

The faculty of Applegate School consisted of 45 professionals: 42 teachers; one curriculum coordinator; one assistant principal; and one principal. Six teachers have already earned a masters of education degree or higher, while seven teachers are currently working on higher degrees. The average years of teaching experience is nine years.

The Applegate faculty is always striving to make improvements towards educational and professional development in order to provide their students with the opportunity to acquire the very best. Applegate School has excellent support from the administration as evidenced by the numerous opportunities to attend workshops, inservices, and training seminars. The workshops and inservices make it possible for the teachers and staff of Applegate School to remain current regarding new and innovative ideas that are being used, not only in Louisiana, but throughout the nation.

Applegate has also been awarded numerous grants within the past four years to be used toward the improvement of overall educational opportunities. For example, over $100,000 in grants has been awarded to Applegate School for the improvement of educational services at the early elementary grade levels through the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the Plan of Social Excellence. The ultimate staff development goal of Applegate is to develop a highly talented and stable staff of professional educators.

With the principal's leadership, Applegate School is beginning to move away from a skills-based philosophy in teaching reading to a literature-based philosophy. This is consistent with the current trend of approaching reading instruction from the holistic
perspective of integrating all the language arts (reading, writing, oral language, and listening) using children's books rather than basal readers. An integral component of the literature-based philosophy de-emphasizes skills and focuses on reflective thinking and the development of critical thinking. The faculty at Applegate believes in the philosophy that all children can learn and deserve the best educational facilities, technology, and educational materials. The overall well-being and education of each individual student is stressed at Applegate School, and the faculty is dedicated to providing quality educational opportunities for all students.

**Bayside Elementary School**

Bayside School is an elementary school in a large north Louisiana urban district. Bayside School is located in a middle-class subdivision surrounded by mid-sized brick homes, but students from throughout the district attend Bayside. The student population is representative of the socioeconomic spectrum, ranging from children living in at-risk minority neighborhoods to children from affluent neighborhoods.

Bayside School was built in the 1960's and is a white brick building with classrooms located on wings with doors opening to the outside as well as to an inside hall. Prior to the current principal coming to this school, Bayside was destined to be closed because of low enrollment. The neighborhood has few children because most of the children who grew up in this neighborhood have reached adulthood and moved away.

School billboards are located in the front and back of the school which display the school’s news. The school is a well-kept facility that is attractive both from the outside and the inside with flowers and shrubbery located at the front entrance and back entrance of the school.
Inside the school, the entrance halls always have attractive displays, and student work is exhibited throughout the school. The majority of the teachers have wreaths on their doors displaying their names and wooden school cut-outs.

The ethnic make-up of Bayside school was approximately 58% Caucasian and 42% African-American. Ninety-percent of the students at this school were regular education students, four-percent were special education students in full inclusion, and six-percent of the students were enrolled in self-contained special education classes. Of the total school population, approximately 30% participated in the free or reduced lunch-price program.

Faculty and staff at Bayside consisted of 45 teachers and 29 para-professionals. The professional educators at this school use a holistic, language-based philosophy in their approach to teaching reading. The majority of the faculty has undergone staff development in training in various innovative approaches to language art instruction such as portfolio assessment, the writing process, Reading Rescue (an early intervention for at-risk readers), and the integrated language arts approach. Various learning styles and multi-sensory approaches are incorporated in all classes. Open Court, Touch Math, and Skill Streaming are examples of specialized curricula in use.

Bayside School has been the recipient of many awards. The school has received 14 Parish Public Education grants, six Parish District Mini-Technology grants, one Parish District Drug Free grant, two Bell South grants, a Read-at-Home participation award, and two Teachers of the Year and Principal of the Year awards. At the state level, four 8-g grants have been awarded, one Goals 2000 grant, six Learn for the 21st Century grants, and Special Education Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year awards. Nationally, Bayside School has been selected as a Center of Excellence for Students At-Risk by the National Council of Teachers of English for the Reading Rescue.
early intervention program. In addition, Bayside Elementary has recently been chosen as a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education.

Bayside Elementary School is unique because it is one of two schools in this school district that operates on a year-round schedule. Students attend school for nine weeks and then have two week intersession breaks which are scheduled in October, February, and May. In July, students have approximately a one-month break. Bayside School takes the same holidays as the other schools in the district.

Significance of the Study

Teachers should reflect on the current practices related to portfolio assessment and consider that the time and effort spent in incorporating the changes into their daily classroom procedures and instruction will improve their students' achievement. Teachers need time to reflect and implement changes effectively in their instruction and require support from other teachers, administrators, and the community (Virginia Education Association, 1994). Without positive support, the implementation of innovative practices will be undermined. According to the National Education Association (1994), time to interact with other teachers and to reflect on practice is an essential component of successful reform implementation. The purpose of the peer coaching process is to provide regular feedback to teachers and to promote teacher behavioral changes which ultimately impact instruction; therefore, it is essential that the use of peer coaching be explored as a change agent in implementing portfolio assessment in elementary schools.

Since many school districts invest significant time and money on staff development yet experience limited success, it is important to determine specific factors that might impact staff development training and the implementation of portfolio assessment. This study provides valuable insights into the impact that peer coaching has
on teachers' implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom at the first and third grade levels.

In order for teachers to adopt new teaching practices, administrative support and time are essential factors in creating change (Mohlman, Coladarci, & Gage, 1982; Virginia Education Association, 1994). The purpose of this study was to describe the peer coaching experience, evaluate its impact, and make recommendations for implementing portfolio assessment using the scaffolding technique of peer coaching. By examining each aspect of peer coaching, this study contributes to the body of research on peer coaching, and provides additional information on how peer coaching works best in implementing portfolio assessment. This study also reinforces the findings of others who are investigating the implementation of new instructional methods at the elementary level.

**Research Questions**

This study examined the peer coaching process and its impact on teachers as they implemented portfolio assessment at the first and third grade levels. The research was analyzed from information collected from three elementary teachers and one peer coach at each of two school sites in north Louisiana. The following questions, as they related to peer coaching, were addressed:

(a) What characteristics and conditions are conducive to peer coaching?

(b) What impact does a peer coach have on the implementation of portfolio assessment at the first and third grade levels?

**Definition of Terms**

*Portfolio Assessment*  
Portfolio assessment is the process of student evaluation and assessment which is based on the selection of a representative, ongoing and changing collection of work samples. Portfolio assessment is designed to align curriculum, instruction, and
assessment while encouraging students' participation in their own learning and evaluation, and to measure their growth over time.

**Peer Coaching**

Peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together reflecting on current practices, expanding, refining, and building new skills, sharing ideas, and solving problems.

**Concems-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)**

Concerns-Based Adoption Model is a model for measuring teachers' involvement in the change process. The CBAM measures teachers' concerns about the new innovation (Stages of Concern) and the levels they progress through as they use the innovation (Levels of Use).

**Stages of Concern (SoC)**

The Stages of Concern is a component of the CBAM which assesses teachers' concerns about an innovation. Teachers' concerns are measured as related to their feelings, perceptions, motivation, and attitude.

**Levels of Use (LoU)**

The Levels of Use is a component of the CBAM which measures teachers' progress in relationship to the adoption of the innovation.
Chapter 2
Review of the Literature

Introduction

Educators believe that the main purpose of assessment should be to help them evaluate as well as address each student's individual learning needs (National Education Association, 1992). The procedures and rationale for testing students, however, have resulted in a political debate that extends far beyond the classroom. Over the past 10 years, educators have become increasingly interested and involved in alternatives to standardized testing (Coutinho & Malouf, 1993). Portfolio assessment has emerged as one of the most promising alternative assessment options (Davis, 1994). Portfolios offer a way of documenting change and growth over time through comparisons of students' pieces added to their portfolios.

Staff development has become a beneficial tool in educational reform. According to Fullan (1994), staff development has become established as a major thrust for educational development and reform. Training in new methods of assessment cannot be a one-shot deal (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991). Continuous motivation and support is needed to change attitudes, implementation, and ways of thinking, doing, and interacting (Aschbacher, 1992). Peer coaching is one type of staff development training that has become popular in helping teachers adapt the knowledge gained from staff development to solve problems that occur. Showers (1993) found that teachers involved in coaching had higher implementation of new practices.

This chapter reviews research in three areas relevant to this current study. First, portfolio assessment will be discussed. Second, the educational change process will be examined. Finally, the relevance of peer coaching for implementing positive change in classroom instruction and assessment, particularly as related to portfolio assessment, will be reviewed.
Portfolio Assessment

In recent years, the use of portfolios for instruction and assessment in reading has gained nationwide popularity. More and more schools are including portfolio assessment in their reading programs. Evaluating the reading process has taken an entirely different approach to assessment, relying entirely on student work samples collected in portfolios (Jongsma, 1989).

Portfolio assessment has been widely, yet loosely, defined in the professional literature. Despite the widespread use of portfolio assessment, it is not always clear what is meant by this term. Standards are lacking in the definition of portfolio assessment. There seems to be some consensus, however, that a portfolio is more than just a folder of student work.

Valencia (1990) asserts that a portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work, records of progress and evidence of achievement collected over a period of time. She explains portfolio entries allow teachers to expand the quality and quantity of information they use to examine learning and growth. In addition, Valencia also indicates that a portfolio is more than a physical container to hold important evidence. The portfolio represents a new concept in assessment - assessment before, during, and after instruction with participation by teachers and students. Valencia views the portfolio as an integral part of the instructional process involving both teacher and student in an effort to guide the learning process. At the same time, the portfolio offers various ways of evaluating learning by aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment providing (Valencia & Place, 1994). The most positive outcome of using a portfolio is the increase in student engagement and reflective thinking.

Portfolio assessment is a systematic process that continually changes as learners grow and develop their literacy skills (Sulzby, 1990). Portfolios are particularly promising, because children can be primarily responsible for their own learning using
teacher guidance to help them keep track of their progress. Sulzby (1990) believes that portfolios can only work if the teacher has the knowledge to help children build them and if the teacher can interpret the child’s progress and development. The process must include student participation in the selection of portfolio content, the establishment of criteria for selection and the criteria for judging merit, and the evidence of student self-reflection (Arter, 1990).

Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991) state that a portfolio is a systematic collection by both students and teachers. The portfolio can serve as the basis to examine effort, improvement, processes and achievement as well as meet the accountability demands usually addressed by more formal testing procedures. Through reflection on systematic collections of student work, teachers and students can work together to illuminate students’ strengths, needs and progress (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).

The portfolio is a set of tangible evidence of accomplishments and skills that must be updated as a person changes and grows. Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991) state that it is from this collection of works that each person is evaluated in a variety of contexts.


Portfolios offer many benefits as well as challenges to teachers, students, and parents by providing a new framework for reading assessment - one that facilitates student reflection in conjunction with reading and writing (Tierney, 1991). According to Tierney, students must be encouraged and empowered to reflect on their reading and to
grow in their understanding of their reading as well as of themselves. Using portfolios is an innovation that is dynamic and grounded in what students are actually doing. Teachers are encouraged to use portfolios as a tool for reflecting on their instructional effectiveness and determining the need for modifications in the curriculum.

The literature describes a wide range of definitions for the concept of portfolio assessment. Each definition reflects the way portfolios are shaped by the individuals using them. There is no single working definition; however, there is a set of assumptions that can be made about portfolio assessment (Valencia, 1990). First, a portfolio is an assessment that is anchored in authenticity. Assessment should grow out of authentic reading instruction and reading tasks. Second, assessment must be an on-going and continuous process. Third, reading assessment must be multidimensional. Fourth, assessment must provide for active collaborative reflection by both the teacher and the student. Learning is never completed; instead, it is always changing. Portfolio assessment must be viewed as a process within our control that helps us evaluate how well we have learned and what we need to learn next (Calfee & Hiebert, 1989; Valencia & Calfee, 1991).

Portfolio assessment advocates production over recognition, projects over items, and informed judgment over mechanical scoring (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993). Assessment using portfolios reflects daily classroom practices and goals, and, through the identification of the specific attributes of literacy, one is forced to consider what is important, how to teach it, and how to measure it (Paris, Calfee, & Filby, 1992).

Not everyone is at the same level of implementation of portfolio assessment nor are the purposes of implementing portfolio assessment the same. According to Noden and Moss (1994), portfolios create anxieties for the experienced as well as the inexperienced teacher.
Types and Contents of Portfolios

Depending on the teachers' purpose for implementing portfolio assessment, the type of portfolios used in the classroom as well as its contents will vary. However, folders of individual student work are at the core of the portfolio movement. Three distinctive models for portraying student work appear in practice. They are described as showcase, documentation, and evaluation portfolios.

The showcase portfolio (F. L. Paulson, P. R. Paulson, & Meyer, 1991; Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991) portrays a collection of the student's best or favorite work. The student selects most of the entries, so that the portfolio emerges as a unique portrait of the individual over time. Self-reflection and self-evaluation take priority over standardization.

The documentation portfolio centers on systematic, ongoing records of student progress (K. S. Goodman, Y. M. Goodman, & Hood, 1989). A documentation portfolio includes checklists, classroom tests, anecdotal records, observations, as well as performance-based assessments. The student selects some entries and others are selected by the teacher. Some of the entries are accompanied by student self-reflections, and others are judged by external raters.

The evaluation portfolio is generally standardized, with substantial direction from the teacher, administrator, or district (Au, Scheu, Kawakami, & Herman, 1990). Most entries are predetermined as are criteria for scoring and evaluating performance. For example, a teacher might assign all students to do the same reflection activity with a particular story. A pre-determined rubric (a scoring guide indicating levels of proficiency) would be used to score the reflections.

Materials in a Reading Portfolio

There are many suggestions in the educational literature as to what might be included in a student portfolio. Arter (1990) suggests writing samples, checklists,
observations, and other informal devices can be used in portfolios as an alternative to conventional instruments.

Arter (1990) states that portfolios need to contain samples of student work assembled for a particular purpose and that the content assembled might differ depending on the purpose and audience. Arter asserts that if students are to be evaluated on the basis of their work in the portfolio, then they should probably choose the final version of what they consider their best work. If the purpose is to show growth over time, the representative (or best) work should be included at several points in time. Or, if the portfolio is to be used to see how students go about doing a project, a complete record of all activities, crafts, revisions, etc. might be kept.

According to Calfee and Hiebert (1989), the classroom-based literacy folder comprises a folder containing situated samples of student reading and writing performance. The student assembles a collection of materials during the school year such as lists of books read, reading notes, and conference memos. Some tasks are assigned, others are free-form (Calfee & Hiebert; Calfee & Perfumo, 1993). In addition, the teacher will select appropriate data based on observations of student reading behavior and accomplishments. Collaborative evaluation between the teacher and student provides the foundation for good teaching (Harp, 1993).

Farr (1992) believes that portfolios should contain numerous and varied pieces written and revised in response to reading. Reading logs reporting ongoing responses to books and articles make valuable contributions to portfolios.

Savage (1991) says that portfolios should contain a variety of materials designed to reflect pupils’ developing competency in reading and related language areas. The contents might contain samples of pupils' work (such as originally written stories at various stages of completion, story maps, or exercises on which pupils have worked), reading logs, additional writing samples, and other examples of work that reflects
achievement. Also, photographs or videos of student projects too large for the portfolio might be included.

Self-assessment indicators and personalized statements from pupils to enhance both the teachers' and parent's understanding can also be part of the student portfolio. Flood & Lapp (1989) state that this assessment can be written by a child describing a series of questions such as: (a) How well do you think you do in reading? (b) What do you do when you try to read a hard word? and (c) How do you select your own reading material?

Savage (1991) contends that some work samples in a portfolio might include captions, brief teacher comments as to why the sample was included, and an explanation about what the sample demonstrated about particular pupils and their achievements. There might also be a provision for written comments by parents and others who review the material.

The contents of the reading portfolio must be organized in a usable and meaningful manner. Contents can be organized in many ways, but ideally the organization is a collaborative effort between the student and the teacher (Farr, 1992). A table of contents is essential to organizing the portfolio contents, but since the portfolio is always changing so must the table of contents (Farr & Tone, 1994; Valencia, Heibert, & Afflerbach, 1994).

A portfolio summary sheet is often useful to suggest the organization of the material in the folder. This summary sheet provides a guide for administrators and others who have neither the time nor the need to review the contents in great detail. The summary sheet is also useful to pass along to the next year's teacher.

A portfolio ought not be a potpourri of every piece of work that a student has completed in a school term. Students should choose samples of work that reflect their
development as a learner. The key to selection is choosing materials that will clearly reflect pupil growth (Savage, 1991).

Unanimous agreement as to what data should comprise a portfolio does not exist, mainly because suggested content depends so heavily on the purpose. However, the review of the literature indicates that a consistent theme is apparent. Portfolios must represent shared communication between teacher and student about individual goals and progress. Johns and Van Leirsburg (1992) say that documentation of growth in reading ability serves as evidence and information that is both useful and specific about reporting student progress, and assessing curriculum effectiveness.

Critical Issues Facing the Implementation of Reading Portfolios

Perhaps the most critical issue for student portfolios is the assumption that a classroom teacher can handle the challenge of defining high-level achievement outcomes, identifying or constructing authentic assessment tasks for these outcomes, and evaluating those tasks (Valencia & Calfee, 1991). Unfortunately, many teachers received their training a decade or more ago, and preparation was often brief and unrelated to classroom assessment or instructional practices (Calfee and Hiebert, 1989). Further, studies of portfolio programs often turn up haphazard collections of student work and poorly-constructed performance based assessments (Wiggins, 1991). Many teachers appear ill-equipped and feel unable to handle the challenge of portfolio assessment (Church, 1990). Although teachers have potential to meet the portfolio challenge, they will need well designed and adequately supported staff development to acquire skill and confidence (Valencia & Calfee, 1991). Without skill, classroom assessment is likely to be misguided and invalid. Without confidence, it simply will not happen.

Keeping portfolios for each student takes considerable time. Paperwork has never been a favorite activity for teachers, and a portfolio system heaped on top of already bureaucratic system of record-keeping could seem like adding the role of "file
clerk" to a teachers' job description. For portfolio assessment to work, it must not be seen as just something added to a teachers' already overburdened work load. Grady (1992) says assessment must truly become less like a manager and more like a coach.

The concept of a portfolio as a framework for assessment is quite different from the traditional standardized method of classroom assessment. In the past, standardized tests have attempted to serve all audiences in need of educational performance (Farr, 1992). Achievement tests offer quantified units that can be counted and accounted (F. L. Paulson, P. R. Paulson, & Meyer, 1991). Portfolios have the potential to document growth over time and contexts. Standardized tests measure performance on a particular day in a particular setting; they do not encompass the situational variability that characterizes the learning process (Valencia & Calfee, 1991).

Literacy professionals and other educators are looking beyond norm-referenced standardized tests for ways of sampling the language arts performance of students that are more closely linked to instruction (Jongsma, 1989). The literacy portfolio offers a broader view of student progress, one that is complex and includes authentic, collaborative, multidimensional and evaluative tasks that measure growth over time (Johns & Van Leirsburg, 1991). The portfolio is a tool that helps students to become independent learners. In using portfolios, teachers facilitate the instructional process.

While the literature is promising regarding potential effects of portfolios on curriculum and instruction, it also indicates the substantial time and challenges the portfolio use entails. For example, a majority of principals interviewed in Vermont believed that portfolio assessment generally had salutary effects on their schools' curriculum, instruction, and effects on student learning and attitudes. However, almost 90 percent of these principals characterized the program as "burdensome," particularly from the perspective of its demands on teachers (Koretz, McCaffrey, Klein, Bell, & Stecher, 1993). It takes time for teachers to learn new assessment practices, to
understand what should be included in portfolios, to help students compile them, to
develop portfolio tasks, to discern and apply criteria for assessing students' work, to
reflect upon and fine-tune their instructional and assessment practices, and to work out
and manage the logistics (Herman & Winters, 1994).

Many people rightly worry about the costs of implementing large-scale portfolio
assessment programs. While the direct and indirect costs of portfolios have had little
study, the cost ingredients are many. Among these costs are staff training; ongoing
support; technical expertise; and time for teacher to develop, practice, reflect upon, and
hone their instructional and assessment expertise (Herman & Winters, 1994). Portfolio
assessment will require more time and money to design, manage, score, interpret, and
report results. Shrinking school budgets may place the portfolio assessment at risk.

There exist substantial challenges in the area of technical quality and feasibility if
portfolios are to be used for large-scale assessment for high-stakes purposes. The
questions that arise are the results of portfolio assessment reliable, consistent, and
meaningful estimates of what students can do? Some of these technical issues probably
can be solved if portfolio tasks are closely specified and highly standardized, but in
seeking technical rigor, we need to be sure not to lose the appeal of the portfolio
concept.

Thus far, the literature is silent regarding how well new practices are being
implemented. We know that student performance judged on the basis of large-scale
portfolio assessments tends to include a relatively small number of students (Koretz,
McCaffrey, Klein, Bell & Stecher, 1993). We can infer from these findings that we have
considerable room for improvement in both instructional practices and the quality of
students' accomplishments.

There is a wide range of definitions and a set of assumptions described in the
literature on portfolio assessment. Unanimous agreement as to what data should be
included in a portfolio does not exist, mainly because the suggested content depends so heavily on the purpose. However, the literature indicates that portfolios must represent shared communication between teacher and student about individual goals and progress. Due to the silence in the literature relating to how well new practices are being implemented, there is a need for further study on the implementation of portfolios. One of the most positive outcomes of using portfolios is the increase in student engagement and reflective thinking (Valencia & Place, 1994).

Portfolio assessment holds great promise. It has the potential to enrich and expand the very nature of the information that assessment provides. The primary benefit of using portfolio assessment seems to be the enhancement of student learning. Students become active participants in their own learning; therefore, they gain a better understanding of what and how they learn.

In order for teachers to accept new practices like portfolio assessment they need to be convinced that the time and effort spent in incorporating the changes into their daily classroom procedures and instruction will improve their students' achievement. Teachers need time to study and implement the change effectively in their instruction (Virginia Education Association, 1994).

Educational Change Process

Two of the most prevalent misconceptions of both administrators and leaders of the change process in education are that: (a) once an innovative method or strategy has been introduced and initial training has been completed, the innovation will be put into practice; and (b) all users of the implementation will react similarly (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). Every professional has been involved in or will be involved in processes of institutional change at various levels—as the initiator of the innovation, assisting the change process, or the one expected to adopt the innovation.
According to Mohlman, Coladarci, and Gage (1982), in order for teachers to adopt new teaching practices and implement the innovation, it is important to incorporate certain strategies. Recommendations need to be easily understood yet explicit. Where possible, an acceptance of the innovation needs to be developed in teachers. Teachers also need to be convinced that the time and effort spent in incorporating the innovation into their daily instruction will result in improved student achievement. Teachers exhibiting the highest degree of implementation, according to Ebmeier and Good (1979), seemed to be those who already believed in the change.

Also important to note is that change occurs on an individual basis. Therefore, individuals must be the primary focus in implementing a new program or method (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). A study conducted by Francis Fuller in 1969 demonstrates this point. This study consisted of a survey of pre-service teachers and their ratings of a required educational psychology course. Of the 100 students surveyed, only three rated the required course as being very helpful. To gain further information, Fuller decided to concentrate on the three who responded positively to the course and identify what transpired during the course that made these students value the required course. Results of the study indicated that the three students' perceptions were different due to their maturity levels and previous teaching experiences.

During Fuller's research on pre-service teachers' concerns, she found primarily three basic stages through which teachers progressed. The three stages of concerns were self concerns, task concerns, and impact concerns. In the first stage, the focus of pre-service teachers are on their own feelings of adequacy and whether or not they could control their classroom. When the teachers became more comfortable, they began to concentrate more on the task and teaching process. In the final stage, teachers were concerned about the general impact of their instruction.
Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Fuller’s research concerning the teachers’ involvement in the change process in school is the basis of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The CBAM is based on the following research conclusions:

1. Change is a process, not an event. Change is a process that usually occurs over a period of several years.

2. Change is accomplished by individuals. Only when each individual in the school has adopted the innovation can we say the school has changed.

3. Change is a highly personal experience. Individuals react differently to a change. Change will be more successful when it reflects the diagnosed needs of the individuals.

4. Change involves developmental growth. Individuals appear to demonstrate growth in terms of their feelings and skills which tend to shift in regard to degree of experience.

5. Change is best understood in operational terms. Teachers relate to change in terms of how it will affect their current classroom practice which, in turn, can reduce resistance to improvement efforts.

6. The focus of facilitation should be on individuals, innovations, and the context. School improvement is a result of human efforts as well as the new curriculum or innovation. The real meaning of any change lies in the human component. (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987, pp. 6-7)

Because the CBAM model is client-centered, it can identify the individual needs of the individual users (teachers) and enable the change facilitator (coach) to provide vital assistance through appropriate actions. This approach assists in increasing the prospects for successful implementation while decreasing the frustrations related to implementing new innovations.

Many studies have been conducted by Hall and his colleagues researching and developing the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. In the 1980s, some studies concentrated on the principal’s role as being the primary change agent in the school setting (Hall, 1984), in setting the school climate (Hall, 1987), and in the school climate and the interaction between the school and the principal (Hall, Rutherford, & Griffin,

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model was also used to study curriculum adoption of science in school systems. Hall and his colleagues studied the adoption of a school system's science program (Hall, et al., 1984), the implementation of a revision of a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade science curriculum (Hall, 1979), and a district-developed science curriculum (Hall, et al., 1980).

Hall and his associates have also researched the change process at the secondary level (Hall, et al., 1984). Research conducted in high school settings included many aspects of change: types; sources; purposes; critical elements and factors; and the management of the change process at the secondary level. Overall, Hall and his colleagues have made extensive research based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. Research was conducted at all levels of the curriculum, elementary, secondary, and university level.

A major premise of the CBAM is that the single most crucial factor in any change process is the people who will be most affected by the change. The Stages of Concern (SoC) dimension of the CBAM focuses on these individuals (Hall, 1979). Concern is defined as the composite representation of feelings, preoccupations, thoughts, and consideration given to a particular issue or task. Hall (1979) proposes that concerns change over time; thus, a person goes through various stages in their level of concern. Seven different stages have been identified in the Stages of Concern model. The Stages of Concern are reflected in three dimensions - self, task, and impact - into which the seven stages of concerns may be grouped. The three techniques used to assess Stages of Concern with the implementation of any change are guided interviews, open-ended concern statements, and pre- and post-responses to a concerns questionnaire. Table 1 depicts the typical expressions of concern about the innovation.
During the early stages of change effort, teachers are likely to have self-concerns (stage 1, informational; stage 2, personal). During this stage, teachers will have various questions concerning the innovation. Personal concerns will also be intense yet may not be as openly expressed as informational concerns. Teachers may be concerned about their own abilities or lack of abilities to implement the innovation and about making mistakes that would embarrass them.

Task concerns (stage 3, management) usually become more extreme prior to the initial use of an innovation and during the early period of use. Management of time is usually expressed as a major concern at this stage.

The impact level (stage 4, consequence; stage 5, collaboration; stage 6, refocusing) is usually reached when teachers’ most intense concerns involve the effects of the innovation on their students and what can be done to improve the effectiveness of the program. At stage 5, teachers show concern about working with others to improve the results of the innovation. When teachers efficiently use the innovation for a period of

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Stages of Concern</th>
<th>Expressions of Concern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPACT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Refocusing</td>
<td>I have some ideas about something that would work even better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Consequence</td>
<td>How is my use affecting children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>How will using it affect me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>I would like to know more about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>I am not concerned about it (the innovation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hord. et al., p. 31)
time and become concerned about finding even better ways to instruct students, they have reached stage 6.

Teacher concerns can be a highly effective guide to actions that change facilitators might take to facilitate the innovation. Concerns can be a result of teachers' feelings about the innovation, their perception of their ability to use it, the environment in which the change occurs, the number of other changes in which they are involved, most importantly, the level of support and assistance they receive during the change process (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987).

A primary responsibility of the change facilitator (coach) is to guide the change process to a point of successful implementation. To achieve this, the coach must monitor how an innovation is being used and act upon that information. The CBAM offers facilitators a proven technique for monitoring innovation—the assessment of Levels of Use (Hall, Loucks, Rutherford, & Newlove, 1975). The Levels of Use (LoU) dimensions depicts the behaviors of the innovation users through various stages—from non-use of the innovation, to orientation of use, to managing, to finally integrating use of the innovation. There are eight distinct Levels of Use as indicated in Table 2. Levels of Use are distinct stages that represent observably different types of behavior and patterns of innovation use as exhibited by individuals. These levels characterize a user's development in acquiring new skills and varying use of the innovation. Each level encompasses a range of behaviors, but each is limited by a set of identifiable decision points. For descriptive purposes, each level is defined by eight categories.

The Level of Use (LoU) dimension of the CBAM offers information that can be of great assistance to the coach or change facilitator. The Level of Use can facilitate the performance of individual users for assessing innovation implementation. Data collected with the Levels of Use portion of the CBAM can reveal problems that may exist within the implementation process.
Table 2
Levels of Use of the Innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Description</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 0: Non-use</td>
<td>State in which the individual has little or no knowledge of the innovation, no involvement with it, and is doing nothing toward becoming involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Orientation</td>
<td>State in which the individual has acquired or is acquiring information about the innovation and/or has explored its value orientation and what it will require.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Preparation</td>
<td>Stage in which the user is preparing for first use of the innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Mechanical</td>
<td>Stage in which the user focuses most effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than needs of students and others. The user is primarily engaged in an attempt to master tasks required to use the innovation. These attempts often result in disjointed and superficial use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4A: Routine</td>
<td>Use of the innovation is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improve the innovation use or its consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4B: Refinement</td>
<td>State in which the user varies the use of innovation to increase the impact on clients within their immediate sphere of influence. Variations in use are based on knowledge of both short and long-term consequences for clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5: Integration</td>
<td>State in which the user is combining own efforts to use the innovation with related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective impact on clients within their common sphere of influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6: Renewal</td>
<td>State in which the user reevaluates the quality of use of the innovation, seeks major modifications of, or alternatives to, present innovation to achieve increased impact on clients, examines new developments in the field, and explores new goals for self and the organization. (Hord, et al., 1987, p. 55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No matter how appealing and abundant materials may be, in dealing with most innovations, teachers need training to have a more clear understanding of how to use...
them. Training should be an ongoing process which enables teachers to mature to continue the development of new skills. To ensure effectiveness, training should be designed to take into account teachers’ individual needs and concerns.

A change facilitator (coach) should be accessible to provide consultation sessions, reinforcement of the teachers’ progress, and practical assistance. Informal, personalized support, and attention can be critical to successful implementation (Hord, et al., 1987). According to National Education Association (1994), time to talk and interact with other teachers and to reflect on practice is an essential component of successful reform implementation. Teachers need support from other teachers, administrators, and the community (Virginia Education Association, 1994). Without positive support, implementation of the change process will be lacking. Peer coaching is one unique and popular method in providing such personalized support and reinforcement.

**Peer Coaching**

For too long, teachers have been isolated in schools from their colleagues with little chance to observe others in the act of teaching or work collaboratively. Teachers need to have the opportunities to talk together and share about teaching and learning, and solve problems. A new emphasis on collegiality and collaboration is emerging among teachers in schools today. Teachers are working together to refine their teaching skills, to solve common classroom problems, and to discover ways to improve student learning. Peer coaching is one way to engage teachers in these processes.

When you think of the term coaching, you may envision an athletic coach, but Evered and Selman (1989) have a different metaphor. Coaching is a conveyance, like a stagecoach. To coach means to convey a valued colleague from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be (Evered & Selman, 1989). Skillful cognitive coaches apply specific strategies to enhance another person’s perceptions, decisions, and intellectual
functions. Changing these inner thought processes is a prerequisite to improving overt behaviors that, in turn, enhance student learning.

Peer coaching is a non-judgmental process built around a planning conference, observation, and reflecting conference (Costa & Garmston, 1994). A coaching relationship may be established between teachers and teachers, administrators and teachers, and/or administrators and fellow administrators. When a cognitive coaching relationship is established between two professionals with similar roles, or peers, it can be referred to as peer coaching.

Peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; or solve problems at school. It is a process that can only prosper in a climate of trust and risk-taking. Coaches must be trusted to maintain confidentiality, to be honest, and above all else, to be professional (Robbins, 1991).

According to Neubert (1993) peer coaching is on-site assistance for a teacher who is attempting to apply a new teaching skill. It is designed to assist the transfer of new skills into a teachers' active teaching repertoire. Peer coaching is a process during which teachers explore the thinking behind their practices.

Peer coaching was proposed fifteen years ago as a means to provide staff development at the school level (Joyce & Showers, 1980). Prior to the onset of peer coaching, it was revealed that as few as 10 percent of the participants in staff development implemented what they had learned, even for those participants who had volunteered for the staff development training.

During the 1980s, studies were conducted relating to the impact of regularly scheduled seminars on practice and implementation of curriculum and strategies in the classroom. Consistent results indicated that implementation rose significantly. Recommendations were made that teachers form small peer coaching groups for sharing
the learning process in hopes that staff development would directly affect student learning (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Results of these studies indicated that teachers who were involved in peer coaching practiced and implemented new skills and strategies more often and applied them more appropriately than their peers who were not in a peer coaching group. Long-term retention of new strategies was also exhibited by members involved in the peer coaching groups with more appropriate utilization of new teaching models over time (Baker & Showers, 1984).

Several studies have demonstrated that the more engagement in coaching, the higher the benefits to the teacher. Garmston and Hyerle (1988) conducted a study with two seventh and eighth grade English teachers being peer coached. The results indicated that there were changes in teaching styles, expansion of teaching repertoire, and greater student accountability. These teachers reported that they had a greater consciousness of their own behaviors and options during teaching. A study conducted by Sommers (1991) involved twelve high school teachers being peer coached. The teachers reported talking to their colleagues more about teaching.

The coaching process is a three-phase cycle built around a planning conference, observation, and reflecting conference (Costa & Garmston, 1994). These cycles are used for the sole purpose of helping the teacher improve instructional effectiveness by becoming more reflective about teaching. The planning conference requires a teacher to articulate the day’s objectives. The reflecting conference calls for assessment where the teacher, not the coach, evaluates the lesson’s success (Garmston, Linder, & Whitaker, 1993). The ultimate goal of peer coaching is teacher autonomy, the ability to self-monitor, self-analyze, and self-evaluate.

Neubert (1993) says that the coach serves two major functions during the coaching process. The first is providing feedback to the teacher on specific methodology
related to the skill. An effective coach helps the teacher plan how the new skill will be used in the lesson, observes the lesson, and reports what is happening with the skill in the context of a specific class of students. Then, if necessary, the coach helps the teacher adapt and apply the skill in the next lesson. The goal is to have the teacher execute the new skill and incorporate it into his or her active teaching repertoire without any further assistance from the coach.

The second function of the coach is to provide personal instruction to the teacher. In a coaching situation, the teacher assumes the role of a student trying to change and acquire new behavior, and in the role of student, the teacher as a learner, may experience a certain amount of anxiety. Therefore, the coach, in addition to providing feedback on methodology, should offer affirmation so that the teacher feels supported through the change process.

The impact of peer coaching on the implementation of curriculum in general. In a decade when many schools are pressed for time and money, why is coaching so important? According to Costa and Garmston (1992), there are five compelling reasons for peer coaching. First, coaching enhances the intellectual capacities of the teacher, which in turn produces greater intellectual achievement in students. Research shows that teachers with higher conceptual levels are more adaptive and flexible in their teaching style, and they have a greater ability to empathize (Evered & Selman, 1989). These teachers choose new practices when classroom problems appear, vary their use of instructional strategies, elicit more conceptual responses from students, give more corrective and positive feedback to students, and produce higher achieving students who are more cooperative and involved in their work (Harvey, 1987).

Second, few educational innovations achieve their full impact without a coaching component (Costa & Garmston, 1994). Conventional approaches such as workshops, lecture, and demonstrations, show little evidence of transfer to ongoing classroom
practice. Several studies by Joyce and Showers (1989) reveal that the level of classroom application hovers around only 5 percent even after high-quality training that integrates theory and demonstration. This figure increases a bit when staff development includes time for practice and feedback. When staff development includes coaching in the training design, the level of application increases to 90 percent. Current research supports this idea. Coached teachers use the new approaches more skillfully, more appropriately, more frequently, and with greater long-term retention than do trained but uncoached teachers (Baker and Showers, 1994).

A third argument for peer coaching is its positive effect on teamwork (Costa & Garmston, 1994). A harmonious collegial effort needs coordination. Peer coaching provides a safe format for professional dialogue and develops the skills for reflection in practice, both of which are necessary for collaboration (Costa & Garmston, 1994).

In addition, coaching develops positive interpersonal relationships which are the energy sources for school cultures. Peer coaching builds a knowledge of and an appreciation for diversity and provides frameworks, skills, and tools for coaches to work with other adults and students in open resourceful ways (Costa & Garmston, 1994).

Finally, peer coaching helps teachers take responsibility for what is increasingly regarded as teachers' professional work: learning; teaming; coaching; and teaching colleagues. It encourages teachers to value thinking, creativity, and collaboration in their students.

The impact of peer coaching on portfolio assessment in elementary schools. The current focus on portfolio assessment reflects a hope that it can be a force to drive reform and improvements in student performance in our nation's schools. However, to be truly effective, teacher training must consider the complexities of school change and utilize strategies like professional networks that offer continuous motivation, inspiration and support for innovation. According to Aschbacher (1992), sustained support for
teachers can be provided through peer coaching. Peer coaching can provide a non-threatening forum for sharing concerns and solutions and can reinforce the risk-taking that is required with implementing an innovation. Because portfolio assessment is relatively new and somewhat overwhelming to teachers, the use of a peer coach may enhance the implementation of this strategy. Peer coaching should guide teachers to more effectively incorporate portfolios into the reading curriculum.

One argument in the case for combining peer coaching with portfolio assessment in the elementary schools is that this pairing offers a way to break the isolation experienced by elementary teachers and encourages them to tap into the knowledge of other teachers. Teacher isolation is the norm. Elementary teachers work without adult interaction most of the day. Their classroom is their "turf," and the price of this autonomy is the loss of professional interaction, limited sharing of ideas and experiences, and the lack of support of one's peers.

Teachers need to be able to use innovations in a practical way. Working with a peer teacher is one way to ensure innovations or new skills are practiced. Peer coaching is a useful strategy for teacher improvement, not only because it is practice-oriented, but also because it requires interaction with colleagues and helps build a sense of professional responsibility. Coaching allows teachers to keep the classroom operating while incorporating new ideas. Fullan (1993) says that effective teachers must "be able to form and reform productive collaborations with colleagues" (p. 63). The teacher of the future must be equally at home alone in the classroom and with colleagues in other educational settings.

Coaching means that someone is in the classroom helping the teacher adapt a new strategy. Who that person is will vary and so will the specifics of his or her approach. The purpose, however, will be the same - to observe, describe, and analyze
the classroom performance of the teacher as a basis for working together to plan and test new strategies.

A study conducted by Showers (1993) found that teachers involved in the peer coaching process had much higher rates of implementing innovative strategies. In a recent dissertation study (Klein, 1995), results indicated that teachers who had peer coaches or "mentors" implemented portfolio assessment activities in their classroom at a significantly higher rate than teachers who did not have peer coaches or "mentors."

Joyce and Showers (1989) describe three major functions of coaching that not only will ensure better classroom performance because teachers would use new skills and strategies, but also because coaching would make the improvement process part of a new norm of collegial relations among teachers. To help make portfolio implementation more effective, coaching can function to provide companionship, technical feedback, and analyses of application (Joyce & Showers, 1989).

First, the coaching relationship provides companionship by providing for an opportunity for professional interaction with another educator. It results in the possibility of mutual reflection, the checking of perceptions, the sharing of frustrations and successes, and the informal thinking through of mutual problems. Portfolio contents and implementation strategies can be explored between peer coach and teacher through discussion (Joyce & Showers, 1989).

Second, the feedback provided by a peer coach helps keep the teachers’ mind on the business of perfecting skills, polishing them, and working through problem areas. The act of providing feedback is also beneficial to the person doing it. It is often easier to see problems of confusion and omission when someone else teaches than when attempting to recapture one’s own process. Feedback on the technical aspects of portfolio assessment implementation can be used to enhance the teacher’s means of process.
Finally, because selecting the right occasion to use a teaching strategy is not always easy, many teachers need help to find out how much they have, in fact, accomplished, and how much they might accomplish by making adjustments in the way they use a particular strategy. Practice in the classroom allows close attention to be given to the approach used. A peer coach could plan with the teacher when and how to use portfolio assessment and then observe its use and promote feedback to the teacher (Joyce & Showers, 1989).

Experience with peer coaching has indicated that if appropriate conferencing techniques are taught to teachers, peer coaching can result in greater reflection on the part of the teachers and significant growth in their application of a variety of teaching strategies (Pasch & Neubert, 1990; Neubert, 1993). This information is important in that the reflection process is also a crucial component in the portfolio assessment process. Through peer coaching, teachers have the opportunity to engage in metacognition and reflect on what they have learned about their teaching. In other words, the teachers will be practicing what they are teaching the students to do - to become self-assessors and self-reflectors. The reflection and self-analysis components characterize effective staff development programs and according to Saxl (1990), can add to the peer coaching experience.

The classroom teacher is the gatekeeper to portfolio assessment; indeed, it would be hard to imagine a successful large-scale performance assessment taking place without the cooperation of the teacher. Lack of competent and fully committed involvement would simply kill the endeavor outright.

Few teachers are well supported with ongoing professional development activities in portfolio assessment. It is difficult for anyone to be thoughtful about topics that are only understood shallowly. For students, teachers, schools, and districts, adequate technical quality is essential in the implementation of portfolio assessment.
Technical quality will continue to be a critical issue if portfolio assessment results are used to make important decisions about students, teachers, and schools.

While the literature is promising regarding potential effects of portfolios on curriculum and instruction, it also indicates the substantial time and challenges that portfolio use entails. The implementation of a peer coaching program to support portfolio assessment would be a positive step to the alleviation of this problem. Many innovations at one time or another have had their pitfalls; however, it is essential to seek continuous methods of program improvement so that the advantages will ultimately outweigh the disadvantages, resulting in the overall improvement of student and teacher performance.

All in all, peer coaching can be an asset for teachers implementing portfolio assessment in the elementary school. Not only does peer coaching have the potential to provide teachers with the practical support and practice needed for implementation of portfolio assessment, it can also affect the rate of implementation, as well as assist teachers in their metacognition and reflection of their own teaching abilities, which in itself is a crucial element in making improvements.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

This study, based on applied research principles (Patton, 1990), examined the concerns of individual educators involved in implementing portfolio assessment through peer coaching. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact peer coaching had on teachers' implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom at the first and third grade levels, and to identify characteristics and conditions conducive to peer coaching.

Research Design

A qualitative research design involving two multiple case studies of first and third grade teachers and their peer coaches was chosen for this study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), qualitative research is warranted when the study is (a) conducted in a natural setting in which the instinct of the researcher will be instrumental in the analysis, (b) written descriptively with the data being collected in the form of words or pictures, (c) focused on the process of the intervention, and (d) centered around the meaning of the approach. A case study format was utilized for this study since data were collected from individuals in the environment in which the events occurred, not within a controlled setting.

Selection of Participants

Three elementary teachers and one peer coach from each of the two schools participated in this study. Three elementary teachers from each of the two schools were selected based on their motivation and enthusiasm in implementing portfolio assessment in their classrooms with the assistance of a peer coach. To determine their motivation, a questionnaire was distributed among the volunteers at the two school sites. The peer coach at each of the two schools was selected because of her expertise and knowledge concerning portfolio assessment and her experience and background in the peer coaching
concept. Each set of the four individuals (three teachers and one peer coach) was based at the same school site for ease of providing coaching/feedback during the implementation of the portfolio assessment process and for providing accessibility, which was an essential component of the peer coaching process.

Another aspect in choosing the two sets of three elementary teachers and coach was the concept of “volunteerism.” In this study, each set of the participants were volunteers. According to Borg and Gall (1989), volunteers differ at least in motivation level from those who are not volunteers. The volunteers in this study may have been more motivated and comfortable with implementing portfolio assessment and providing coaching than teachers not included in this study.

Participants were selected because of characteristics they shared. Common characteristics of all of the teachers selected for this study were as follows: (a) each was an elementary teacher in a public school in north Louisiana; (b) each was certified in elementary education; (c) each had approximately the same number of students in her classroom; and (d) each had over 2 years of teaching experience at her present school. Common characteristics of the two peer coaches selected for this study were as follows: (a) each was certified in elementary education; (b) each had at least six years of experience at her current school; and (c) each had numerous other responsibilities outside their classroom teaching.

**Data Collection**

Data for this research were collected from teachers through questionnaires and demographic surveys (see Appendixes A and B), interviews, and journals. A demographic survey was administered at the start of the study to gather information on each teacher's experience and current classroom makeup. Questionnaires were administered at the beginning and end of the research to determine each participant’s comfort levels with portfolio implementation and the peer coaching process. All
participants were interviewed every two weeks to gain insights into their implementation and attitudes toward implementing portfolio assessment. All participants kept journals describing their thoughts and concerns toward portfolio assessment and the value of peer coaching. Authorization to conduct this study was obtained in writing at the local school level. Copies of the request and permission letter are located in Appendixes C and D.

Initially, the investigator developed questionnaires adapted from the Stages of Concern (SoC) questionnaire from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Loucks & Hall, 1977). At the beginning of this study, the participant response forms were administered to all eight study participants. Secondly, Levels of Use (LoU) interviews, also from the CBAM framework, were conducted with the six teachers concerning implementation of portfolios in their classrooms. The investigator attended the Leadership for Change Institute sponsored by the Southwest Educational Development Lab and was a qualified rater on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. The peer-debriefer employed in this study has also attended the Leadership for Change Institute and is a trained CBAM rater. He read all of the data from this study and concurred with the investigator on the accuracy of participants' placements in the Stages of Concern and Levels of Use at the beginning and at the end of the study.

Guided Interviews for Data Collection

Interviews with the teachers in this study centered around obtaining information concerning each teacher's use of portfolio assessment in her classroom and the contributions (if any) the peer coach had made toward assisting her in the implementation process. Questions for the teachers concentrated on determining their feelings toward the use of portfolio assessment in their classrooms and the level of support given to these teachers by the assigned peer coach. Questions for the coaches focused on the teachers' progress and growth in using portfolio assessment in their
classrooms during the span of the peer coaching project. Peer coaches were also asked to describe their personal experiences during this study. Questions also focused on the process used by the peer coach in promoting the implementation of portfolio assessment and assessing the progress of the group. All conversations and dialogues with the participants were tape recorded, transcribed, and compiled.

Guided interviews of teachers. Data about Stages of Concern (see Table 1) provided insight into the participants' concerns, attitudes, feelings, and reactions about implementing portfolio assessment in their classrooms with the assistance of a peer coach. By identifying what the elementary teachers were actually doing with portfolio assessment, the investigator was able to rate the teachers' level of implementation and use. Initial Stages of Concern placement was determined by questionnaires. Through CBAM, the investigator was able to determine the degree of the coaches' input on the participants.

The Stages of Concern interviews (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987) began with open-ended, general questions for the teachers to describe their concerns. These questions were followed by more thought-provoking questions to define more precisely each teacher's Stages of Concern. The following questions were used to collect data reflecting the Stages of Concern about the implementation of portfolio assessment with the assistance of a peer coach at the elementary level. These questions, some of which are two-part, are based on Stuhlmann (1993) and include:

(a) What are your general reactions to implementing portfolio assessment in your class? Why do you feel the way you do?

(b) What are your general reactions to having a peer coach assist you with the implementation of portfolio assessment?

(c) What would you advise other teachers who are thinking about implementing portfolio assessment? What questions do you have now about portfolio assessment?
In addition, questions from the Level of Use of Innovation Chart (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987), as indicated in Table 2 in this study, were modified to gather information about each teachers’ Levels of Use in the implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom. The questioning strategy focused on asking general, open-ended questions, followed by more thought-provoking questions. The questions for the interview were as follows:

(a) Have you attempted to implement portfolio assessment in your class?

(b) Are you currently using portfolio assessment with your students?

A response of “no” to either or both of the preceding questions led to the following questions:

(a) Do you have any plans to begin using portfolio assessment?

(b) Have you set a date to begin using portfolio assessment?

(c) Have you talked with your peer coach about implementing portfolio assessment?

(d) Is there anything you’d like to discuss with me about why you are not implementing portfolio assessment at this time?

A response of “yes” to the questions of whether a teacher had tried to implement portfolio assessment lead to the following questions:

(a) What types of portfolios have you tried? How have they worked? What were some of your pupils’ reactions?

(b) Are you consulting with the peer coach in implementing portfolio assessment? How is this progressing?

(c) Are you planning to make any major changes in the way you are currently using portfolio assessment in your classroom?

(d) Is there anything else you would like to discuss with me about your use of portfolio assessment in your classroom?

These guided teacher interviews contained information that provided insight on teachers’ perceptions of their implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom and the importance attached to the use of the peer coaching in assisting the
implementation process. The information collected provided the investigator with precise data about the concerns and experiences of implementing portfolio assessment into instructional practices. All interviews took place between January 1997 and March 1997.

Guided interviews of peer coaches. Six interviews with each of the two peer coaches were conducted from January to March to gather information on the type of support and training requested and received by teachers, on how each coach promoted the implementation of portfolio assessment, and on how each coach assessed the progress of her teachers. The following questions were asked:

(a) Do the teachers have the necessary materials to implement portfolio assessment in their classrooms?

(b) What are some of the problems teachers are experiencing in implementing portfolio assessment?

(c) How are you responding to questions and requests for help?

(d) What types of training, if any, have you provided for the teachers?

(e) How are you promoting the use of portfolio assessment?

(f) How are you assessing the progress of the teachers?

(g) Do you feel teachers are incorporating portfolio assessment into their teaching practices?

(h) What circumstances and/or experiences do you think lead some teachers to implement portfolio assessment at a higher level than others?

(i) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience as the peer coach for this study?

Demographic Survey and Questionnaire

Each participant was asked to complete a questionnaire to obtain demographics and to gain an insight into the teachers' and coaches' experiences concerning implementation of portfolio assessment (see Appendixes A and B). Teacher questionnaires addressed the following specific issues in relation to peer coaching: observation/technical feedback; collegiality/analysis of application; experimentation;
student learning; concerns/comfort with peer coaching; and characteristics of trust and frequency of implementation of portfolio assessment activities (see Appendix A). The coaches’ questionnaire addressed specific issues in relation to being a peer coach: background of experience; characteristics of trust; concerns/comfort with peer coaching; and frequently asked questions (see Appendix B).

Journals

A daily journal was kept by all of the participants in the study, including the coaches, to record thoughts and perceptions during the peer coaching experience. The focus of the journal activity was to provide a daily record of the events during the field experience which was instrumental in providing more detailed information concerning the implementation of the project. The entries were reflective in nature in order to provide a more personalized account of the whole implementation process.

Data Analysis

Constant Comparative Method

The steps in the constant comparative method described by Glaser (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) were utilized. These steps include: (a) Begin data collection; (b) search for issues, recurring events, or activities in the data to develop categories; (c) collect further data that provide examples of the categories of focus, looking to find the diversity in each category; (d) write about the categories by describing and accounting for all the incidents within the data while constantly searching for new incidents or negative cases; (e) work with the data and emerging themes to uncover basic processes and relationships; and (f) sample, code, and write as the analysis focuses on the core categories. These processes occur simultaneously as the analysis of the data continues until the completion of the research report.

Data from all questionnaires were compiled by using the constant comparative method to determine commonalities and differences between the research participants.
and two research sites. Each teachers' and coach's journal was examined, and commonalities and differences in their reflections were compiled and compared to their responses on the questionnaires. The journal entries enhanced the experiences of the participants and provided more descriptive insight into the results of the study. The questionnaires and interview data were systematically integrated with the journal entry notes from the six site visits at each school site.

The guidelines from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model were also used to analyze the growth of teachers and their concerns as they implemented portfolio assessment in their classroom. By analyzing the comments of the teachers in the study, the investigator, who is a trained rater of the CBAM, was able to determine the extent to which each participant was using portfolio assessment and how this changed over time.

**Case Studies**

This research involves a case study approach. Case studies are a primary approach of the qualitative researcher.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

Data were reported in the form of two multiple case studies to emphasize the effects of each peer coach on each of the three teachers at each of the two school sites. After each case was reported, a cross-case analysis (Yin, 1984) was conducted to determine effective practices of the peer coaches. Commonalities and differences of each case were analyzed and reported. The two sets of data were compared and the patterns which led to the incorporation of portfolio assessment were identified.

**Trustworthiness**

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are equally concerned with establishing validity and reliability of their data collection methods and conclusions. Qualitative researchers use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
To persuade readers that the findings of this research are legitimate and trustworthy, several procedures were followed.

**Establishing Credibility, Dependability, and Confirmability**

Credibility, dependability, and confirmability for this study were established through various means. Triangulation of sources, peer debriefing, external auditing, member checking, and confidentiality all contributed to a rigorous study.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation was used to increase the credibility of this study. According to Denzin (as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 187), this study employs data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation involved collecting data from various sources, six teachers and two peer coaches. Triangulation of method included the use of surveys, interviews, and questions to collect data. In this study, data were collected through various sources: guided interviews from teachers and peer coaches; surveys; guided interviews; informal conversations with peer coaches and teachers; journals; and questionnaires.

**Peer debriefing and external auditing.** The peer debriefer keeps the investigator honest by questioning procedures, methods, and analysis that were used in the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "The task of the peer debriefer is to be sure that the investigator is as fully aware of his or her posture and process as possible" (p. 308). The peer debriefer for this study works for the Louisiana State Department of Education and is a certified CBAM rater. All of the data were read by the peer debriefer at the beginning and end of the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an external auditor to provide dependability and confirmability. The external auditor scrutinizes the data and conclusions to carefully verify the process and product of the research. The raw data and final report of this research were examined to ensure that the report was dependable and confirmable.
**Member checking.** Member checking involved letting the participants in the study review the data for accuracy and correct information they perceived to be incorrect. It also gave the participants the opportunity to include information they might have forgotten the first time.

**Confidentiality.** Participation in this study was voluntary. Trust was established with the participants by ensuring they would remain anonymous, and measures were taken to prevent data from being linked to specific individuals. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix E) which provided the participants with the name, address, and telephone number of the investigator, and a written statement of why the information was to be collected and how the information was to be used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Rigor.** To ensure the reliability of this study, rigor was used in the research process. Cooper (1984) characterized rigorous research synthesis as five phases: problem formation; data collection; data evaluation; analysis and interpretation. Each phase of the review requires subjective decisions that can profoundly affect the outcome of the research. To insure accurate reporting in this study, the investigator strived to make valid conclusions of the research.

**Transferability**

The thick description of a qualitative report allows someone interested in generalizing the information from the context of the study to arrive at a conclusion about whether transfer to another setting is possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the degree of transferability depends upon the degree of similarity between the sending and receiving contexts. Since the original investigator cannot know the other contexts to which transferability might be sought, it is the investigator's responsibility only to provide sufficient descriptive data to make judgements of transferability possible. Therefore,
determinations of the generalizability of the findings from this current research must be left to those researchers who wish to apply these findings to other settings.

**Limitations**

This study was subject to the following limitations:

(a) The subjects of this study were first and third grade teachers during the 1996-97 school year.

(b) Peer coaches were not able to be equally-matched.

(c) Subjects and factors not specified were considered beyond the scope of this study.
Chapter 4
Presentation of Case Study of Applegate School

The first case study represents one coach and three teachers who participated in the peer coaching/portfolio assessment study at Applegate School. Coach Applegate has a background in teaching kindergarten, first, and second grades. Allison and Beverly are first grade teachers, and Catherine is a third grade teacher.

Applegate School Setting

Applegate School is the oldest facility in this north Louisiana school district with an approximate enrollment of 650 students. Ninety-two percent of the students at Applegate were at-risk due to socioeconomic status. Nearly 50% of the students came from single parent homes. This school district ranked high in poverty risk indicators, such as: free lunches; unemployment; and federal assistance.

Principal of Applegate School

The principal of Applegate School has over 30 years of experience in the educational field, 19 years of which are in a supervisory position. She has been principal at Applegate for the past 10 years. She has a masters degree plus 30 hours with certification in elementary grades, reading, and four supervisory/administrative areas. She is a member and office holder of numerous professional and civic organizations both locally and nationally. She has received several “Principal of the Year” and “Outstanding Young Woman” awards.

The principal of Applegate School has over 300 hours of training in specific topics such as building effective schools, Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), principal as change facilitator, coaching teachers to higher levels of effectiveness, and authentic assessment/portfolios. She also has taught several courses at the university level.

The principal of Applegate School believes in the well-being of each student and strives to provide well-rounded educational opportunities for all students. She believes
that all children can learn and become productive individuals. She is a sincere, caring, and devoted principal who is concerned about the individual needs of the students at Applegate. She knows every student by name and makes it a priority to be visible around the school as well as in the classrooms. She has a good rapport with her faculty and staff and has high expectations of everyone. The principal treats everyone with great respect and is a tremendous support to her faculty and staff members, and she plays a big role in maintaining the positive and pleasant climate at Applegate School.

Coach Applegate

Coach Applegate has teaching experience at the kindergarten, first, and second grade levels. She has a bachelor's degree with certification in the area of elementary education. She is pursuing a masters degree in administration and supervision. She has ten years teaching experience, all of which had been at the same school. She has been in her present position of teaching preschool one year. She has approximately 15 college hours toward her Masters degree and 10 hours of inservice training on portfolio assessment with numerous hours spent on developing a research paper on portfolios.

At the onset of the peer coaching study, Coach Applegate rated herself on the demographic survey (see Appendix B) at the knowledge level of development in portfolio assessment. This meant that she had sufficient information about portfolio assessment and had the capability to effectively communicate with someone else. At the conclusion of the peer coaching study, Coach Applegate rated herself on the demographic survey at the skill level of development in portfolio assessment which meant that she felt she had the ability and she felt comfortable performing tasks and assisting others with tasks related to portfolio assessment.

Coach Applegate's responsibilities, besides being a volunteer peer coach for this study, included being a member and office holder of several professional organizations, grade level leader and faculty liaison at Applegate School and School Building Level
Committee chairperson, who is responsible for teachers’ referrals of students for special education services. Coach Applegate is also a member of the parish-wide grant writing team and has co-authored and received numerous school improvement grants.

**Elements of Establishing Trust**

On the Characteristics of Trust survey (see Figure 1) administered at the beginning of the study as part of the questionnaire, Coach Applegate ranked the following traits as being extremely necessary in establishing trust with peer teachers: being visible and accessible; revealing feelings; listening reflectively; admitting mistakes; and demonstrating professional knowledge and skills. She ranked the following traits as being necessary in establishing trust with peer teachers: maintaining confidentiality; behaving consistently; keeping commitments; expressing personal interest in other people; and acting non-judgmentally.

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Figure 1

Characteristics of Trust Survey

Ironically, after the completion of this research study, the majority of the traits that Coach Applegate had previously rated on the Characteristic of Trust survey (prior to the study) as being necessary were changed to extremely necessary. The traits rated as

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extremely necessary were as follows: maintaining confidentiality; behaving consistently; keeping commitments; expressing personal interests in other people; acting non-judgmentally; listening reflectively; admitting mistakes; and demonstrating professional knowledge and skills. Two traits previously rated as extremely necessary to establishing trust were changed to ratings of necessary. These two traits were being visible and accessible and revealing feelings.

The characteristics for establishing trust with the peer teachers exhibited by Coach Applegate through the guided interviews and journal entries were as follows: (a) being visible and accessible; (b) expressing personal interest in other people; (c) listening reflectively; and (d) demonstrating professional knowledge and skills. It was interesting to note that most of these characteristics were rated by Coach Applegate at the conclusion of the study as being extremely necessary in establishing trust. It was evident that Coach Applegate was practicing what she believed to be important aspects in establishing trust with her peer teachers.

Interview Results of Coach Applegate

During the twelve week period, interviews with Coach Applegate were conducted every two weeks for a total of six interview sessions. At the onset of the study, Coach Applegate indicated that the peer teachers had adequate materials to begin implementing portfolio assessment in their classrooms. Portfolio assessment is addressed in the basal texts used at the school, and all of the teachers have been trained to implement it. The principal has also provided the teachers with information about portfolio assessment.

During the first interview session, Coach Applegate noted that the big issue with the peer teachers at the beginning of the study was “Are we doing it right?” “Are we doing it wrong?” She noted that Catherine had not received the workshop information that Allison and Beverly had received; and therefore, had requested additional information concerning portfolio assessment.
Coach Applegate adhered to the philosophy that "If you are going to support something, you have to be involved in it and do it yourself." Coach Applegate is currently incorporating portfolio assessment in her preschool classroom, and she passes along new information to the peer teachers as she gathers it.

At the beginning of the study, Coach Applegate rated the school, as a whole, to be between the awareness and implementation stages of implementing portfolio assessment on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). She stated:

Most every teacher has started implementing some form of portfolio assessment in her classroom. Many of the teachers here at the school have already selected four students in which to implement portfolio assessment on a small scale. So, even though they may not be directly involved in the peer coaching study, there has been some training and everyone directly or indirectly involved in the study is doing something with portfolio assessment at the lower elementary level. I think it aids teachers knowing that they don’t have to be concerned about 20 portfolios and just start out small and then increase the usage as time and ease allows.

When asked to characterize the teachers who were willing and excited about implementing portfolio assessment, she stated, “I think the teachers who are excited about implementing it are also the same teachers who are willing to try new methods of teaching.” She continued to say, “The teachers who were really hesitant about this were the teachers that wanted to stick to the basics and not be concerned about things that they couldn’t grade or things that they don’t put on the report card.”

She indicated that grading was another concern voiced by the peer teachers in the study. “There is a concern as to grading when using portfolio assessment and rightfully so. Of course, it is harder for them than it is for me, because I don’t give grades in preschool.”

In the second interview, Coach Applegate remarked that not much progress had been made since the first interview due to school being closed for four days because of bad weather conditions. The school was closed an additional two days because of boiler...
problems, and another day for parent/teacher conferences. Coach Applegate said that she felt that the next interview session would be better.

However, she did indicate that during the parent/teacher conferences, "the parents really seemed to have taken a liking to the portfolios in my classroom as well as other classrooms, too." Coach Applegate was a preschool teacher that incorporated portfolio assessment in her own classroom. She stated that several parents felt that their child didn't do particular skills at the beginning of the school year because they lacked the necessary skills. Coach Applegate responded, "As we discussed the progress of their child, I was able to show them what I meant by growth." "The parents were excited about the portfolios."

Coach Applegate indicated that the handouts and articles on portfolios that the investigator had given the study participants were very helpful. The peer teachers were especially interested in the different kinds of checklists, some of which the children could do for themselves. She also indicated that Catherine requested some checklists that the students could "use to judge their own work to show that they can choose which pieces represent their best work."

Toward the middle of the study, Coach Applegate indicated that the peer teachers were beginning to show improvement in their implementation of portfolio assessment and that more feedback was being given during this time. Although Allison, the first grade teacher, was somewhat of a procrastinator and needed more encouragement and a "push" to get started, all of the peer teachers were in the process of implementing portfolio assessment with some of their students. At that time, Coach Applegate indicated that she was pleased with their progress.

During the fourth interview, which occurred during the eighth week of the study, Coach Applegate noted that everyone was up-to-date with their journal entries and appeared to be more comfortable with the portfolio assessment process. Prior to the
interview session, the peer teachers met with Coach Applegate and discussed their children. "We discussed problems and how to assess our children better and more authentically." At that point, everyone was progressing.

"I was especially proud of Beverly." Coach Applegate indicated that Beverly (one of the first grade teachers) was using sentence writing and the portfolio assessment process together in the students' journal writing. "Even though Beverly was a new teacher, she had really progressed in implementing portfolio assessment and was very enthusiastic about the process."

Allison had a tutor in her classroom who had become involved in the portfolio assessment process and who was very interested in helping the students with portfolios. "Just like I stated all along - it must be a joint effort between the teacher and the tutor, and for that reason we've always thought that the tutor needed the same training as the teacher."

The fifth interview session with Coach Applegate revealed that she was proud of the way the peer teachers were working toward implementing portfolio assessment with their students. She indicated that the teamwork of Allison and Beverly had really been a positive experience. Coach Applegate indicated that Beverly, being new and enthusiastic, encouraged Allison in the implementation process. The fact that Allison and Beverly taught at the same grade level was also a positive aspect in the peer coaching study. "With both teachers working together, I think that was an added plus for them both."

Coach Applegate reported that by this time, all of the peer teachers had come to the point where they were anxious to be able to explain the process to the parents. She further responded, "As the portfolios were being built, you saw the growth of the students and, over time, the portfolio grew."
Coach Applegate indicated that it had been more difficult for Catherine to implement portfolio assessment, because she was the only teacher in the study at the third grade level. Therefore, Coach Applegate tried to be more accessible to Catherine during the peer coaching study. Several times Catherine had said that she felt isolated. She believed that what the first grade teachers, Allison and Beverly, were implementing would not be "useful or practical" for her third grade students. So at this point, Catherine was not progressing at the same pace as the other two peer teachers.

In the last interview with Beverly, Coach Applegate was described as being a very valuable resource during the entire implementation of the study. The investigator relayed to Coach Applegate that the peer teachers of the study described her as being "a true inspiration." The investigator stated that the peer teachers had indicated that, "In many cases, the coach was the number one factor that encouraged us—her knowledge and her willingness to help were the keys to our success." Coach Applegate revealed that in order to respond to different requests from the peer teachers, she relied heavily on the expertise of the principal of Applegate School and the principal's willingness to share information with others, and provide workshops and inservices.

Interview information concerning Coach Applegate's experiences as a peer coach are summarized in Figure 2. Coach Applegate met with the participants prior to the initial meeting with the investigator to discuss the peer coaching study. Throughout the entire study she provided her peer teachers with information concerning portfolio assessment through the form of handouts, journal articles, and forms. She met with her peer teachers on a regular basis, established good rapport, and made classroom visits to make herself more available. During the classroom visits, Coach Applegate checked students' portfolios and made suggestions to the peer teachers. Overall, Coach Applegate developed a support system for the teachers to assist them in their implementation of portfolio assessment in their classroom.
Met with teachers and shared ideas and solved problems

Established good working rapport with peer teachers

Provided information through handouts, journal articles, and forms

Visited classrooms to examine student work and assist in implementation

Checked student portfolios and made suggestions to peer teachers

Overall, developed a support system for the peer teachers

Figure 2
Coach Applegate's Experiences
Coach Applegate was excited about her peer teachers' incorporation of portfolio assessment into their teaching practices. Coach Applegate stated, "I believe that as we progressed, teachers saw the benefits of portfolio assessment more and more, and not necessarily for grading purposes, but to give us more information about our individual children."

In regard to the growth of the peer teachers, Coach Applegate indicated that at first, all of the participants were somewhat hesitant. However, she stated, "With the guidance of a peer coach, I saw their self-confidence increase, and now they all have plans to continue using portfolios throughout the year, and on a larger scale next year."

She further noted:

I think this encouragement has been stimulated by just having somebody to talk things over, not by having an expert or a higher authority, but a situation where we're all on the same playing field and it's just somebody to bounce things off without being critical. However, I think the principal makes it or breaks it. If the principal says, "Hmmm," then it's going to go down the drain. If the principal is cooperative and wants to share what she has and is willing to try new things and allows us to try new things without being so critical, the innovation will work. Our principal is not critical. She's willing, and she's always been open to new ideas and to trying things. I think a supportive principal has to be that way. They have to be open. They have to be willing to step in and say, "Well, maybe we're not heading in the right direction, but let's see if we can turn this thing around and make this adjustment, and that adjustment." I think she has the ultimate control.

In reflecting over the course of the study, Coach Applegate indicated that she felt that the study was very instrumental in opening the teachers' eyes as to what results occurred when portfolio assessment was implemented through the peer coaching process. She felt that the whole school was going toward implementing portfolio assessment. "I'm not saying every teacher does it now, but I think that the more information we can share with the teachers, the more inclined they will be to use portfolio assessment in their classrooms."
Reflections from Coach Applegate’s Journal

At the onset of the peer coaching study, Coach Applegate gathered and organized information on portfolio assessment for the teacher participants. She documented locating and making available specific articles on portfolios for her peer teachers as they expressed a need for further information. Throughout her journal, she expressed pride in her peer teachers and followed their growth in implementing portfolios, as indicated by such entries as, “I’m so proud of Beverly today,” and “Stopped by Allison’s room to see how things were going.”

Coach Applegate allowed Allison and Beverly to work together in the implementation of portfolio assessment since they taught at the same grade level. Because Catherine did not have a “grade level cohort” in the study, Coach Applegate documented that she made extra efforts to assist Catherine in the implementation process. Coach Applegate made additional visits to her classroom, checked her students’ portfolios, and located specific information on portfolio assessment for Catherine’s particular grade level, and made further suggestions to help her.

Coach Applegate reported in her journal entries that the parents of her students approved of using portfolio assessment to document the children’s growth in skills. One entry reflectively read: “Shared portfolios with parents. Parents were excited to see the growth of their child and it was so rewarding to know that I was a part of that experience.” Coach Applegate indicated in her journal that she was very willing to share information with the parents, study participants, and other teachers at the school not directly involved in the study. Numerous entries revealed teachers not involved in the peer coaching study were requesting information concerning portfolio assessment. Other entries showed that as parents became interested in the portfolio experience, they were provided with further information concerning portfolios, such as articles and fact sheets.
Coach Applegate documented the investigator giving her a copy of the book entitled, *Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools* (Costa & Garmston, 1994). As Coach Applegate read the book, her journal entries reflected her application of key concepts of cognitive coaching. Her journal entries showed her comparison of Applegate’s school grade level meetings to “coaching” in that “each teacher was supporting, assisting, and assessing each other.” She reflected on the possibility of time being made for conferencing throughout the school. It was apparent in her journal entries that she had spent quite a bit of time reflecting on the peer coaching process and implications of the study, as indicated by above mentioned entries as well as another journal entry, “Read more of book...Does the peer coaching experience take time away unnecessarily from other teacher responsibilities?”

Coach Applegate’s entries reflected her desire to be accessible to her peer teachers and to encourage them in all of their endeavors. She expressed a real desire to encourage the peer teachers and others in implementing portfolio assessment.

**Allison**

**Characteristics**

Allison is a large, older motherly teacher who is the sister of the principal at Applegate school. She loves children and is a very devoted teacher who spends time at school on weekends and holidays. She has taught eight years, all of which have been at Applegate School. She holds a bachelor’s degree and is certified in elementary education. She taught first grade and had 25 students in her classroom. Her greatest concern at the beginning of the peer coaching study was to do what was expected of her. She was concerned about her aide’s lack of training in portfolio assessment. She indicated that she would like to have the peer coach observe her, record information, and provide feedback in all areas of portfolio assessment. She was very open to suggestions.
concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment and the peer coaching experience. She implemented portfolio assessment with four of her weaker students in her classroom.

Pre-Implementation

Prior to implementation, Allison scored at Level II, Preparation Level of Use (LoU) on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. This meant she was gathering information and beginning to implement portfolio assessment. The following journal entries and interview comments led to this conclusion. Allison wrote, "I am still a bit skittish about using portfolios, but plan to use this time with the peer coach to my advantage to be more positive about them," and "I'm going to be successful this time." She reported, "I have some journal articles that I have read concerning using portfolio assessment and I want to see similar results with my students, but I feel I cannot do this by myself." She stated that she was aware of the portfolio assessment process and believed that it would be a worthwhile addition to her teaching repertoire. She felt with the help of the peer coach she would be successful. She appeared too afraid to move ahead on her own and relied heavily on the assistance of the peer coach.

She also appeared to be overly concerned about doing what was expected of her in the study, and she hoped she would not upset or disappoint anyone. This indicated that she had very limited knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment. This observation led her to be placed at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I) on the CBAM. Her comments were characteristics of Level I, because she stated that she had little background knowledge of portfolio assessment and wanted to learn all she could about it during the peer coaching study.

Allison asked to be teamed with Beverly for the peer coaching project since both teachers taught at the same grade level. Allison indicated that it would be more to work as a team, and she felt that she needed extra prodding and assistance to implement portfolio assessment. Allison was extremely concerned about being a procrastinator.
She indicated, "I need somebody to kind of shove me along." She noted that by pairing up with Beverly the implementation of portfolio assessment would be easier.

**Implementation Process**

At this point, Allison reported that she was limiting herself to implementing portfolio assessment with only four of her weaker students in her classroom. Because the peer coaching project was Allison's first attempt at using portfolio assessment in her classroom, she felt it was necessary to start with only a few students. Her support came from Beverly and from the peer coach at Applegate School.

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Allison stated, "Beverly and I have both chosen four students using the same criteria for our classes, and we are going to be working together." When asked about her working relationship at this point with the peer coach, Allison replied, "We are in the beginning stages, and we haven't had an opportunity to work together very much. I plan to meet regularly with Coach Applegate in the future." She indicated that her students were very motivated about the idea of having their own portfolios and that she was personally looking forward to using portfolios in her classroom.

**Evaluation**

**Levels of use.** Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Allison stated that she was "still working on implementing portfolio assessment in her classroom." She noted:

> We've just been collecting materials, talking with the children about them, and, about the things that they would like to collect. One thing we've touched on at this time was helping students make decisions. I've tried to let them decide and make some decisions as to some things they would like to put in their portfolios.

Concerning her students' selection of pieces for the portfolios, Allison said, "At this point they really don't reflect or give any reason for choosing a particular piece for their portfolio, they just choose." She further clarified, "Because my students are first
graders, they may not verbalize their reasons for choosing a particular piece, but probably in their minds, they have thoughts as to what they want to do and why."

From her statements and actions, on the CBAM, Allison was moving out of Preparation, Level II (LoU). She was beginning to establish implementation of portfolio assessment on a Mechanical Use, Level III (LoU). She also indicated that she wanted to keep on working on using portfolio assessment in her classroom until she included the whole class.

**Stages of concern.** At the end of the peer coaching experience, Allison's concerns had also changed focus. She was worried about the implementation taking a longer time than Beverly, since she was taking the time to train her tutor in the portfolio assessment process. She said, "Well, we're trying, we really are, but Beverly is ahead of me on the implementation process." Allison clarified her concern with the following statement, "Beverly's tutor has been around longer and went through the training that we had earlier, and mine didn't, so it's taking a little longer but we're working on it." However, she indicated that she was very pleased with the progress that they had made in the classroom.

Another concern mentioned was the time factor. Allison noted, "I can see that it's going to take lots of time to implement portfolio assessment, and it's going to take lots of effort." She further stated, "And for a procrastinator, it's going to take double the effort, because I am really a top-notch procrastinator, but it is making me work harder by doing this with Coach Applegate and Beverly." At the conclusion of the study, this concern about time and management of portfolio assessment placed her at the Management Stage of Concern, (Level III) on the CBAM.

**Support from Coach Applegate**

Allison was excited about beginning the peer coaching experience. Because she repeatedly described herself as a procrastinator, she stated that she was looking forward
to having a peer coach for added support and encouragement to assist her through the implementation process. She reported that she planned to meet frequently with the peer coach in the future.

About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Allison said that she had met with Coach Applegate approximately three times the previous week. “Coach Applegate has really been a mentor for me. It is really comfortable to have somebody with that much confidence in what they’re doing to help us,” she said. “Any school contemplating setting up an innovation, should have a peer coach,” she continued. “It is an asset to have someone you can call on when something is not going right or to have someone to seek out to give advice or assistance.” The peer coach was described by Allison as someone who “helped you along, at times prodded you along, encouraged you to keep up with what you were doing, and saw to it that you were keeping up with it - a true asset to any program.”

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Allison reported:

As noted many times in my journal, I could not do without the peer coach. She is very important. She has been so very reassuring to me. She’s been extremely helpful, making suggestions, and kind of keeping me going, too. She has assisted and checked with me every week once or more about new ideas that I have tried. She has really made all of the difference in the world in changing my attitude about putting off the implementation of a new instructional method. She changed my dread to enthusiasm.

She also stated that working closely with Beverly had been helpful. However, she noted that the greatest help though was having a peer coach. She further noted:

The greatest part of the experience was having a peer coach to check on me, to offer helpful suggestions, and to reassure me throughout this program. She has been very interested as well as sympathetic (she knows what a procrastinator I am). She has put a lot of time into stopping by to offer help, to just see where I was and how I was doing. A peer coach certainly can be the making of a new program such as this. It has been a thrill to work with everyone. I was really quite afraid of setting up portfolios. Over these past weeks my fears have been calmed and I know I’m on the right track. I am so thankful I was a part of this experience!
Using Portfolio Assessment with Students

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Allison had not consistently incorporated portfolio assessment in her classroom. As indicated on the demographic survey (See Appendix A), she rated that she had sometimes incorporated the following portfolio assessment activities in her classroom: anecdotal records; group/individual projects; hands-on activities; and exhibitions. She stated that she had regularly incorporated thematic units and observation checklists in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Allison was beginning to use portfolio assessment with four of her students on somewhat of a regular basis, yet in conversations, she reported that she was still in the beginning stages. She began using reflective journals and processing writing activities in the portfolio assessment. In addition, parents of the four students using portfolios made positive comments. Allison stated, “Not only are the four children able to see the improvement in their skills, but the parents have responded favorably during the parent/teacher conference this past week.” She further reported, “Parents commented how excited they were to see the enthusiasm in their children when they show off their work in their portfolios.” With the assistance of Coach Applegate and Beverly, she became a more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment by sharing ideas with others and by seeing the benefits of using it in the classroom.

Future Use of Portfolio Assessment

Allison reflected on the progress she had made throughout the peer coaching experience. She stated, “I feel more comfortable now about portfolios although I realize I have a lot more to learn. She reported that she sees the benefits of using portfolio assessment in the classroom and further noted:

I can see where it’s going to be beneficial all the way around for all the children, the parents, and the school, if we’ll all start using portfolio assessment. I’m going to keep trying to improve the process. Right now I’m just working with four children. But I think next year I’m really going to start off with it at the
beginning of school, trying to do all of the children, and just see how I do with it. It may not be a total effort, but it will be a partial effort with every child, I think, for every grading period.

Based on her comments, Allison has progressed in her implementation of portfolio assessment to the Mechanical Use, Level III on the CBAM. She said that she is going to implement portfolio assessment with her entire class next school year.

Views on Impact of Peer Coaching

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (see Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Allison's views changed upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she indicated that she occasionally observed and was observed by others, and received and gave feedback and advice to others. At the conclusion of the study, she indicated that the frequency of being given advice regarding instruction increased from occasionally to frequently.

In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, she indicated that prior to the study that she frequently discussed effective strategies/methods with her colleagues, but only occasionally turned to others for instructional needs or adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, she indicated that she frequently adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. She continued to look at student's responses and grades to determine the need for instructional adjustments. Her frequency of communicating with other teachers during the day increased from somewhat likely to very likely.

Responses on the pre/post questionnaire indicated that Allison's confidence changed from somewhat confident to trying new ideas in the classroom to feeling confident. From the onset of the study, she believed that the students would be more motivated and reinforced through the peer coaching experience and would experience an increase in self-esteem.
As noted earlier, Allison's main concern at the onset of the study was “doing what is expected of me and getting the information to others that will be of value to them.” At the end of the experience, she said:

Now I have no more concerns. I feel that we definitely needed the peer coach to make the implementation of portfolio assessment a successful one. Everything works better and it is so comforting to know that person is there for you.

At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach (See Figure 1), Allison indicated that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to: maintain confidentiality; reveal feelings; act non-judgmentally; and to listen reflectively. She further ranked the following characteristics as being necessary: being visible and accessible; admitting mistakes; demonstrating professional knowledge and skill; behaving consistently; keeping commitments; and expressing personal interest in other people. According to the trust survey (see Figure 1), it is interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience, when asked to again rank the characteristics of a peer coach that were important toward establishing trust, Allison ranked all of the above traits as falling in the category of extremely necessary. It appears that Allison has had a positive experience with her peer coach and realizes the necessity of maintaining all of the presented characteristics in order to establish trust.

Beverly

Characteristics

Beverly is a young, enthusiastic, beginning teacher. She has been teaching two years, both of which have been at Applegate School. Beverly has some prior knowledge of portfolio assessment from her college reading method courses. These courses created a personal interest in portfolio assessment for her as shown by her willingness to learn more about portfolio assessment. She feels that she can learn from other teachers.
Beverly holds a bachelor's degree and is certified in elementary education. She taught first grade and had 24 students in her classroom. Her greatest concern at the beginning of the peer coaching study was to get organized in order to do a good job. Being new, she wanted to be able to get started and do a good job. She said that she was excited about having the assistance of a peer coach to help her implement portfolio assessment. Beverly was open to suggestions concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment and the peer coaching experience.

Pre-Implementation

Prior to implementation, Beverly scored at Level II, Preparation Level (LoU) on the CBAM. This meant she was gathering information on portfolio assessment and preparing to implement it. The following journal entries and interview comments led to this belief. Beverly wrote, "I am excited about the use of portfolios, but I want to learn more about using them so I can be more knowledgeable about the process." Beverly had also asked to be teamed with Allison for the peer coaching project, since both teachers taught at the same grade level. Coach Applegate indicated that it would be more comfortable for them to work as a team, so they could both plan together.

Beverly was concerned about being a new teacher and trying to begin a new instructional method in her classroom. "I don't know a lot about portfolio assessment, but I am willing to try and having other teachers to help will be an asset," she said. Beverly noted that by pairing up with Allison, the implementation of portfolio assessment would be easier. "I am excited about using portfolios, but I don't feel at this point I know enough about the process to implement it on my own, furthermore I plan to take advantage of the assistance from the peer coach and Allison to be more positive about the implementation of portfolio assessment in my classroom," she continued. She appeared to be overly concerned about being a new teacher and doing what was expected of her in the study. This indicated that Beverly had a very limited knowledge.
about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment. Her comments indicated that she was at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I). In other words, she was just beginning to use the knowledge she had acquired to begin the implementation process.

Implementation Process

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Beverly stated, “I have started small and have selected four students to develop portfolios in the areas of reading and language arts.” The portfolios were general portfolios, a generic collection of students’ work. Sometimes she selected the work that went into the students’ portfolio and other times the students selected the work they wanted to place in their portfolio. The peer coaching project was Beverly’s first attempt at using portfolio assessment in her classroom. Support came from Allison and from the peer coach at Applegate School.

When asked about her working relationship at this point with the peer coach, Beverly replied, “I have asked Coach Applegate several questions about portfolio assessment, but I plan to use her a great deal more in the near future.” She said, “I’m excited about the use of portfolios, but I want to learn more about using them so I can be more knowledgeable about the process.”

Approximately one month into the peer coaching experience, Beverly was excited to share with the investigator the progress she had made despite inclement weather delays at school. She noted:

My teacher aide and I organized our portfolios. We kind of went through the material that we had in there, and we organized it and made sure everything was dated. We are trying to get ready for our next step. We also have gotten some mailboxes to store our children’s things in for our portfolios and we have those ready. That is kind of where we are with it right now.

Approximately seven weeks into the peer coaching experience, Beverly worked with her students to review individual reading logs concerning books they had read. These logs were to be placed in their portfolios. She stated that having a peer coach and
Allison working together with her had been extremely helpful. She was concerned at this point about Catherine, another participant, being somewhat removed from them since she was at a different grade level. She noted, "Since Allison and I have the same planning period, we have had extra time together to talk about our experiences with portfolio assessment, and of course Catherine does not have that opportunity since she has a different planning time than us."

Evaluation

Levels of use. Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Beverly said that she had started using journals, and that Coach Applegate had read over her personal journal and discussed some of the things she had been doing giving her a few suggestions to improve it. Beverly noted:

I started labeling "cubbies" with each child's name. They decorated a folder that told about their personality. One child liked horses, so he had horses all over his folder. Every morning the students took a sheet of paper from the journal paper stack and wrote "Dear Journal." Then they write two to three sentences. I have to guide some of them, but some of them can do it on their own. Every day we picked a topic for the day and they write about something, and we put it in their journal folders. I'm going to show this to the parents on conference day as some sample collections of their work. Maybe they'll pick out the best ones. We've kind of worked together.

From her statements and actions, Beverly had moved out of Preparation, Level of Use II, and had established implementation of portfolio assessment on Mechanical Use, Level III. This meant that she was able to implement portfolio assessment with guidance from her peer coach. Beverly reported that she planned to use portfolio assessment next year, "I can begin my year with a fresh start and know what I know now at the beginning of the year, so I can carry it out consistently instead of picking it up midway." Beverly's comments revealed that her comfort level with portfolio assessment was increasing, and she was ready to try new things on her own. Her comments and behavior suggested that she had rapidly moved to LoU IVA Routine Use of portfolio assessment.
**Stages of concern.** At the end of the peer coaching experience, Beverly's concerns had changed from that of being hesitant to start a new innovation in her classroom to one of being excited that she was a participant in the peer coaching experience. At the end of the study, Beverly was beginning to assess her students with rubrics to get feedback on their progress. This indicated that she was concerned about evaluating the impact of portfolios on her students and placed her at the Consequence Stage of Concern (Level IV). Beverly stated that the kids had become enthusiastic about their portfolios. “It’s starting to affect them a little more, and they’re being more aware of it themselves, because they are wanting to put special work in their special folders,” she said.

Beverly stated that she was pleased with the progress that she had made in implementing portfolio assessment and with the lines of communication that she opened with the students’ parents. At this point, she noted, “I just want to try to use it (portfolio assessment) more than what I’ve been doing this year.” “We got off to a slow start this year, but next year I will be working the whole year with all of my students with portfolio assessment,” she concluded.

**Support from Coach Applegate**

Beverly was excited, yet hesitant, about beginning the peer coaching experience. She explained that she was looking forward to having a peer coach and Allison for support and encouragement to assist her through the implementation process. At the beginning of the study, Beverly said, “I have asked Coach Applegate several questions about portfolio assessment, but I plan to use her a great deal more in the future.” At first Beverly was concerned about involving the parents in the portfolio process and about their reactions toward portfolio assessment, so Coach Applegate provided her with articles and forms to send home to the parents to explain portfolio assessment.
About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Beverly stated that she had met with Coach Applegate approximately five times the previous week. She reported:

I met with Coach Applegate last week and I showed her what I had in my journal to make sure I was going about this in the right manner, and she looked at what I had and read my journal entries and suggested some things I could do. I think having our peer coach and Allison and I working together has helped me tremendously.

She stated that the peer coaching experience was not a threatening experience at all. She said that Coach Applegate had always been a mentor to her anyway, so she was glad that she was the peer coach in the study. She noted, “It’s very comfortable for me to work with her. She’s more on the ball with portfolios than I am, she tells me what she’s doing and guides me,” Beverly said.

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Beverly had extremely positive comments concerning peer coaching. She noted:

As noted many times in my journal, I could not do without the peer coach. The peer coach is the factor, because if I didn’t have anybody else to guide me or to work with like I do the peer coach, it would be hard to do, because we talk to each other in passing or when we meet, and just say, “Hey, what’s going on? What are you doing with it today? or What do I need to be doing? and It’s been great!

She stated that working closely with Allison had been helpful, but noted that the greatest help was having a peer coach. She further stated:

Our peer coach has been consistent in her guidance to me and provided ideas to help me in implementing portfolios in my classroom. She provided me with technical feedback which was extremely helpful. She allowed me to make changes to better my plans. She provided ideas that have been helpful that I would not have gotten on my own. The great thing about Coach Applegate was that she knew me well enough to give me ideas to adapt to my teaching style. She assisted me throughout the study and checked with me every week to see how the new ideas I tried worked out in the classroom. I have nothing but positive thoughts about the peer coaching experience. I enjoyed the experience!

**Using Portfolio Assessment with Students**

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Beverly had not consistently incorporated portfolio assessment in her classroom. She stated that she had sometimes used the
following portfolio assessment activities in her classroom: portfolios of students' work; anecdotal records; group/individual projects; and hands-on activities. She indicated, however, that she had regularly incorporated thematic units and observation checklists in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Beverly began to use portfolio assessment with four of her students on a regular basis with the hopes of using it with all of her students the next year on a regular basis. She began using reflective journals and processing writing activities in the portfolio assessment process. With the assistance of Coach Applegate and Allison, she became a more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment, sharing ideas with others and seeing the benefits of using it in her classroom.

**Future Use of Portfolio Assessment**

Beverly reflected on the progress she had made throughout the peer coaching experience. "I will continue to use portfolios in my classroom as part of a consistent routine in my plans," she reflected. Beverly said that she sees the benefits of using portfolio assessment in the classroom, not only for the students, but the teacher and parents as well. She further reflected:

I can see where it's going to be beneficial for everyone: all the children, the parents, and the school. We just all need to start using portfolio assessment. I'm going to keep trying to improve the process. Right now I'm just working with a few students, but I plan to use it next year with a fresh start and know what I know now at the beginning of the year, so I can carry it out consistently instead of picking it up midway.

These comments suggested that Beverly has the potential to advance to Level V. This projection is based on the fact that Beverly is considering changing her use of portfolio assessment in her classroom to fit the needs of her students and her instructional practices. By working as part of a collaborative team at LoU V, Integration, Beverly was assessing the merits and weaknesses of her and her colleagues' performances. She was contemplating what could be done to further refine and improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.
Views on Impact of Peer Coaching

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (see Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Beverly's views changed upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she stated that she rarely observed others, or received and gave feedback and advice to others and was only occasionally observed by others. At the conclusion of the study, she reported that the frequency of being given advice and feedback regarding instruction increased from occasionally to frequently.

In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, she indicated prior to the study that she occasionally discussed effective strategies/methods with her colleagues, but only rarely turned to others for instructional needs or adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, she noted that she frequently discussed strategies/methods with her colleagues, turned to others to help with instructional needs, and adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. She continued to look at her students' responses, grades, and her own reflections to determine the need for instructional adjustments, but her frequency in communicating with other teachers during the day increased from somewhat likely to very likely.

Responses on the pre/post questionnaire showed that Beverly's confidence changed from confident to trying new ideas in the classroom to feeling very confident. From the onset of the study, she believed that the students would be more motivated and have an increase in self-esteem as a result of the skills gained from the peer coaching experience. At the conclusion of the study, she believed that there would also be a reduction of behavioral problems in the classroom and students would have more reinforcement as a result of the peer coaching experience.
As noted earlier, Beverly's main concern at the onset of the study was "being a new teacher and doing a good job with implementing portfolio assessment in her classroom." At the end of the experience, she noted:

Now I am confident I can implement new methods in my classroom. I feel that with the help of the peer coach I was able to implement portfolio assessment in my classroom successfully. It helped to know that there was someone there to assist and guide us and that she was there for us through everything and ready to make suggestions for improvement.

At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach, Beverly revealed on the Characteristics of Trust survey (see Figure 1) that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to maintain confidentiality and act non-judgmentally. She further ranked the following characteristics as being "necessary": being visible and accessible; demonstrating professional knowledge and skills; behaving consistently, keeping commitments; revealing feelings; and listening reflectively. She ranked the following traits as somewhat necessary: expressing personal interest in other people and admitting mistakes. According to the Characteristics of Trust survey, it was interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience, when asked to again rank the characteristics of a peer coach that were important toward establishing trust, she ranked all of the above traits as falling in the category of extremely necessary. It appeared that Beverly had a positive experience with her peer coach and saw the necessity of maintaining all of the presented characteristics in order to establish trust.

Catherine

Catherine is a close friend of Coach Applegate. She did not have any prior training or knowledge about portfolio assessment and is a traditional type of teacher who adheres to a skill-based philosophy of teaching. Catherine has been teaching 25 years, 15 of which has been at Applegate School. She holds a bachelor's degree and is certified
in elementary education. She taught third grade and had 23 students in her classroom. Her greatest concern at the beginning of the peer coaching study was whether or not she would have time to talk to the peer coach during school hours. She indicated that she would like the peer coach to assist her with the record keeping and conferencing aspects of portfolio assessment. She was open to suggestions concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment and the peer coaching experience.

**Pre-Implementation**

Prior to implementation, Catherine scored at Level II, Preparation Level (LoU) on the CBAM. This meant she was gathering information on portfolio assessment and preparing to implement it. The following entries from Catherine's journal and her interview comments substantiated this belief: "I'm excited about the study, but I feel I need a little more information from Coach Applegate. I read some more material on portfolio assessment and mapped out some strategies in my mind as to how I'm going to implement it in my classroom."

Catherine indicated that she had little background with portfolio assessment, since she had only taught language for several years. At the beginning of the peer coaching experiences, she further noted:

I use writing. The children write daily. Although I have not kept a portfolio as such until just recently, I know enough to put some of their writings in there. This is where I started: I've included a survey on my students' likes and dislikes; some of their writings; and then I have some test data in there as well. Pretty much that is where I am at this point.

Since Catherine was the only third grade teacher who participated in the peer coaching experience, she was not able to be teamed with another teacher in the study; therefore, she decided to implement portfolio assessment with all of her students in the classroom. The peer coaching project was Catherine's first genuine attempt to use portfolio assessment in her classroom. Support came from the peer coach at Applegate School.
Catherine was concerned about learning what was really involved in a portfolio. She remarked, “I don’t know much about portfolio assessment but am willing to try; having a peer coach to assist will be very helpful to me.” Since Allison and Beverly were both first grade teachers, Catherine had a concern about being somewhat isolated from the other two participants in the study. She continued, “I think portfolio assessment is going to have so many positive effects. I just haven’t had a chance to get into it, and I don’t know if I am doing it right or not, but I’m doing it. I plan to take advantage of the assistance from the peer coach though and try my best to implement portfolio assessment in my classroom.” This indicated that she had a very limited knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment, which placed her at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I) on the CBAM.

**Implementation Process**

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Catherine stated, “Basically I have what you would call a ‘general collection’ portfolio.” She further noted:

> Of course, the students want to put everything in their portfolios. I just explained to them that they are going to pick and choose what they would like to put in there and then I will submit something as well. But right now, they put everything they do in there. I think as we go along they will realize that they can eliminate. I think they will decide what they want to have their parents look at.

When asked about her working relationship at this point with the peer coach, Catherine replied, “Coach Applegate has been a big help already. I have not had a lot of training and she has given me handouts.” Catherine indicated that Coach Applegate had talked about some things that she might put in the portfolios. Catherine said that the students needed to add more variety to their portfolios, but she was not sure what they needed to include.

After the first few weeks of the study, Catherine appeared to be overly concerned about the issue of time. She reflected:

> I feel so frazzled. I think it’s just that there is so much going on, and I haven’t really had time to do portfolio assessment justice. It’s going on. The children
are still reading and writing. I just don’t know that I have the time to evaluate and assess like I ought to be doing. I talked to the peer coach and she assures me that’s probably normal for this time of year and not to worry about implementing portfolio assessment.

At this same time, she expressed concerns about not having another teacher at her grade level implementing portfolio assessment. She noted:

I just think if I had someone else in my grade level that I could talk with about portfolio assessment, perhaps it would help me further. My peer coach is real good and supportive, but she’s preschool and I’m third grade, and I think there’s a big difference in what you do and when you do it and how you do it, plus she has a tutor, and I have no one to assist me during the day. It makes it real difficult for me to do my regular work plus help the children with their portfolios. So, I guess I’m just a little frazzled at this point. However, I’m not giving up.

By the second interview session, approximately one month into the peer coaching experience, Catherine was excited to share with the investigator the process she had made despite inclement weather delays at school. She noted:

We have been doing some writing for our portfolios and I do want to tell you about what I wrote in my journal. I have a little boy who is so quiet and meek and has some special problems, but he is in regular class still at this time and we did a writing the other day. He came up to me in this soft little voice and said, ‘Can I put this in my portfolio?’ and I was so proud. It made a difference - he wanted to save it. He was so proud of his work and it needed to go in a ‘special’ place. It was so special, this little boy, the child I least expected to do was the very one that wanted to know if he could put his work in his portfolio.

Approximately seven weeks into the peer coaching experience, Catherine said that she had a chance to talk with the peer coach about evaluations. She asked the peer coach to find some information on assessment and self-assessment so her students could grade themselves. She said that having a peer coach made all of the difference in her implementation process because it gave her someone to talk to and advice her. Since Coach Applegate and Catherine were friends outside of the school setting, they had many opportunities to talk. Catherine noted, “It’s just wonderful to have a support person to work with you and share and bounce off ideas.”
At the fourth interview session, Catherine told the investigator that she was given the opportunity to meet with the other two teachers who were participating in the study.

In regard to the meeting, she noted:

I was real excited about meeting with the other teachers, because I work alone, generally, other than my coach, who is really supportive, but we had a chance to share and talk, and I found out what they’re doing, and, of course, Coach Applegate gave us all direction, so that was real neat. I enjoyed that. At times I feel like I’m on the second floor all by myself. I’m isolated.

**Evaluation**

**Levels of use.** Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Catherine indicated that she was so happy that she participated in the study. She reported that she was asked to contribute some writing for the school’s newsletter, and was able to contribute samples of her students’ writing from their portfolios. Catherine remarked that she had talked to both Allison and the peer coach and felt she was ending the project with “a bang.”

Coach Applegate had read over her personal journal and discussed some of the things she had been doing and was pleased with her implementation of portfolio assessment. Catherine noted:

By participating in the peer coaching experience, I really learned a lot about the concept of portfolio assessment and also about myself, in general. I appreciate the opportunity being given to me. I’ve already told the parents that I’m going to continue this next year and that the students will be able to take their portfolios home at the end of the year. So, they will be looking for the portfolios to come home. I plan on continuing this next year and hopefully will continue to learn more about the benefits of portfolio assessment.

Her statements and actions indicated that Catherine had moved from Preparation, Level II (LoU) on the CBAM to the Mechanical Use, Level III. Her comments suggested that she is now able to use portfolio assessment on a routine basis without her coach. This is exemplified by her desire to continue using portfolio assessment until the end of the year. She further remarked, “I am only in the initial stage, but I hope to
continue next year, taking it one step farther. I know it has been beneficial to the children."

Stages of concern. At the end of the peer coaching experience, Catherine's concerns had changed from that of being nervous about starting a new innovation in her classroom to being glad that she was a participant in the peer coaching experience. She said that having a coach kept her on target throughout the whole study.

Toward the end of the study, she became concerned about having conferences with her students because of her full schedule. She was also disappointed in the lack of improvement in her students' spelling skills. She felt that a great deal of time was required to do a thorough job with portfolios. She felt that having an aide in the classroom would be beneficial. "I think the reluctance of teachers to utilize portfolios lies more with the time element than anything else. There's an abundance of so much paperwork involved. It requires so much time to keep updated and keep the children updated and critique their writings and give them some feedback, I just don't have time to do that," she noted. This concern for time and organization of the portfolios placed Catherine at the Management Stage of Concern (Level III) on the CBAM at the end of the study.

She did say that the students were enthusiastic about their portfolios, "They are enjoying choosing their work to put in their portfolios." Catherine explained that she was pleased with the progress that she had made in implementing portfolio assessment but wished that she had an aide to help with its implementation in the classroom. At this point, she noted, "I'm going to continue it this year and let the students take their portfolios home at the end of the year." She also said, "We got off to a slow start this year, but I think I have a better insight as to how to start next year already, and it will make the process a little easier for me. I'm going to continue for sure."
Support from Coach Applegate

Catherine was enthusiastic about beginning the peer coaching experience. Because she was the only teacher at the third grade level that was implementing portfolio assessment, she was looking forward to having access to a peer coach. She said that she needed a peer coach to keep her on track with the process of implementing portfolio assessment. Catherine knew she would benefit from having a peer coach to answer her questions and offer guidance. She felt that was one of the more beneficial aspects of having a peer coach.

At the beginning of the study, Catherine said, “Coach Applegate has been a big help already. Because I have not had a lot of training, she has helped me by giving me handouts and personal suggestions.” She further noted that Coach Applegate was very organized, and she could put her hands on materials very easily and knew where everything was at all times. She felt that was a big help.

About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Catherine remarked that she had met with Coach Applegate to discuss portfolios, in particular the evaluation aspect of portfolios. She said:

I asked Coach Applegate to look for some things on assessment, self-assessment so the children could grade themselves and she went immediately to her room and located some information and forms for me to look over. It is just wonderful to have a support person to work with that understands what all you are going through.

Catherine thought that the peer coaching experience was very helpful and that Coach Applegate had made a big difference by giving her encouragement. She noted, “Just having someone here that I know if I have a problem or just to know that I’m on track. It’s nice to have someone you can talk to who is very familiar with portfolios.”

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Catherine had extremely positive comments concerning peer coaching. She said that working closely with the peer coach...
had been helpful and had reduced the isolation that she had felt by not having another teacher, at her grade level, implementing portfolio assessment. She further noted:

Our peer coach has been extremely helpful! She has kept me on schedule, secured materials, and answers questions or talked me through things. She has visited my room on numerous occasions and talked to the students and even saw their work! Just her reassurance that what I’m doing is right for my class made all the difference in my attitude about this experience. Coach Applegate always came across as a caring, friendly coach whose purpose was to assist, not judge. Otherwise, I may have given up early on in the study. I really appreciate the opportunity to have had access to such a wonderful peer coach. I have nothing but positive thoughts about the peer coaching experience.

Using Portfolio Assessment with Students

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Catherine had not incorporated portfolio assessment in her classroom. The demographic survey (see Appendix A), shows that she had sometimes incorporated the following portfolio assessment activities in her classroom: writing process activities; group/individual projects; and hands-on activities. She reported, however, that she had regularly incorporated thematic units and observation checklists in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Catherine was beginning to use portfolio assessment with all of her students on somewhat of a regular basis and needed extra time or the assistance of an aide in the classroom. She began using reflective journals and processing writing activities for the students’ portfolios. With the assistance of the peer coach, she noted that she had become a more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment.

Future Use of Portfolio Assessment

Catherine reflected on the progress she had made throughout the peer coaching experience. She reflected, “I will continue to use portfolios in my classroom through the rest of this year, because I see the benefits it provides. She further reflected:

I think I have a better insight as to how to start next year already and it will make the process a little easier for me. I am surely going to continue using portfolio assessment with all of my students next year. I’ve learned so much from this experience, especially about myself.
Overall, Catherine progressed in her implementation of portfolio assessment to the Mechanical Use, Level III on the CBAM. Based on her comments above, she will be continuing the use of portfolio assessment next school year.

Views on Impact of Peer Coaching

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (see Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Catherine's views did not vary much upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she said that she frequently observed others and gave feedback and advice to others. She further indicated that she was only occasionally observed by others and received feedback on instruction. At the conclusion of the study, she did not indicate any difference in any of the items presented above.

In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, she indicated prior to the study that she frequently discussed effective strategies/methods with her colleagues, and frequently turned to others for instructional needs or adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, no changes in frequency were noted in collegiality or analysis of applying instructional methods. She continued to look at her students' responses and grades to determine the need for instructional adjustments. Her frequency of communicating with other teachers during the day did not increase from somewhat likely.

Responses on the pre/post questionnaire indicated that Catherine's confidence levels did not change in reference to trying new ideas in the classroom. She maintained that she felt somewhat confident throughout the study. From the onset of the study, she believed that the students would have an increase in self-esteem as a result of the skills gained from the peer coaching experience. At the conclusion of the study, she maintained that belief.
As noted earlier, Catherine's main concerns at the beginning of the study were basically being isolated in the study since she was the only third grade teacher implementing portfolio assessment and not having enough time to implement portfolio assessment effectively. At the end of the experience, she indicated:

Now I am more confident. I can implement new methods in my classroom. I feel that with the help of my peer coach I was able to implement portfolio assessment in my classroom on a larger scale than the other teachers involved in the study. It was reassuring to me to know that there was someone there to assist and guide me; however, I still feel that I would have benefitted more if I would have had a teacher at my grade level implementing the process with me.

At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach, Catherine indicated that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to: act non-judgmentally; be visible and accessible; demonstrate professional knowledge and skills; keep commitments; and to listen reflectively. She further ranked the following characteristics as being necessary: maintaining confidentiality; behaving consistently; and revealing feelings. She ranked the following traits of admitting mistakes as somewhat necessary and the trait of expressing personal interest in other people as not necessary. According to the Characteristics of Trust survey (see Figure 1), it is interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience when asked to again rank the characteristics of a peer coach no differences in ranking were noted. It appeared that Catherine's perceptions and attitudes did not change during the peer coaching experience. This lack of change can be attributed to the fact that Catherine had significantly more years of teaching experience than the other two teacher participants in the study and she has already established a firm teaching philosophy.

Cross-Case Analysis for Applegate School

Allison and Beverly taught first grade; Catherine taught third grade, and Coach Applegate taught preschool. Allison and Beverly worked as a team during the study, whereas Catherine worked alone and felt somewhat isolated. Beverly was the newest
teacher having taught only two years. Catherine had the most years of teaching experience having taught 25 years. All teachers had concerns, but Beverly's concerns differed in that she was concerned about not having the years experience in teaching as did Allison and Catherine. Allison and Catherine were concerned about not having enough time to implement portfolio assessment. Significant changes were noted on pre/post rankings on the demographic survey of Allison and Beverly but not Catherine. All peer teachers were rated as being at the Preparation Stage of Level of Use (Level II) with post test results showing Beverly exceeding the other two teachers by one level on the Level of Use on the CBAM. The results indicated that only Beverly was implementing portfolio assessment on a consistently regular basis, with Allison being somewhat more consistent than she had been and Catherine beginning to implement portfolio assessment with all of her students on a somewhat regular basis.

Differences in teachers' levels of use of portfolio assessment were characterized by years of experience, grade level taught, and types of concerns. Beverly, being a newer teacher, appeared to have had a more enthusiastic attitude as documented by interviews and journal entries than Catherine who had been teaching over 20 years. Secondly, Allison and Beverly taught at the first grade level and possibly had more in common during the implementation process, more so than Catherine who taught at the third grade level. Thirdly, Beverly's concerns centered around being a new teacher and wanting to try new methods of instruction, whereas Allison was considered to be a procrastinator and consistently worried about finding enough time to implement portfolio assessment. Catherine was concerned with time and complained about feeling isolated.

Differences in teachers' implementation of portfolio assessment were also characterized by the peer coach's years of experience, grade level taught, levels of training, other responsibilities, and staff development experiences. Beverly had significantly less years of teaching experience than the peer coach, compared to Allison...
and Catherine. Beverly indicated in her journal entries and interviews that the peer coach was already functioning in a mentor-type role with her and that she highly respected and looked up to her. Catherine indicated that the peer coach was not aware of the differences in the implementation of portfolio assessment at the preschool level compared to the third grade level which may have indirectly affected her rate of implementation of portfolio assessment. Catherine also felt her progress was hampered due in part to not having a classroom aide to assist in the implementation of portfolio assessment as did Allison and Beverly. Allison and Catherine did not progress beyond one level of use which may have been due to the peer coach’s lack of ability to move teachers to a higher level of understanding about the philosophy of portfolio assessment. It appears that Beverly progressed more than Allison and Catherine, possibly due to her enthusiasm to learn on her own initiative as documented by journal entries and interviews and her having taken methods courses which dealt with portfolio assessment.

Conclusions

The peer coach enhanced each teacher’s growth in the implementation of portfolio assessment at Applegate School. Although the peer coach may have lacked the ability to promote a more extensive growth in implementation, she encouraged the teachers and established a good rapport with them thereby giving them an incentive to continue the implementation process. Her availability and accessibility to the peer teachers, documented by the interviews and journal entries, were an indirect result of not having so many responsibilities at school and in the community and her genuine interest in the project.

In this study, Coach Applegate demonstrated personal characteristics conducive to peer coaching. These characteristics are: being visible and accessible; expressing personal interest in other people; listening reflectively; and demonstrating professional knowledge and skills.
The conditions conducive to peer coaching exhibited at Applegate School are as follows: having a principal who is supportive and knowledgeable about portfolio assessment; having teachers who collaborate with another teachers who have about the same knowledge of portfolios and who teach the same grade and are implementing portfolio assessment; and having a peer coach at the school site who is willing and able to share their knowledge about portfolio assessment.
Chapter 5
Presentation of Case Study of Bayside School

The second case study represented one coach and three teachers who participated in the peer coaching/portfolio assessment study at Bayside School. Coach Bayside had a background in teaching fourth and fifth grade. Abigail and Barbara were first grade teachers, and Crystal was a third grade teacher.

Bayside School Setting

Bayside School is an elementary school in a north Louisiana school district with an approximate enrollment of 640 students. The student population was representative of the socioeconomic spectrum. The ethnic make up of this school was approximately 58% Caucasian and 42% African-American. Ninety percent of the students at this school were regular education students, four percent were students in special education full inclusion, and six percent of the students were enrolled in self-contained special education classes. Of the total school population, approximately 30% participated in the free or reduced price lunch program.

Principal of Bayside School

The principal of Bayside School has over 25 years of experience in the educational field, 12 years of which are in a supervisory position. She has been principal at Bayside School for the past 10 years. She has a doctor of philosophy degree in curriculum and instruction with certification in kindergarten and nursery school, elementary grades, supervision of student teaching, reading specialist, and three supervisory/administrative areas. She is a member of numerous professional organizations both locally and nationally. She has received several “Principal of the Year” and “Teacher of the Year” and leadership awards.

The principal of Bayside School has over 300 hours of training in specific topics such as authentic assessment, reading, building effective schools, whole language, early
literacy, principal as change facilitator, coaching teachers to higher levels of effectiveness and portfolio assessment. She has also assisted in planning and implementing school/system improvements, has experience teaching several courses at the university level, and has several professional publications.

The principal of Bayside School is guided by current research and practices in the field of education. Periodically, she issues pertinent educational articles to the entire staff. She is a life-long learner and is considered an expert in the field of authentic assessment. She has conducted numerous inservice activities on ways to use alternative means to assess student achievement and has taught a graduate class on portfolio assessment. She also has a large professional lending library in which she encourages co-workers to check out.

The philosophy of the principal of Bayside School encompasses the premise that all children can learn and deserve a quality education. She believes that given the appropriate opportunities in a student-centered environment, all students can succeed as they strive for educational excellence. She expects the faculty to help students assume responsibility for their own behavior, so the students will respect authority and the rights of others. Through educational excellence, students can become effective, productive citizens in a free society, according to the principal. One of her many goals in her role of principal and instructional leader at Bayside School includes the development of exemplary instructional programs that served as a model for the state and nation. She has a good rapport with her faculty and staff and has high expectations of everyone.

**Coach Bayside**

**Characteristics**

Coach Bayside has experience teaching at the fourth and fifth grade levels. She has a specialists degree with certification in the area of elementary education and reading. She has more than 36 years teaching experience, six of which have been at
Bayside School. She has approximately 25 hours of inservice/training on portfolio assessment, one semester course on portfolios, and has presented many workshops and inservices on portfolio assessment.

At the onset of the peer coaching study, Coach Bayside’s rating on the peer coach questionnaire (see Appendix B) was at the "knowledge level of development in portfolio assessment. This meant that she had sufficient information about portfolio assessment and had the capability to effectively communicate with others. At the conclusion of the peer coaching study, Coach Bayside’s rating was at the skill level of development in portfolio assessment which meant that she has the ability and feels comfortable performing tasks and assisting others with tasks related to portfolio assessment.

Coach Bayside’s responsibilities, besides being a volunteer peer coach for this study, include being a curriculum coordinator, a supervisor teacher for student teachers, a member of a portfolio assessment team, and a national, state, and local inservice/teacher trainer. Coach Bayside has also written numerous school improvement grants.

Elements of Establishing Trust

Based on the answers on the Characteristics of Trust survey (see Figure 1) administered at the beginning of the study, Coach Bayside ranked the following traits as being extremely necessary in establishing trust with peer teachers: being visible and accessible; listening reflectively; admitting mistakes; demonstrating professional knowledge and skills; maintaining confidentiality; behaving consistently; keeping commitments; expressing personal interest in other people; and acting non-judgmentally. She ranked the trait of revealing feelings as being necessary in establishing trust with peer teachers.
After the completion of the peer coaching questionnaires at the beginning and end of the study, all of the traits that Coach Bayside had previously rated on the demographic survey (prior to the study) as being necessary were changed to extremely necessary. All traits presented were rated by Coach Bayside as extremely necessary.

The characteristics for establishing trust with the peer teachers exhibited by Coach Bayside through the guided interviews and journal entries were as follows: (a) being visible and accessible; (b) demonstrating professional knowledge and skills; (c) expressing personal interest in other people; (d) listening reflectively; (e) acting non-judgmentally; and (f) keeping commitments. It was interesting to note that all of these characteristics were rated by Coach Bayside at the conclusion of the study as being extremely necessary in establishing trust. It was evident that Coach Bayside was practicing what she believed to be important aspects in establishing trust with her peer teachers.

Interview Results of Coach Bayside

During the twelve week period, interviews with Coach Bayside were conducted every two weeks for a total of six interview sessions. At the onset of the study, Coach Bayside indicated that the peer teachers had adequate materials to begin implementing portfolio assessment in their perspective classrooms. Coach Bayside provided each peer teacher with a three-ring binder with articles on portfolio assessment so that when they met together, everything could be placed in their notebooks and organized. She further noted:

The teachers may not think they have what they need to start implementing portfolio assessment, but I think they do because I know all the teachers in this study have been exposed to it through workshops and so forth except maybe one teacher, but she is so motivated and has been doing a lot of things on her own that I don't think this is going to be difficult for her at all. Even though she may think it is, I don't think it is.

During the first interview session, Coach Bayside noted that she wanted the peer teachers to understand that there was no universal way to implement portfolio
assessment. After they asked “Am I doing it right?” she asserted that implementation should be “based on the needs of our particular children.”

Coach Bayside adhered to the philosophy that “in order to coach someone else in a particular instructional method, you have to be involved in that method and practice it yourself.” Coach Bayside was incorporating portfolio assessment in her fourth grade classroom during the research year, and as she gathered new information, she passed it along to the teachers.

At the beginning of the study, Coach Bayside rated Bayside School to be between the awareness and implementation stages of implementing portfolio assessment on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). She stated:

Most every teacher to some extent is using some form of portfolio in their classrooms. Quite a few teachers have already implemented portfolio assessment with all of their students and some have implemented portfolio assessment on a smaller scale by choosing just a few students in their classroom. There has been quite a bit of training and most everyone directly or indirectly involved in the study has had experience with some aspect of portfolio assessment at the lower elementary level.

When asked the direction in which she was planning to take in the peer coaching experience, she said that she wanted to first encourage the peer teachers to decide what their portfolio would be like. For instance, she wanted the peer teachers to answer the following: “Will it be a folder or a binder? What are you going to put in it? What is your purpose for the portfolios?” At that point she interjected, “I then plan to just share with them what I have started so far in my classroom.”

Coach Bayside indicated that many times teachers become overwhelmed trying to determine if what they are doing is best for the students. She further noted:

I feel that the more you read, the more exposure you get. Then if you are not careful, it will become overwhelming. The problem begins when you see how someone does it in a book and you see how someone does it over there and then you think, well I need to do all of this. Then everything becomes so overwhelming. I think that is what happens to a lot of teachers when they try to implement instructional methods on their own. The main thing that I can give my peer teachers is my willingness to help.
Two weeks later during an interview session, Coach Bayside reported that the peer teachers had made progress since the first interview session. The teachers were busy reading information and articles in their notebooks that were given to them at the beginning of the study. She said that one of the first grade teachers, Barbara, was feeling pressure about the progress of some of her students in reading. Coach Bayside showed her how to "take some of the student's first efforts from the beginning of school, when the students could barely do anything, and how to collect work pieces later on in the school term which would be valuable portfolio information."

Several peer teachers had conveyed to the investigator the advantage of informally talking with the peer coach in the hallway. Their sharing of ideas collaboratively had been extremely helpful as teachers dealt with concerns about their students. When the investigator relayed this information to Coach Bayside, she replied:

I hope that our little get-togethers will be more conducive and that teachers can let go of things that they are concerned about. Then we can see how we can implement portfolio assessment and help them with some of their concerns about some of their students.

During the third interview, which occurred during the sixth week of the study, Coach Bayside said that the peer teachers were beginning to show improvement in their implementation of portfolio assessment and that more feedback was being issued. She expressed concern for Barbara who was somewhat anxious and reluctant, perhaps due to her lack of confidence in her abilities. In order to boost Barbara's confidence, as well as to help the other peer teachers, Coach Bayside held a meeting in which all study participants shared their experiences. The coach felt that this meeting gave confidence and a bit of challenge to the teachers. Overall, Coach Bayside was pleased with the peer teachers' progress and continued to make positive comments toward all teachers involved in the study.

Prior to the fourth interview session during the eighth week of the study, Coach Bayside met with peer teachers and shared information that she thought might benefit
them. She provided examples of rubrics, showcase portfolios, and parent surveys. She noted:

I thought I would give them time to process the information I gave them, and then get together and go over it, share, and do some specific planning about what we can do about getting the portfolios together. That way, everyone won’t feel so overwhelmed.

During the fourth interview, Coach Bayside observed that everyone but Barbara was up-to-date with their journal entries and was more comfortable with the portfolio assessment process. She noted that Barbara continued to be hesitant and lagged behind in progress compared to the other peer teachers. Barbara had neither kept her journal up-to-date nor expressed any comfort in implementing portfolio assessment in her classroom. Coach Bayside shared her philosophy with the teachers: “My stand is that teachers must do portfolio assessment first, themselves, and get the philosophy and the feeling inside before they can ever understand the process with children.” She planned to share her teaching portfolio, her working portfolio, and her showcase portfolio with the teachers so they could have a model to refer to when developing their own.

At the tenth week, Coach Bayside indicated that by this time, most of the peer teachers had come to the point where they were really anxious to continue using portfolio assessment on a school-wide basis. They wanted to meet across grade levels and at the end of the year to pass on portfolios to the next grade teacher. Abigail and Crystal felt that would be a good way for future teachers to meet their perspective students. However, Barbara, who had been somewhat reluctant in the implementation process, suggested that in order to appear nonthreatening, they should offering it on a voluntary basis.

For the last interview, the investigator and four study participants met together to discuss their outcomes. Discussion revealed that Coach Bayside was a valuable resource during the entire implementation progression of the study. Coach Bayside
said that she would like to see the whole school adopt portfolio assessment. However, after reading more about portfolio assessment, she decided that “everyone here is at different levels of knowledge and implementation and you can’t just mandate that everyone do it.”

During the last interview, Coach Bayside was described as making the teachers feel relaxed. The investigator conveyed to Coach Bayside that the peer teachers of the study said that she was accessible and knowledgeable. Coach Bayside responded that in order to respond to different requests from the peer teachers, she relied heavily on her own experiences in implementing portfolio assessment in her classroom as well as offering research findings and articles. Also, because Coach Bayside had a student teacher during the peer coaching study, she was able to have more release time from her classroom duties to provide more assistance to the peer teachers.

Coach Bayside was excited about most of her peer teachers’ incorporation of portfolio assessment into their teaching practices. Coach Bayside stated, “Abigail and Crystal had a higher rate of implementation than Barbara.” Coach Bayside also noted, “I believe that as we were going along they became more and more comfortable with the implementation process and the majority of them are branching out by using different types of portfolios for different purposes.”

Interview information concerning Coach Bayside's experiences as a peer coach are summarized in Figure 3. She met with the participating teachers prior to their initial meeting with the investigator. At that time, she provided the three peer teachers with notebooks to organize articles and information they would receive throughout the study, and she discussed her role as a facilitator. Throughout the entire study, she provided her peer teachers with information concerning portfolio assessment through handouts, journal articles, and forms. Because Coach Bayside had a student teacher, she had more release time to work with her peer teachers. Coach Bayside modelled
various types of portfolios with the peer teachers that she had already implemented in her classroom. She met with the peer teachers on a regular basis and provided challenges each time for the next session meeting. She also shared her own personal experiences with the peer teachers concerning her implementation of portfolio assessment in her classroom. She established good rapport with her peer teachers by providing informal as well as formal assistance, by making herself readily available for assistance, by making regular classroom visits to check the peer teachers' progress, and by sharing her enthusiasm for portfolio assessment. Coach Bayside developed a support system for the teachers to assist them in their implementation of portfolio assessment in their classrooms, and she continuously expressed her own excitement concerning the benefits of using portfolios.

In regard to the growth of the peer teachers, Coach Bayside said that all of the participants were somewhat reluctant and fearful, at first. However, she stated, "Most of the peer teachers just wanted to ventilate some of their frustrations at the beginning." She said that Abigail was very open to risk and that she attempted new and better ways to assess her students. She noted, "Abigail and I talked frequently about various ways to use authentic assessment." Abigail showed enthusiasm throughout the peer coaching experience.

Barbara was described as being "very reluctant to let go of her old tightly structured teaching strategies in order to take risks to get closer to her students' needs." Coach Bayside further described Barbara as being intense and driven and during the meetings only wanting to complain about her students. "Barbara needed to have someone to listen to her each day, and she was not as free to take risks as others in the group. "Barbara was hard to work with compared to the other two peer teachers. I really never knew how she truly felt about portfolios."

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Figure 3
Coach Bayside

tried to encourage Barbara, but she never felt Barbara "internalized the information or encouragement."

Crystal was described as being a cooperative, laid back individual. Crystal had developed her own professional portfolio. Coach Bayside stated, "She stopped by fairly often to share things she was doing in her classroom." Overall, the peer teacher group was described by Coach Bayside as being "quite diverse and very interesting."
In reflecting over the course of the study, Coach Bayside indicated that she felt that the study was very instrumental in opening everyone’s eyes as to what results could occur when implementing portfolio assessment through the peer coaching process. She felt that the whole school would benefit in so many ways by going toward implementing portfolio assessment at all levels. She noted:

I know that our teachers are all on different levels, but I think that the more benefits we can show our teachers, the more apt they will be to use different types of portfolios in their classrooms and become more involved in authentic types of assessment. Most of us have truly enjoyed this experience and I have learned a lot about myself in the process.

Reflections from Coach Bayside’s Journal

At the onset of the peer coaching study, Coach Bayside gathered information on portfolio assessment for the teacher participants. She expressed her enthusiasm and excitement about being able to share her own experiences with portfolios with her peer teachers. She documented sharing information on portfolio assessment through journal articles and literature. Coach Bayside made them available as the peer teachers expressed a need for further information. Throughout her journal, she expressed pride in her peer teachers and followed their growth in implementing portfolios, as indicated by such entries as, “Abigail had great things to share about how she has changed in her beliefs and practices and Abigail was so enthusiastic, and she and Crystal brought portfolios to share with us.” She continued to express concern about Barbara. Coach Bayside wrote, “Barbara appears not to be as motivated as Abigail and Crystal,” and “Barbara has not completed her journal and is reluctant to participate in our conversations concerning portfolio assessment.”

Coach Bayside also documented her self-reflections concerning portfolio assessment in her classroom. One entry read, “In my head, I can see so many ideas for my class but getting them out and into practice is another thing.”
Additionally, Coach Bayside documented reading various books given to her by colleagues on portfolios. She stated that she is always constantly reevaluating the use of her students’ portfolios. One of her concerns was time, “I long to have time to meet leisurely with the team and reflect about using portfolios.” She also reported that she wished she didn’t have anything going on outside the classroom, so she could take all of the time she needed to work with her students on their portfolios.

Coach Bayside was accessible to her peer teachers and encouraged them in all of their endeavors as indicated by the numerous entries indicating formal and informal meetings with them. She expressed a real desire to encourage everyone in the use of portfolio assessment. It was evident that she was an asset to this peer coaching study and provided positive assistance to the peer teachers at Bayside School.

**Abigail**

**Characteristics**

Abigail is a young and enthusiastic teacher with a cheerleader-type personality. She is willing to take risks and is incorporating authentic assessment methods in her classroom. All of her three years of teaching have been at Bayside School.

Abigail has a bachelor’s degree and is certified in elementary and secondary education. She taught first grade and had 19 students in her classroom. She was very enthusiastic about implementing portfolio assessment. Her greatest concern at the beginning of the peer coaching study was to learn as much as she could about portfolio assessment and to not miss anything. Abigail noted, “I need to get my ducks in a row, and fast, if I am going to get the full benefit of this peer teacher group, and I think I am going to learn a lot.” Abigail is currently using authentic assessment in her classroom and has a background knowledge of portfolio assessment. She noted that she wanted to have the peer coach show her how to use portfolios to assess
quantitatively. She is open to suggestions concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment and the peer coaching experience.

Pre-Implementation

Prior to implementation, Abigail scored at Level III, Mechanical Use Level (LoU) on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). This meant she was focusing on the day-to-day use of portfolio assessment with little time for reflection. The following journal entries and interview comments led to this conclusion. Abigail stated, “I don’t want to miss anything; and I want to make sure that my students and I utilize all available information.” She further noted, “I want to learn how to use portfolios to assign grades for my students.” In her journal, Abigail wrote, “I feel that I do assess authentically for the most part, I just need to get the portfolio part firmly in place, and get more in the habit of using it.”

Although Abigail and Barbara were both first grade teachers, they chose to work separately at implementing portfolio assessment, but they came together during the interview sessions and meetings to formally collaborate. Coach Bayside felt that was a good idea since both first grade teachers were at different levels of use.

Abigail was extremely concerned about missing something on portfolio assessment during the peer coaching/portfolio assessment experience. As previously indicated, Abigail wanted to make sure that she and her students utilized all available information. She said, “I’ve been able to learn more by just listening and really trying to apply the knowledge to my situation. You can learn so much from people by listening to them.” These comments revealed that Abigail wanted to know how she should change her approach to teaching, and that she wanted more information on assessing portfolios. These concerns placed her at the Personal Stage of Concern, (Level II).
Another concern Abigail shared was that of having something tangible and understandable for parents. She noted:

Even though you don't want to admit it, you do have to make it so, and parents do like to have things that are very solid, and exactly what does this mean, and to me, that is the hardest part of portfolios assessment—the coupling of real authentic assessment with being accountable. Accountability and also the understanding of the parents. They're so used to looking at A, B, C, D, and F grades and this is a different approach.

Implementation Process

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Abigail stated, "I am going to start this peer coaching experience where I had left off in my implementation of portfolio assessment." She was using "writing workshop portfolios" with her students in which they used little sticky notes to give details about what they kept. She noted, "The students' workshop portfolios are strictly their portfolios. I use them to get a feeling about their progress and their writing abilities, but not necessarily to get a grade."

Abigail was concerned that her students were going to have to wait until she "grew" in the portfolio assessment process. She stated, "I wish I knew everything already, but I guess that is just the way it is. It will just take time." She stated that teachers needed to be gentle with themselves and not overload themselves. Abigail teaches at the first grade level, where most of the students were at different maturity levels. Because of the varying levels of maturity, she feels that portfolios are a good method to use to make instruction more individualized. Abigail is excited about using authentic assessment. The peer coaching project was Abigail's first attempt at consistently using portfolio assessment in her classroom. Her support mainly came from the peer coach at Bayside School.

When asked about her working relationship at this point with the peer coach, Abigail replied, "At the beginning, Coach Bayside held a group meeting with us. The meeting was strange because I didn't do a lot of talking. "I did a lot of listening, and that was because I feel that you just have to remain very open-minded and not
guarded.” In her journal Abigail wrote, “I feel if you listen and really try to apply it to yourself, you can learn so much from teachers who share what they do in their classrooms.” She further noted that Coach Bayside had given everyone a three-ring binder in which to keep articles that she gave to read. Abigail responded to the articles in her journal. Abigail felt that having the support of the coach and the peer team was a tremendous asset. Abigail stated that the peer coach told them to always give themselves the option of change. She noted, “We were told to start things slowly and small and that it would grow quickly.”

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Abigail stated:

It is wonderful to work with a peer coach because everybody has all of these questions to ask all of the time. Having a peer coach is a way of just not going off on a whole different tangent that really has nothing to do with what your focus is really suppose to be. It makes me feel more confident having a peer coach here to assist me. I plan to meet regularly with Coach Bayside in the future.

Abigail indicated that her students were very motivated about having their own portfolios, and she was personally looking forward to using the peer coach’s assistance in continuing her implementation of portfolios in her classroom.

Evaluation

Levels of use. Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Abigail stated that she was “still working on more ways of assessing students’ portfolios.” She has begun using rubrics with her students, and after reflecting on rubrics, she noted:

Now that I think of it, almost anything that shows students what is expected of them is a rubric. I have the students write CUPS at the bottom of all their papers to remind them to check for capitalization, etc. That is their rubric. Also, when we have projects, the example I show them is their rubric.

Abigail shared a need to be more consistent in her writing of anecdotal records. She stressed, “I think I need to almost glue a pad with a pencil someplace central--maybe I would go to it and write throughout the day.”
From her statements and actions, Abigail is implementing portfolio assessment on a Refinement Level, (Level IVB). This placement is based on Abigail's use of portfolios in her classroom. This meant that she is integrating portfolio assessment as a standard part of her teaching repertoire. She stated, “It is a part of all we do.” Abigail makes decisions about portfolio assessment based on both short and long-term consequences for her students.

**Stages of concern.** At the end of the peer coaching experience, Abigail was researching different ways to assess portfolios, such as developing different rubrics for specific tasks. This shows that she is concerned about evaluating the impact of portfolios on her students which places her at the Consequence Stage of Concern (Level IV). She said, “It's really getting easier for me.” She continued:

I really like looking back through things. It's enjoyable to me to look back through what my students have done, and it does give you kind of an overall feeling about the child.

**Support from Coach Bayside**

Abigail was excited about beginning the peer coaching experience. At the beginning of the study, she stated that she wanted to learn all she could about portfolio assessment, especially about using portfolios to quantitatively assess her students. Coach Bayside provided her with articles and forms on using rubrics to quantitatively assess her students. She said that she planned to meet frequently with the peer coach in the future to help her in her quest to improve her abilities in implementing portfolio assessment.

About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Abigail said that she had met with Coach Bayside three times that week. She noted, “Coach Bayside has really made a difference to me.” She further stated:

I work with her at The Reading Center a decent amount and we talk about the things that we are doing. It is so nice because she’s so knowledgeable. It is great to be able to visit with her. Because of how accessible she is, it’s a real
relaxed thing. It’s not a situation where you say, ‘Okay, let’s talk about this now.’ You just do talk about it. She’s just there, I see her, and we just talk.

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Abigail was singing the praises of the peer coach. She noted:

As noted many times during the interview and in my journal entries, the peer coaching experience was very beneficial. The peer coach is very important. She has been so very reassuring to me. It was very helpful to have someone guide me along. Especially because I know how much she does portfolio assessment in her classroom. Whatever she tells me, I say, ‘Okay, fine.’ I have a lot of trust in what she says.

When asked specific information concerning her relationship with the peer coach during the peer coaching experience, Abigail said, “My coach has given me a lot of good ideas, verbally, and a lot of good articles.” Upon reflecting on the peer coach’s impact, she stated that the peer coach is always supportive in her efforts. She continued, “Coach Bayside always made a point of emphasizing that we are really a cut above because of our efforts in authentic assessment and portfolio assessment.”

Using Portfolio Assessment with Students

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Abigail had incorporated portfolio assessment in her classroom, but she implied that it was not on a consistent basis. She incorporated the following activities all of the time in her classroom: hands-on activities; student self/peer evaluations; thematic units; processing writing activities; and exhibitions. She rated herself as regularly incorporating the following portfolio assessment activities in her classroom: portfolios of student work; group/individual projects; observation checklists; and student interviews/conferences. On a sometimes basis were the following activities: anecdotal records; reflective journals; oral presentations; and developing rubrics. She said that she had never incorporated learning logs, graphic organizers, or open-ended problems in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Abigail increased her usage of portfolio assessment to all of the time. She also showed an increase in using
anecdotal records and developing rubrics to a regular basis. With the assistance of Coach Bayside, she has become a consistent implementor of portfolio assessment, sharing ideas with others and increasing the usage of anecdotal records and developing rubrics.

**Future Use of Portfolio Assessment**

Abigail reflected on the progress she had made throughout the peer coaching experience. She stated, “I feel more confident now with incorporating other types of activities in the portfolio assessment process.” She reported that she has more to learn, but portfolios have become a standard part of her teaching repertoire. She further reflected:

I would encourage others to use authentic assessment and portfolios. I would encourage them to learn, like I still am, how to use the authentic assessment, and how to track a child’s progress through their portfolio, rather than just having a portfolio with a bunch of papers in it that you never look at again.

**Views on Impact of Peer Coaching**

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (See Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Abigail's views changed upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she indicated that she occasionally observed and was observed by others, and received/gave feedback/advice to others. At the conclusion of the study, Abigail reported that the frequency of being given advice regarding instruction increased from occasionally to frequently.

In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, Abigail stated that prior to the study that she frequently discussed effective strategies/methods with her colleagues, but only occasionally turned to others for instructional needs or adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, she reported that she frequently adjusts the way she uses strategies in her classroom. She continues to look at student’s responses and grades to determine the need for instructional adjustments,
but her frequency in her communicating with other teachers during the day has increased from somewhat likely to very likely.

Responses on the pre/post questionnaire showed that Abigail's confidence changed from somewhat confident to trying new ideas in the classroom to feeling confident. From the onset of the study, Abigail believed that the students would be more motivated and reinforced through the peer coaching experience and would also experience an increase in self-esteem.

Abigail's main concern at the onset of the study was to learn as much as she could about portfolio assessment and not to miss anything. At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach, Abigail wrote on the characteristics of trust survey (see Figure 1) that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to: reveal feelings; act nonjudgmentally; listen reflectively; behave consistently; be visible and accessible; demonstrate professional knowledge and skills; and express a personal interest in other people. She further ranked the following characteristics as being "somewhat necessary": maintaining confidentiality and admitting mistakes.

According to the results of the questionnaire administered at the end of the survey (see Figure 1), it was interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience, when asked to rank again the characteristics of a peer coach that were important toward establishing trust, Abigail ranked all of the above traits as falling in the category of extremely necessary. It appeared that Abigail had a positive experience with her peer coach and saw the necessity of maintaining all of the presented characteristics in order to establish trust.
Barbara

Characteristics

Barbara is not as cooperative as the other two peer teachers. Her "less than cooperative" attitude is evident in her partial completion of her journal and remarks made throughout the peer coaching experience. She had a student teacher at the time of the peer coaching experience which should have afforded her more time to be involved in the portfolio assessment experience. However, it appeared that she had a negative attitude from the onset, as indicated by her comment, "My class is a mess right now because of my student teacher."

Barbara has been teaching 26 years, five of which had been at Bayside School. She has a masters degree plus thirty hours, and is certified in elementary education. She taught first grade and had 20 students in her classroom. Her greatest concern at the beginning of the peer coaching study was not knowing enough to do the project. She noted that she was willing to have the assistance of a peer coach in trying to implement portfolio assessment in her classroom. She was somewhat open to suggestions concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment, but she noted that she was unsure of the process even after several inservices.

Pre-Implementation

Prior to implementation, Barbara scored at Level II, Preparation Level (LoU) on the CBAM. This meant she was gathering information and beginning implementation of portfolio assessment. The following journal entries and interview comments led to this conclusion. Barbara wrote: "I took a graduate course on portfolio assessment. I have been to workshops that Coach Bayside has conducted, and I am still not sure I know what it really is. I am trying to make more anecdotal notes on the kids' writing. I think portfolio assessment will fit in our classroom in our writing process class time."
Although Barbara and Abigail were both first grade teachers, they chose to work separately at implementing portfolio assessment and only came together during the interview sessions and meetings to formally collaborate. Coach Bayside felt that was a good idea since both first grade teachers were at different levels of use.

The peer coaching project was Barbara's first attempt at using portfolio assessment in her classroom. Her support came from the peer coach at Bayside School.

Barbara was reluctant to join the peer coaching group and was concerned that she did not know much about portfolio assessment, but stated that she was willing to work with a peer coach in trying to implement it in her classroom. She stated that she wanted to join the group in order to take a total look at what she was doing, and especially her teaching. This indicated that she had a very limited knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment which placed her at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I).

One of her concerns was helping parents understand that she did not have to save every little piece of paper that their children did in order to assess their work. She reported that she had several parents who were having a difficult time understanding the portfolio assessment process. But, she concluded, “We just have to make them aware of what we're trying to do.”

She noted, “I am going to continue to try to use portfolios, but I am concerned about the way the students are putting things in their portfolios.” She said that the students need a tool for helping them evaluate their own work. Her concern revolved around the issue of helping her students self-assess their work, which she noted was a major weakness for her students. Barbara felt inadequate in that area, and she thought she needed someone to guide her.
Implementation Process

At the beginning of the peer coaching study, Barbara stated, “I want to learn more about portfolio assessment. The more I hear and read, the more I think I need.” She reflected on reading an article the previous night about practical assessments for literature-based reading classrooms. She said that she couldn’t help but think, “Gee I could have been doing this all the time.”

When asked if she was implementing portfolio assessment in her classroom, she replied:

I generally have these files over here where the kids file things that they have written and things that I file, but it has not been implemented so far. Normally I would have already had it well under way. The students have a folder where all of their sloppy copies are on file. I have a permanent file where I keep all those things, but it is not one where they go in and out of at this point right now.

When asked about her working relationship with the peer coach, Barbara replied, “I have asked Coach Bayside several questions about portfolio assessment, but I really haven’t gotten to the point where I know specifically where I am as far as implementing portfolio assessment in my classroom.” She said that “I hope that she will be an asset for me in the classroom.” Barbara stated that she needed to watch someone implement portfolio assessment instead of only listening to them talk about it.

Approximately one month into the peer coaching experience, Barbara told the investigator that she had started to look at some things differently. She noted:

I had some stuff on the bulletin board, where I had the kids write down their resolutions for 1997, and I started to take them off the other day to throw them in the trash, and I went, ‘Whoa, wait a minute - This could go in their portfolios.’ And then later, we’ll come back at the end of the year and see how well they did with their resolutions.

She said that she was learning more than she thought she would. She stated, “I really wasn’t planning to volunteer for this study, and now I’m doing it. I think it is really changing the way I’m looking at some things.”
Approximately seven weeks into the peer coaching experience, Barbara stated that she was not seeing much progress in her students’ self-assessment abilities. She reported, “The students tend to spend a few minutes on a task and most of them don’t go back and work with it again.” She explained that the students want to spend a certain amount of time on a task, and then they want to start something new every time they write. Barbara attributed this to their short attention span and immaturity. Her comments indicated that she was becoming frustrated in her attempt to implement portfolio assessment, and that she was beginning to suggest that it may not be appropriate for her students at this time due to their lack of ability to self-assess and self-correct their work.

Barbara stated that having a peer coach at the same school was beneficial, but she had not taken time to tap into her resources. She reported, “I can seek out the peer coach fairly easily because our classrooms are located in the same hall. I know where I can reach her if there is a real need to do so.” Barbara further indicated that if she ran into a problem, she knew that she could get help from the peer coach at the school, but due to committee meetings and a school audit, she had not taken time to meet with the peer coach.

Evaluation

Levels of use. Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Barbara indicated that she started using portfolios after the departure of her student teacher. She explained that she had enough time to be with her students, and she was able to complete a unit with them by herself without having to stop because the student teacher needed to teach. She further commented:

My class is a mess right now because of my student teacher. Assessment for writing has been poor while she has been teaching. They have lost much of what we had done prior to the student teacher coming to our class. We are having to proceed slowly sentence by sentence.
She indicated that Coach Bayside had read over her personal journal and made numerous suggestions about adding to what she had been doing with portfolios in her classroom. The peer coach informed Barbara that sometimes it just takes time and maturity for students to use some of the portfolio assessment components such as self-assessment. Barbara negatively commented:

I still don't get it. I hear a lot of people saying that any kid can do a portfolio and incorporate self-correction and self-assessment techniques, and I just don’t see it. Even my very strong students do not catch their errors, and basically, at this level, the only errors they have are capitalization and placing a period at the end of a sentence. They just haven’t been able to do it yet.

From her statements and actions, Barbara had moved out of Preparation Level (LoU), Level II to (LOU) III, Mechanical Use. This was determined because she was no longer preparing for the first use of portfolios. Barbara exhibits inefficiency in use of time and resources. This behavior is common at the Mechanical Level. She said that she planned to use portfolio assessment next year with more concentration on the self-assessment aspect of portfolio assessment. She stated, “I feel at this point I have just begun to make it a part of my teaching. I know that it is okay to change if things aren’t working. I feel more confident now in using portfolio assessment.”

Stages of concern. At the end of the peer coaching experience, Barbara's concerns had changed from that of being hesitant to start a new innovation in her classroom to being somewhat more confident about the peer coaching experience. She is still concerned about involving the students in the portfolio process. Coach Bayside provided her with articles and suggestions that would assist her in implementing and managing portfolios in her classroom. Barbara's concerns about implementing and managing portfolios place her at the Management Stage of Concern, (Level III) on the CBAM model. This means her attention is primarily focused on the process and everyday tasks of using portfolios.
Barbara said that her students were enthusiastic about their portfolios. She stated, "Their motivation to choose samples for their portfolios is really catching!" She noted the enthusiasm and eagerness the students had toward their own portfolios and work, yet she reiterated her concerns over their lack of ability to self-correct and self-assess their writing.

Barbara revealed that she was somewhat pleased with the progress that she had made in implementing portfolio assessment. At this point, she noted, "I feel more confident now in using portfolio assessment, and I would not have attempted it without the peer coaching partnership."

Support from Coach Bayside

Barbara was extremely reluctant about beginning the peer coaching experience. In fact, she had made the comment that she really had to be coaxed to participate. However, she said that the peer coach was instrumental in guiding her in the right direction. At the beginning of the study, Barbara stated that she had touched base with the peer coach a little but knew that she was going to have to make time for further involvement, "I'm less intimidated by portfolio assessment now."

About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Barbara said that she had met several times with the peer coach. She reported:

I met with Coach Bayside this week and I showed her what I had in my journal to make sure I was going about this in the right manner. She made quite a few suggestions about some things I could do. Having the peer coach help me with implementing portfolios in my class has been an asset.

She stated that the peer coach is a good resource in that she shares a lot of information with everyone. She further noted, "She gives us wonderful things to read, but I haven't read them.

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Barbara had positive remarks concerning Coach Bayside. She stated, "Without the peer coach, I would not have grown as much, because I would have been too afraid to go out on my own."
Using Portfolio Assessment with Students

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Barbara had not incorporated portfolio assessment in her classroom. She rated herself as sometimes incorporating the following portfolio assessment activities in her classroom: portfolio assessment; anecdotal records; learning logs; open-ended problems; oral presentations; and exhibitions. She said, however, that she had regularly incorporated process writing activities, thematic units, hands-on activities, and observation checklists in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Barbara is beginning to use portfolio assessment on a somewhat more consistent basis with the possibility of making it a part of her teaching. She wants to continue to use reflective journals and processing writing activities in the portfolio assessment process. She said that she is still struggling with her students' inability to self-assess and self-correct their own work as indicated by the following comment:

My students go through what they think is the process of it, but they still don't catch their errors. I've even made up little sheets for them and written in different colored ink on the printer on what they need to do, and they take it to their desk, read through it, and do the motions, but the outcome is not there yet. So, I think it's one of those things, like kids taking baby steps but they're still not walking yet, they're hanging on to the table and all, and I'm not sure that is something that is a first grade skill, except with maybe a bright student.

With the assistance of Coach Bayside, Barbara stated that she has become a somewhat more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment. She further reported that the feedback from the coach is very helpful in incorporating the ideas in her classroom.

Future Use of Portfolio Assessment

Barbara reflected on the progress she has made throughout the peer coaching experience, "I am just now at a point where I feel a little more comfortable in making portfolio assessment more of a part of my teaching." She said that she feels somewhat
more confident now because of the feedback she received from the peer coach, and revealed that she plans to continue her reading about using portfolios and in the classroom. She further indicated:

Portfolio assessment has allowed me a better tool to evaluate my students’ abilities. With fill-in-the-blank stuff, you can’t determine if a student can spell or write. With portfolios, my students have to go from the factual stuff to applying it and putting it together. And they really enjoyed it and had fun doing it.

Views on Impact of Peer Coaching

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (See Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Barbara's views changed upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she indicated that she occasionally gave feedback and advice to others and had only occasionally been given advice regarding instruction. At the conclusion of the study, she reported that the frequency of being given advice and feedback regarding instruction increased from occasionally to frequently.

In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, Barbara said that prior to the study that she occasionally tried something new in her classroom and was not very willing to implement portfolio assessment in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, she stated that she frequently tried something new in the classroom and was more willing to implement portfolio assessment. Her frequency in communicating with other teachers during the day increased from somewhat likely to likely.

From the onset of the study, Barbara believed that the students would be more motivated as a result of the skills gained from the peer coaching experience. At the conclusion of the study, she believes that there will be a reduction of behavioral problems in the classroom.
As noted earlier, Barbara's main concern at the onset of the study was "not knowing enough about the project to do a good job." At the end of the experience, she indicated:

Despite my problems and aggravations with having a student teacher, I really have learned a lot about portfolio assessment. Even though the peer coaching study is over, I would still like to be a part of that feedback and contact. I became more comfortable in implementing portfolio assessment with the assistance of the peer coach.

At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach, Barbara said on the questionnaire (see Figure 1) that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to: maintain confidentiality and act non-judgmentally. She ranked the following characteristics as being necessary: being visible and accessible; demonstrating professional knowledge and skills; behaving consistently; keeping commitments; revealing feelings; and listening reflectively. She ranked the following traits as somewhat necessary: expressing personal interest in other people and admitting mistakes. According to her answers on the questionnaire, it is interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience, when asked to again rank the characteristics of a peer coach that were important toward establishing trust, she ranked all of the above traits as falling in the category of extremely necessary. It appears that Barbara sees the necessity of maintaining all of the presented characteristics in order to establish trust.

Crystal

Characteristics

Crystal is a dedicated and cooperative teacher with a laid back personality. Crystal has her own teaching portfolio which she updates religiously. Crystal's classroom is located next to Coach Bayside's classroom; therefore, she is more accessible to Crystal.
Crystal is a very respected teacher at Bayside School. She loves working with children and loves teaching. Her background knowledge of portfolio assessment includes a graduate course and over 75 inservice hours. Even though she is quite knowledgeable about portfolio assessment, she is concerned about using her knowledge to guide her students in using portfolio assessment effectively.

Crystal has been teaching 24 years, 13 of which have been at Bayside School. She has a master’s degree and is certified in elementary education. She taught third grade and had 23 students in her classroom. One of her greatest concerns at the beginning of the peer coaching study was having enough time to implement portfolio assessment effectively and conferencing with students. She said that she would like the peer coach to assist her with the reflection and conferencing aspects of portfolio assessment. She was very open to suggestions concerning the implementation of portfolio assessment and the peer coaching experience.

Pre-Implementation

Prior to implementation, Crystal scored at Level II, Preparation Level (LoU) on the CBAM. This meant she was gathering information and beginning implementation of portfolio assessment. The following journal entries and interview comments led to this conclusion. Crystal wrote, “I’m really excited about this project with portfolios.” Crystal stated that she had a background in portfolio assessment, since she had taken a class the previous quarter, and her mind has been in an uproar about how to get the most from portfolio assessment. She expressed hesitancy to go forth with it because of the fear of whether or not it would work.

Crystal was concerned about not having the knowledge to guide her students in using portfolios effectively. Finding time to implement everything effectively and conferencing with the students was another concern of Crystal. She remarked, “I have
a good background on portfolio assessment, and I am willing to try to implement it in my classroom.”

Crystal also reflected on the issue of time. She stated:

I think portfolio assessment for me is going to take two to three years at least to really feel like I have implemented well, and I’m not sure if you can ever say you know everything about it, but there are just so many aspects and so many things you have to think about. When you first hear portfolio, you think of just a container to put the things in, and you don’t think about the rubrics that you can do with them and the self-reflection with the children. So there are so many aspects that it takes a long time in a process to go through it.

This indicated that she was concerned about time and organizing for each day and was overwhelmed about trying to manage everything at one time. This placed her at the Management Stage of Concern, (Level III), meaning that Crystal’s attention was primarily focused on issues related to efficiency, scheduling, and time demands.

Implementation Process

After the first few weeks of the study, Crystal stated, “I’m still not completely clear about how to implement portfolio assessment.” She indicated that she had many questions about what she should be doing. As time went on, she felt she was becoming more confident about her work. She noted that most of her students had responded very positively toward portfolio assessment. One student appeared not to have an interest; however, she attributed his attitude to a personal attention deficit disorder.

Toward the beginning of the peer coaching experiences, Crystal noted:

I gave each student a gallon zip-lock bag for their working portfolio. This stays in their chair pocket to put on-going work inside. That is where I started the process. I also showed my students my on-going professional portfolio. They were excited and eager to start.

Since Crystal was the only third grade teacher to participate in the peer coaching experience, she was not able to be teamed with another teacher in the study. The peer coaching project was Crystal’s first genuine attempt to use portfolio assessment in her classroom, and she received support from the peer coach at Bayside School.
Toward the beginning of the peer coaching study, Crystal stated, "Basically I have put two kinds of portfolios in the room—showcase and teacher/student portfolio." She further noted:

I worked on reflection today with my students. I told them I wanted to have some reflection from them about why they choose to include an item in their portfolio. I put post-it notes by their portfolio boxes. They were to write their reason on the note and stick it to the item that goes in the portfolio.

She continued:

They are so serious about writing down their reasons for selecting an item. The reasons being written right now are "I got a good grade on this." I will need to talk about other reasons with them.

When asked about her working relationship with the peer coach, Crystal replied, "I think she’s great, but I haven’t had the opportunity yet to work with our coach as much as I’d like." She said that they were all in the beginning stages, and finding the time to meet had been difficult. Crystal felt that would change as soon as they both had student teachers. This would provide them with more opportunities to work together. She further stated, "I’m still not completely clear about how to implement portfolio assessment. As time goes on, I feel I will become more confident in what I’m doing."

Approximately one month into the peer coaching experience, Crystal was excited to share with the investigator the process she had made in implementing portfolio assessment. She noted:

We have reached a point where we know the difference between showcase and working portfolios. The students have been making their own personal decisions about what they want to go in each portfolio. I try to provide post-it notes so that they can write a note to me about the reason why they chose particular items to place in each portfolio. It’s really fun to watch the kids get back a project or paper and walk over to their showcase portfolio to put it inside. It is so easy to see the pride on their faces. I feel that they are taking ownership of their learning.

Approximately seven weeks into the peer coaching experience, Crystal reported that she had a chance to talk with the peer coach about reflections and using
conferencing techniques. The peer coach found some information on conferencing and gave it to her to read. She stated that having a peer coach made all of the difference, because she knew that she had support in her school, and she knew that several people were working on the same things, which gave her more confidence to move on. She also stated that when she heard that others were having the same trouble she was having, it made her feel like she was not alone and that she could work on it.

**Evaluation**

**Levels of use.** Upon completion of the peer coaching study, Crystal said that she was “so pleased that she participated in the study.” She reported that a little boy printed his name poem on the computer and the first thing he said was, “May I put this in my showcase portfolio?” It was at that point she decided that everything was “sinking in.”

Toward the end of the study, the peer coach gave everyone another three-ring binder with information on using portfolios. Crystal stated that she had been reading some of the information every night. Most of the information was practical, which made her want to do more. She reflected, “You have to be ready to move to different levels of teaching and assessing the students when you incorporate portfolios into instruction.”

From her statements and actions on the CBAM, Crystal was placed at the Routine Use, Level IVA in using portfolio assessment in her classroom. This meant that a routine pattern of use was established. She also stated that if she could get the children to reflect more, she would start conferencing with her students. She stated, “I am well on my way and so are my students.”

**Stages of concern.** At the end of the peer coaching experience, Crystal’s concerns had changed from that of being very somewhat hesitant to implement portfolio assessment in her classroom to being glad she had agreed to be a participant
in the peer coaching experience. She wanted to learn about using rubrics to assess her students’ progress. She also shared her experiences with rubrics by noting:

Rubrics are very time-consuming, to sit down and do it all at once, but what I do is divide everything up and give them their scores so that they have an idea exactly where their grade comes from. I did that at the beginning of the year. Now, I do it on the computer and have them all printed out so all I have to do is just fill it in. It saves a lot of time.

Toward the end of the study, Crystal reported that her students were having a good year. At the beginning of the year, she was concerned about her students, because they all had such different personalities. But now at the end of the peer coaching experience, she felt they had started to make their learning their own and make it their responsibility. The students were beginning to take everything seriously. She said that Coach Bayside provided constant positive support to her throughout the whole study. All of these comments revealed that Crystal was at the Consequence Stage of Concern, (Level IV). This meant that she was focusing on the relevance of the innovation for students and the evaluation of student outcomes.

Support from Coach Bayside

Crystal was enthusiastic about beginning the peer coaching experience. She was the only teacher at the third grade level that was going to implement portfolio assessment, and she was looking forward to having access to a peer coach. She said that the articles provided by the peer coach were enlightening to her. The information alleviated some concerns she had about how to assess all areas and use rubrics. Crystal felt that the peer coach’s feedback on implementing portfolio assessment provided some new insights into forms, concepts, etc. to use in subjects other than language development and reading. She noted that it was a great idea to use the peer coach to assist in implementing portfolio assessment. She knew that if she needed some information, she would not have to go far to find some answers from someone that was eager and willing to share, the peer coach.
At the beginning of the study, Crystal said, "Coach Bayside has been a big help already. She has been able to answer a lot of my questions concerning how to implement portfolio assessment." Crystal continued, "As time goes on, I will have more and more questions that I will need to ask, and I feel comfortable in asking her."

About the third week of the peer coaching experience, Crystal reported that she had met with Coach Bayside to discuss portfolios, in particular about reflection and developing rubrics. She reflected:

The peer coach was very helpful in helping me in my endeavors of finding easier ways of developing rubrics for my students' activities. She suggested that I start very slowly, to reflect on what I wanted to do, and to keep being confident in what I was doing. That made me feel better and at that point I just relaxed and began to enjoy the experience.

She stated that the peer coaching experience was very enlightening to her. She said that Coach Bayside never intimidated her and was always willing to help and provided consistent support to her. She reported that she got as much support from the peer coach as possible with the time that was available during the day.

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Crystal had positive comments concerning peer coaching. She noted:

The peer coach provided me with so much informative information she made my experience less intimidating and more enjoyable than it would have been if I would have had to implement portfolio assessment on my own. Just knowing that someone was nearby that would be willing to assist me seemed to make all the difference in my attitude of hanging in there and not giving up. I really enjoyed the experience and would recommend having a peer coach to anyone considering implementing portfolio assessment in their classroom.

Using Portfolio Assessment with Students

Prior to the peer coaching experience, Crystal did not try to incorporate portfolio assessment in her classroom, although she said that she had randomly incorporated some of the following assessment activities in her classroom: anecdotal records; learning logs; reflective journals; observation checklists; oral presentations;
and student self/peer evaluations. She said, however, that she had regularly incorporated thematic units and process writing in her classroom.

Upon completion of the peer coaching experience, Crystal was beginning to regularly use rubrics and student interviews/conferences with all of her students. With the assistance of the peer coach, she has become a more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment.

**Future Use of Portfolio Assessment**

Crystal reflected on the progress she had made throughout the peer coaching experience. She reflected:

I keep an ongoing portfolio at all times. I use it for evaluation, conferences, and progress reports. The children keep a portfolio of activities from the writing center. I can easily see the benefits of using portfolio assessment in the classroom.

She further reflected:

I have accepted that it is okay for the children not to be able to assess their own or peer’s work in writing and that it is okay to make changes in the ways we implement portfolio assessment based on the needs of our own students. I’ve learned so much from this experience, especially about my own capabilities.

**Views on Impact of Peer Coaching**

As indicated by the results of the pre/post questionnaire (see Appendix A) concerning characteristics and traits of the peer coaching experience, Crystal's views did not vary much upon completion of the peer coaching experience. Prior to the study, she stated that she occasionally observed others and gave feedback and advice to others. She further noted that she was only occasionally observed by others and received feedback on instruction. At the conclusion of the study, she did not indicate any difference in any of the items presented above with the exception of the frequency of receiving feedback on her instruction which had increased from occasionally to frequently.
In the area of collegiality and analysis of application, she stated that prior to the study that she frequently discussed effective strategies/methods with her colleagues, and frequently turned to others for instructional needs or adjusted the way she used strategies in her classroom. At the conclusion of the study, no changes in frequency were noted in collegiality or analysis of applying instructional methods. She continues to look at students' responses, students' grades and her own reflections to determine the need for instructional adjustments. Her frequency in communicating with other teachers during the day increased from somewhat likely to very likely.

Responses on the pre/post questionnaire also showed that Crystal's confidence levels changed in reference to trying new ideas in the classroom. She maintained that she felt somewhat confident prior to the study and very confident after the study. From the onset of the study, she believed that the students would have an increase in self-esteem, reinforcement, and motivation with a reduction in behavior problems as a result of the skills gained from the peer coaching experience. At the conclusion of the study, she maintained that belief.

As noted earlier, Crystal's main concern at the onset of the study was not having the knowledge to guide the students in using portfolios effectively. At the end of the experience, she noted:

Now I am more confident I can implement new methods in my classroom. The children keep a portfolio of activities from the writing center and I am going to integrate portfolio assessment as a standard part of my teaching methods.

At the beginning of the study when asked to rank characteristics that were important toward establishing trust in a peer coach, Crystal indicated on questionnaire (see Figure 1) that she felt it was extremely necessary for the peer coach to act non-judgmentally, be visible and accessible, demonstrate professional knowledge and skills, keep commitments, and to listen reflectively. She further ranked the following characteristics as being necessary: maintaining confidentiality; behaving consistently;
revealing feelings; expressing personal interest in other people; and admitting mistakes. It is interesting to note that upon the completion of the peer coaching experience when asked to rank again the characteristics of a peer coach, no differences were recorded on the questionnaire. It appears that Crystal's perceptions and attitudes did not change much throughout the peer coaching experience. This lack of change can be attributed to the fact that Crystal has been teaching a significant number of years and has established a firm teaching philosophy and is not as willing to change her attitudes.

Cross-Case Analysis for Bayside School

Abigail and Barbara taught first grade at Bayside School, Crystal taught third grade, and Coach Bayside taught fourth grade. Abigail and Barbara did not work as a team during the study, because they were at different levels of development. Abigail was the newest teacher, having taught only three years. Barbara and Crystal had the most years of teaching experience, having taught 26 and 24 years, respectively. All three teachers had worries about implementing portfolio assessment, but Abigail was concerned she would miss out on something important. Crystal thought she would not have enough time to implement portfolio assessment, and Barbara felt uneasy about her lack of knowledge of portfolio assessment. Significant changes were noted on pre/post rankings on the teacher information questionnaire of Abigail and Barbara (see Appendix A). Crystal initially had ranked herself fairly high with very little room for more positive options. Barbara and Crystal were rated as being at the Preparation Stage of Level of Use (Level II). Abigail was ranked at Level III, Mechanical Use (LoU) on the CBAM. Abigail exceeds the other two teachers by at least one level or step in Levels of Use and exceeds Barbara in Stages of Concern by at least one level or step. Abigail and Crystal ended up being rated at the same Stage of Concern, Level IV, Consequence Stage on the CBAM. The results indicate that Abigail and Crystal
were implementing portfolio assessment on a consistently regular basis, with Barbara beginning to implement portfolio assessment on a more consistent basis.

Differences in teachers' levels of use of portfolio assessment were characterized by the years of experience, grade level taught, and types of concerns. Abigail, being a newer teacher, had a more enthusiastic attitude as documented by interviews and journal entries than did Barbara and Crystal, both who have been teaching over 20 years. Secondly, even though Abigail and Barbara taught first grade, Abigail started at a higher Level of Use as indicated by the CBAM than did Barbara. Interviews and journal entries showed Abigail to be an initiator. Thirdly, Abigail was overwhelmed by the tasks facing a new teacher, whereas Barbara was considered to be a complainer and lacked initiative, and Crystal was concerned with lack of time.

Differences in teacher's implementation of portfolio assessment were also characterized by the peer coach's years of experience, grade level taught, levels of training, other responsibilities, and staff development experiences. Abigail has significantly less years of teaching experience than the peer coach. Abigail noted in her journal entries and interviews that the peer coach was functioning in a mentor-type role with her, and she highly respects and looks up to her. Crystal has more in common with Coach Bayside, due to the similarities of implementing portfolio assessment at the third/fourth grade level. This similarity indirectly affected Crystal's higher rate of implementation of portfolio assessment. Abigail and Crystal progressed beyond one level/increment of use as indicated by the CBAM. This increase was due to Coach Bayside's ability to move teachers to a higher level of portfolio assessment comprehension based on her level of training in portfolio assessment and staff development expertise. Abigail progressed higher than Barbara and Crystal, due to her enthusiasm to learn on her own initiative as documented by journal entries and interviews.
Conclusions

The peer coach enhanced each teacher's growth in the implementation of portfolio assessment at Bayside School. The growth made by Abigail, Barbara, and Crystal may be due to the fact that although the peer coach had extensive responsibilities in school and in the community and at home, her overall background knowledge and expertise to promote a more extensive growth in implementing portfolio assessment gave them an incentive to continue the implementation process.

In this study, Coach Bayside demonstrated personal characteristics conducive to peer coaching. These characteristics are: being visible and accessible; demonstrating professional knowledge and skills; expressing personal interest in other people; listening reflectively; acting non-judgmentally; and keeping commitments.

The conditions conducive to peer coaching exhibited at Bayside School are as follows: having a principal who is supportive and knowledgeable about portfolio assessment; having teachers who collaborate with other teachers who have about the same knowledge of portfolios and who teach the same grade and are implementing portfolio assessment; and having a peer coach at the school site who is willing and able to share their knowledge about portfolio assessment. Overall, it is concluded that if the peer coach has the background and expertise, he/she is capable of producing a significant improvement in his/her mentees.
Chapter 6
Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This study analyzed the impact that peer coaching had on assisting first and third grade teachers in the implementation of portfolio assessment. The Levels of Use and the Stages of Concern from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model, or CBAM (Loucks & Hall, 1977) were used to determine the significance of the peer coaching experience and the impact peer coaching had on each teacher’s implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom. Data for two multiple case studies were collected. Each case was based on data collected from three teachers and their peer coach. All data were collected by the investigator. The research questions were:

(a) What characteristics and conditions were conducive to peer coaching?
(b) What impact did a peer coach have on the implementation of portfolio assessment at the first and third grade levels?

The teachers at Applegate School were Allison, Beverly, and Catherine. Allison and Beverly were first grade teachers, and Catherine was a third grade teacher. The teachers at Bayside School were Abigail, Barbara, and Crystal. Abigail and Barbara were first grade teachers, and Crystal was a third grade teacher. The peer coaches were Coach Applegate and Coach Bayside. The participants from both of two schools were selected for the study based on their desire to implement portfolio assessment in their classroom with the assistance of a peer coach who was based at their school.

Applegate School

Allison. Allison has eight years of total teaching experience, all of which are at Applegate School. She taught first grade. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at the Level II, Preparation Level, of the CBAM. This meant that she was gathering information and beginning the implementation of portfolio
assessment. After the study, Allison’s Level of Use of portfolio assessment increased to Mechanical Use (Level III) because she was confident enough to begin using portfolios on her own.

Allison was concerned at the beginning of the study because she felt she did not know enough about portfolio assessment and what was expected of her in the study. These concerns indicated that she had a limited knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to understand its basics, which placed her at the informational Stage of Concern, (Level I). At the end of the peer coaching experience, Allison’s concerns had changed focus. Since Allison was taking the time to train her aide in the portfolio assessment process, she was concerned that the implementation process was taking her a longer time compared to Beverly, her co-worker. This concern about time and management of portfolio assessment placed her at the Management Stage of Concern, (Level III). Her concerns focused on her trait of being a procrastinator, being behind in her implementation compared to her first grade teammate, and the time factor.

Significant changes in her pre/post rankings were noted in the areas of observation and feedback, collegiality and application, and characteristics important toward establishing trust in the peer coach. Changes were also noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities since she began to implement portfolio assessment in a more consistent manner.

Beverly. Beverly has two years of total teaching experience, both at Applegate School. Like Allison, she is also a first grade teacher. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at the Preparation (Level II) level. After the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment increased to Routine (Level IVA).

Beverly’s concerns focused early in the study on the fact that she was a new teacher who was trying new methods of instruction. She also felt she lacked basic knowledge in implementing portfolio assessment. Because she had a very limited
knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment, she was initially at the Informational Stage of Concern (Level I). At the end of the peer coaching experience, Beverly's concerns had changed from hesitancy to being more concerned about involving the parents in the portfolio process, parental reactions to this new assessment, and beginning to assess her students with rubrics (scoring guides) to get feedback on their progress. This indicates that she is concerned about evaluating the impact of portfolios on her students which places her at the Consequence Stage of Concern (Level IV). Significant changes in her pre/post rankings on the questionnaire are noted in the areas of observation and feedback, collegiality and application, and characteristics important toward establishing trust in the peer coach. Changes are also noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities in that she has begun to use portfolio assessment on a regular basis.

Catherine. Catherine has 25 years of total teaching experience of which 15 years were at Applegate School. She taught third grade. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at Preparation (Level II). After the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment increased to Mechanical Use (Level III).

At the beginning of the study, Catherine was concerned about her lack of knowledge of portfolio assessment. This concern indicated that she had a limited basic knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment, which placed her at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I). At the end of the study, Catherine's concerns focused on the time factor and the isolation she felt by being the only third grade teacher in the study. Toward the end of the study, she became concerned about conferencing with her students. She indicated, “There just doesn’t seem to be enough time during the day to do so.” She feels that having an aide in the classroom would be beneficial. The aide could assist with the abundance of paperwork involved in portfolio assessment. Her concern for time and organization of
the portfolios placed Catherine at the Management Stage of Concern (Level III). No significant changes in her pre/post rankings were noted. Changes were noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities in that she has begun some implementation of portfolio assessment with all of her students on a more regular basis.

**Bayside School**

**Abigail.** Abigail has three years of total teaching experience, all of which are at Bayside School. She taught first grade. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at the Mechanical Use (Level III). After the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment increased to Refinement (Level IVB).

Prior to this research, Abigail was concerned that she might miss something important, wanting to learn everything about portfolio assessment and work with parents in understanding portfolio assessment. This indicated that she wanted to know how her teaching could change and wanted more information on time requirements, which placed her at the Personal Stage of Concern (Level II). After the study, Abigail's concerns were at a different level. She is researching different ways to assess portfolios to provide feedback on the impact of the portfolios. This indicates that she is concerned about evaluating the impact of portfolios on her students which places her at the Consequence Stage of Concern (Level IV). Significant changes in her pre/post rankings are noted in the areas of: observation and feedback; collegiality and application; and characteristics important toward establishing trust in the peer coach. Changes are also noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities, since she consistently uses portfolios all of the time in her class.

**Barbara.** Barbara has 26 years of total teaching experience of which 5 years are at Bayside School. She taught first grade. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at the Preparation (Level II) level. After the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment increased to Mechanical Use (Level III).
Barbara's concerns focused on her lack of knowledge of portfolio assessment and working with parents in understanding portfolio assessment. Her comments indicated that she had a limited knowledge about portfolio assessment and needed to know the basics of portfolio assessment, which placed her at the Informational Stage of Concern, (Level I).

At the end of the peer coaching experience, Barbara's concerns had changed from that of being hesitant to start a new innovation in her classroom to being more concerned about involving the parents in the portfolio process and what their reactions may be toward portfolio assessment. She is concerned about managing the portfolios and is worried about explaining the process to her students' parents. These concerns place her at the Management Stage of Concern, (Level III) at the end of the study. Significant changes in her pre/post questionnaire rankings are noted in the areas of observation and feedback, collegiality and application, and characteristics important toward establishing trust in the peer coach. Changes are also noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities since she had begun to implement portfolio assessment on a more consistent basis.

Crystal. Crystal has 24 years of total teaching experience, of which 13 years are at Bayside School. She taught third grade. Prior to the study, her Level of Use of portfolio assessment was at the Preparation (Level II) level. After the study, because she intends to continue using portfolios on her own, and this places her at the Routine Level of Use (Level IVA).

Crystal’s concerns focused on not having enough time to implement portfolios effectively and her lack of knowledge concerning the integration of portfolio assessment into her classroom instruction. This indicated that she was concerned about time, organization for each day, and was overwhelmed with trying to manage everything at one time. These concerns placed her at the Management Stage of
Concern, (Level III). At the end of the peer coaching experience, Crystal's concerns had changed from that of being somewhat hesitant to implement portfolio assessment in her classroom to that of being thankful she had agreed to be a participant in the peer coaching experience. She wanted to learn about using rubrics to assess her students’ progress which indicated that she was at the Consequence Stage of Concern, (Level IV). Significant changes in her pre/post questionnaire rankings are noted in the areas of observation and feedback. Changes are also noted in her implementation of portfolio assessment activities since she has begun to regularly use rubrics and has become a more consistent implementor of portfolio assessment.

Summary Tables

Table 3 shows the significant teacher changes in the pre/post rankings, as reflected by the Levels of Use and Stages of Concern questionnaires. These questionnaires were completed by the teachers prior to the implementation of this research and at the conclusion of the study. The questionnaires are designed as a means of collecting more objective data on teacher progress. Table 4 shows the credentials of the two peer coaches in this study. Growth in each teacher’s implementation of portfolio activities is shown in Table 5.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total teaching experience/Total years at school</th>
<th>Grade level taught</th>
<th>LoU Prior to study</th>
<th>LoU After study</th>
<th>SoC Prior to study</th>
<th>SoC After study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>25/15</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IVB</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>26/15</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>24/13</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Credentials of Peer Coaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total years of experience/Years at current school</th>
<th>Coach Applegate</th>
<th>Coach Bayside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>36/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level taught</th>
<th>Prekindergarten</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of certification/Degree</th>
<th>Elementary/B.A.</th>
<th>Elementary, Reading Specialist/Ed.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic traits (total)</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of training in portfolio assessment</th>
<th>10 hours inservice</th>
<th>1 graduate class, 15 hours inservice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other responsibilities</th>
<th>Member/office holder of organizations, grant writing, grade level leader, SBLC chairperson, faculty liaison</th>
<th>Curriculum coordinator, supervising teacher, tutor at reading center, presenter at conferences, teacher trainer, grant writer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff development experience</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>District and national presenter, member of portfolio assessment team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Table 5

**Results of Pre/Post Questionnaires of the Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allis on</th>
<th>Significant changes of Pre/Post Rankings</th>
<th>Changes in Implementation of Portfolio Assessment Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation/Feedback Collegiality/Application Characteristic traits</td>
<td>Somewhat more consistent in use of portfolio assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly</td>
<td>Observation/Feedback Collegiality/Application Characteristic traits</td>
<td>Used portfolio assessment on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Not much variation</td>
<td>Beginning some implementation of portfolio assessment with all her students on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>Observation/Feedback Collegiality/Application Characteristic traits</td>
<td>Increased use of portfolio assessment and other related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Observation/Feedback Collegiality/Application Characteristic traits</td>
<td>Beginning to implement on a more consistent basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>Observation/Feedback Characteristic traits</td>
<td>More consistent use of portfolio assessment with the regular use of rubrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Characteristics of Trust

At the beginning of the study, teachers rated the Characteristics of Trust (from the survey in Table 1) as they perceived those characteristics to be relative to establishing trust with their peer coach. The ratings on each characteristic initially spanned the range of survey choices, from extremely necessary to not necessary. At the end of this research, all participants rated all of the ten Characteristics of Trust as either necessary or extremely necessary. In other words, the participants understood that all ten characteristics listed in Table 1 were essential elements in a trust relationship with their peer coach.

Levels of Use and Stages of Concern

At the end of the study, all of the teacher participants had moved up step in knowledge on both the Levels of Use (LoU) and the Stages of Concern (SoC) as measured by the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (see Table 3). One participant at each school increased two levels in LoU and SoC. Abigail and Crystal, teachers at Bayside School, completed this study at higher levels of use than any of the other participants with the exception of Beverly.

Impact of Peer Coaching Between Applegate School and Bayside School

Understanding the differences in the peer coaches' knowledge base of portfolio assessment, years of experience, grade level taught, levels of training, other responsibilities, and staff development experiences provided insight into the impact of peer coaching on the implementation of portfolio assessment at the first and third grade levels. Teachers at Bayside School exhibited more growth in the implementation of portfolio assessment than did teachers at Applegate School as indicated by their increases of Level of Use and Stages of Concern (see Table 3). It appears that several factors affected the peer coaching experience. The level of training and staff
development experience of the peer coach is the first factor affecting the peer coach experience (see Table 4). In comparing the training and staff development experience of the two peer coaches, Coach Bayside has a higher level of training in portfolio assessment and staff development training. She has taken a college course in portfolio assessment, has 25 hours of inservice training, and has presented numerous workshops and presentations as well as conducting parish, state, and national-level presentations. She is also on the school’s portfolio assessment team. Coach Applegate has 15 college hours at the master’s level in education and 10 inservice hours. She did not have any staff development experience.

Another possible factor that differentiated the peer coaching experience of Applegate School from Bayside School was the Area of Certification/Level of Degree of the peer coaches (see Table 4). Coach Bayside is certified in elementary education and as a reading specialist, and holds a bachelor’s degree and has an educational specialist certificate. In contrast, Coach Applegate is only certified in elementary education and holds a bachelor’s degree.

Years of teaching experience of the peer coach also may have had an effect on the peer coaching experience at Applegate School and Bayside School. The peer coach at Bayside School has a total of 36 years of experience compared to the peer coach at Applegate School who has only a total of 10 years of experience.

Other responsibilities of the peer coaches also affected the peer coaching experience at Applegate School and Bayside School. Coach Bayside has a wider variety of responsibilities besides teaching that enhanced her knowledge base compared to Coach Applegate. Coach Bayside is a curriculum coordinator, supervising teacher, tutor at a reading center, national presenter, a teacher trainer, and a grant writer. Coach Applegate is a faculty liaison, school building level committee (SBLC) chairperson, grade leader, grant writer, and member and office holder of organizations. These
differences indicate that if the peer coach has the background and expertise, he/she is capable of producing a significant improvement in his/her mentees.

**The Principals’ Influence**

Through informal discussions with the principals, it is apparent that each principal’s level of knowledge, interest, and support also appeared to have a great deal of influence in the teachers’ use of portfolio assessment. Principals at both Applegate School and Bayside School are strong educational leaders who encourage teachers to try new teaching innovations and are extremely supportive and knowledgeable about portfolio assessment. Both principals actively encourage teachers to attend trainings at both regional and state seminars. Both principals believe the most significant way to improve their school is through improving the instructional performance of teachers. They indicated that changing a teacher’s practices and improving instruction is essential, but teachers need assistance and time to change and develop.

**Relationship of Results to Prior Research**

According to Sperling and Mahalak (1993), teachers require time to implement a new innovation such as portfolio assessment. Time is also necessary to allow for continuity of training for adjustments in implementation (Harris, 1989). According to Aschbacher (1992), continuous motivation and support is crucial, especially when dealing with the change process. Teachers need time to thoroughly identify ways in which to complement their instruction with portfolio assessment and to adjust their methods accordingly (Sperling & Mahalak, 1993). It takes a three- to five-year time frame for any major educational change to take place (Hall & Hord, 1984; Orlick, 1989).

Effective staff development can help educators keep the pace with school reform and new teaching/assessment methods, and can result in educational improvement (Ellis, Cooley, & Thompson, 1988). Educators also need time to interact with other teachers.
and to reflect on practice which, according to the National Education Association (1994), is a very essential element of successful reform implementation.

This current study supports the findings of prior research. Researchers (Au, Scheu, Kawakami, & Herman, 1990; Calfee & Perfuma, 1993; Farr & Tone, 1994) reported that teachers who were incorporating the use of portfolio assessment into teaching practices valued the use of portfolios to enhance instruction, had learned how to integrate portfolios into the curriculum, were adapting their views of the curriculum to accommodate portfolio assessment, and were supported by other educators in their schools who were using portfolio assessment in instruction.

**Recommendations**

The outcomes of this research are specific to the eight participants and two school sites. However, it is important to examine the characteristics described in this research in order to make recommendations about how the implementation of portfolio assessment may be enhanced at other school sites. Five specific recommendations are suggested by the findings of this study.

The first recommendation involves a need to have at least two teachers at each grade level learning and implementing the innovation at the same time. Both third grade teachers voiced concerns, because they did not have a teacher at their grade level to collaborate with in the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The second recommendation focuses on the knowledge level of the peer coach. A peer coach should be knowledgeable about the implementation of the new innovation and have the ability and willingness to impart this knowledge in a non-threatening and supportive manner. All of the teachers indicated that they felt comfortable asking the peer coach’s questions because the peer coaches were so supportive and nonjudgmental. Thus, a teacher’s ability to implement portfolio assessment would be enhanced because of the approachability of a coach.
Thirdly, the peer coach should be actively and personally involved in the implementation of the innovation. If the coach is utilizing portfolios at the same time as other teachers, credibility of the coach is enhanced.

Another recommendation is to have the peer coach located on-site so that the coach can provide assistance to teachers with the new innovation. In this study, the coach was more accessible because she was at the same site as the teachers she was coaching. By being on-site, any peer coach can be more accessible when problems arise.

The final recommendation, from this research, is to have a peer coach who is willing to make himself/herself available to assist in the implementation process. Teachers indicated that this enabled them to be more of risk-takers and to try new innovations more readily.

**Significant Factors Influencing Implementation**

At Applegate and Bayside Schools, research analyses reveals that similar conditions existed at both schools that had a positive effect on the implementation of portfolio assessment practices. The conditions were as follows:

(a) All participants were implementing portfolio assessment in a school with a strong instructional leader as the principal, who encouraged its implementation;

(b) All participants took advantage of the knowledge and materials provided by the peer coach;

(c) All participants increased in their knowledge and implementation of portfolio assessment. Teachers moved to more consistent application;

(d) All participants respected their peer coach’s ability to implement portfolio assessment and appreciated her willingness to share her knowledge;

(e) All participants stated they had a good relationship with the coach, did not feel intimidated, and felt comfortable asking questions; and

(f) All participants trusted the peer coach to demonstrate the characteristics of trust listed in Table 1.
Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study indicate that coaches who have more experience in the portfolio assessment process are better able to demonstrate the value of this assessment method. The investigator found that to incorporate the use of portfolio assessment into instructional practices, teachers needed to feel at ease using the method and change their philosophy and/or approach to the curriculum to accommodate its use. As a result of this peer coaching/portfolio assessment study, the following recommendations can be considered for future research.

Longitudinal studies should be conducted to determine if additional time after training would result in more positive perceptions and higher implementation of portfolio assessment. According to Orfick (1989), studies from the “effective schools movement” show that it takes a three- to five-year time frame for any meaningful implementation of a major educational change to take place.

A control study could be conducted to determine the effectiveness of a peer coach versus no peer coach in the implementation of portfolio assessment. Various grade levels should also be included in the study.

Conclusions

This study could change the way portfolio assessment is implemented in schools. This investigator concurs with the major premise of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model in that the single most crucial factor in the change process is the people who will be most affected by the change. When teachers become comfortable with a new method, there is a greater likelihood that this method will be implemented on a more consistent basis. If schools would adopt this approach of using a peer coach and a support network in implementing innovative methods, the investigator believes the possibility of an innovation being used would be greatly increased. Ultimately, these changes would enhance instruction and student growth.
The investigator feels that this study has the potential to impact teachers' future use of portfolio assessment in a positive manner if peer coaches follow the recommendations to provide suggestions, feedback, and support. Any change, takes time and support, and the implementation of more authentic assessment practices through the use of portfolios is no exception. This research helps to support the conclusion that peer coaching is a useful strategy for teacher improvement, because it is practice-oriented, requires collaboration with colleagues, and helps build a sense of professional responsibility. Peer coaching made a positive difference to the teachers in this study; therefore, educators involved in effective staff development at all levels should be able to make use of the conclusions reached in this research.
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Appendix A
Teacher Information Questionnaire

1. I teach at the following grade level: (Circle all that apply)
   Kindergarten  First  Second  Third  Fourth  Fifth

2. I have the following certification (circle one)
   A certification  B certification  C certification  T certification  Not applicable

3. I have the following degree: (circle the highest one)
   Bachelors  Masters  Masters Plus 30  Specialists  Doctorate

4. I am certified in the following areas: (circle all that applies)
   Elementary  Secondary  Adm/Supervision  Sp. Ed.  Early Childhood  Counseling  Other

5. I have ___ years teaching experience with ___ years at this school.

6. I have ___ total students in my classroom.

7. The racial breakdown of my class is as follows:
   _____ black students
   _____ white students
   _____ other students

Awareness: means that you have been exposed to information about portfolio assessment;  
Knowledge: means that you have sufficient information about portfolio assessment so that you can effectively communicate with someone else.  
Skill: means that you have the ability and feel comfortable performing tasks and assisting others with tasks related to portfolio assessment.

8. Using the above terms, indicate your perceived level of development AT THIS TIME:
   Awareness  Knowledge  Skill

9. Estimate the total number of hours/days of inservice/training you have had on portfolio assessment/performance assessment:______________
FOR TEACHERS:
Observation and Technical Feedback

1. How often have other teachers observed you?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

2. How often have you observed other teachers?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

3. How often have you received feedback on your instruction?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

4. How often have you given feedback to others concerning their instruction?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

5. How often have you been given advice regarding instruction?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

6. How often have you given advice to others regarding instruction?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

Collegiality/Analysis of Application

7. How often have you discussed effective teaching strategies/methods with your colleagues?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

8. How often have you turned to another colleague to help them with an instructional need or concern?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

9. How often have you had to adjust the way you are using a strategy in the classroom?
   Never   Rarely   Occasionally   Frequently

10. How do you know when your instruction in the classroom needs adjusting?
    Students' Responses   Other Teacher's Responses
    Students' Grades      Own Reflections
11. How likely are you to communicate with another teacher during the day?
Very likely  Somewhat likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all

Experimentation

12. How often do you try something new in the classroom?
Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Frequently

13. When trying something new, are you...
Very confident  Confident  Somewhat confident  Very lacking in confidence

14. When you try a new technique for the first time and it doesn't work well, how likely are you to try it again?
Very likely  Somewhat likely  Not very likely  Not at all likely

15. How willing are you to implement portfolio assessment in the classroom?
Very willing  Somewhat willing  Not very willing  Not willing at all

Student learning

16. What do you perceive the students will learn more as a result of the skills gained from the Peer Coaching Project?
Motivation  Reinforcement  Self-esteem  Reduce behavior problems

Concerns and comfort with peer coaching

What is your greatest concern about participating in the peer coaching project?

What would you like to have the coach to observe, record, and provide feedback about?
Characteristics of trust

On a scale of 1-4, rank the following characteristics below according to its importance toward establishing trust in your peer coach (as you perceive it).

1. Extremely Necessary  2. Necessary

The coach should:
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be visible and accessible
- Behave consistently
- Keep commitments
- Reveal feelings
- Express personal interest in other people
- Act non-judgmentally
- Listen reflectively
- Admit mistakes
- Demonstrate professional knowledge and skills
AFTER THE STUDY IS COMPLETED:

1. How successful has the peer coaching been in providing for professional collegiality?

2. How helpful has the technical feedback from your coach been on your lesson plans?

3. How helpful has the technical feedback from your coach been on in-class visits?

4. To what extent do you feel you have integrated portfolio assessment as a standard part of your teaching repertoire?

5. To what extent has your partnership with your coach helped to adapt portfolio assessment to your own particular situation?

6. How much assistance have you gotten from your coach in helping you to feel good about yourself as you have tried new strategies?
Appendix B
Peer Coach Information Questionnaire

1. I have taught at the following grade levels: (Circle all that apply)
   Kindergarten  First  Second  Third  Fourth  Fifth

2. I have the following certification (circle one)
   A certification  B certification  C certification  T certification  Not applicable

3. I have the following degree: (circle the highest one)
   Bachelors  Masters  Masters Plus 30  Specialists  Doctorate

4. I am certified in the following areas: (circle all that applies)
   Elementary  Secondary  Adm/Supervision  Sp. Ed.  Early Childhood  Counseling  Other

5. I have ___ years teaching experience with ___ years at this school.

6. I have been in my present position ___ years.

Awareness: means that you have been exposed to information about portfolio assessment;
Knowledge: means that you have sufficient information about portfolio assessment so that you can effectively communicate with someone else.
Skill: means that you have the ability and feel comfortable performing tasks and assisting others with tasks related to portfolio assessment.

7. Using the above terms, indicate your perceived level of development AT THIS TIME:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Estimate the total number of hours/days of inservice/training you have had on portfolio assessment/performance assessment: __________________

9. Have you ever been a peer coach prior to this study?  Yes  No

10. If yes to question #9, what was the occasion and the results?

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11. If no to question #9, what training have you had to make you qualified to be a peer coach for this study?

12. On a scale of 1-4, rank the following characteristics below according to its importance toward establishing trust with your peer teachers (as you perceive it).

1. Extremely Necessary  
2. Necessary  
3. Somewhat Necessary  
4. Not Necessary

As the coach, I should:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Be visible and accessible
- Behave consistently
- Keep commitments
- Reveal feelings
- Express personal interest in other people
- Act non-judgmentally
- Listen reflectively
- Admit mistakes
- Demonstrate professional knowledge and skills
Appendix C
Request to Conduct Study

Lila Finney
10062 Stratmore Circle
Shreveport, LA 71115
May 7, 1996

Dr. _________
Assistant Superintendent
_______ Parish Schools
P. O. Box ________
__________, LA

Dear Dr. _________,

Currently I am working on my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at LSU. I am requesting permission to conduct my study on alternative assessment at Bayside Elementary School. I have contacted the principal, and she has agreed for me to conduct my study at Bayside contingent upon your approval.

My study will involve Coach Bayside, serving in the role of a peer coach, and teachers who volunteer to participate in the study on the implementation of alternative assessment.

I feel the information that will be gained from this study will be of benefit to me, to Bayside, and to other district teachers who are involved in alternative assessment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lila D. Finney
Effective Schools Program Manager, Region VII
December 9, 1996

Mr._____ Superintendent
Parish Schools
P. O. Box _____
______, LA

Dear Mr.______,

Currently I am working on my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at LSU. I am requesting permission to conduct my study on alternative assessment at Applegate Elementary School. I have contacted the principal, and she has agreed for me to conduct my study at Applegate contingent upon your approval.

My study will involve four teachers who volunteer to participate in the study on the implementation of alternative assessment.

This study will take place from December 1996 through March 1997. I feel the information that will be gained from this study will be of benefit to me, to Applegate, and to other district teachers who are involved in alternative assessment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lila D. Finney
Effective Schools Program Manager, Region VII
10062 Stratmore Circle
Shreveport, LA 71115
Ms. Lila Finney
Effective Schools Program Manager, Region VII
3018 Old Minden Road, Suite 1117
Bossier City, LA 71112

Dear Ms. Finney:

Your request to conduct research at Elementary School as part of the Ph.D. requirements at LSU has been received. Your request is approved.

I wish you well with your study.

Sincerely,

Superintendent
May 15, 1996

Ms. Lila Finney
Effective Schools Program Manager Region VII
3018 Old Minden Road, Suite 1117
Bossier City, Louisiana 71112

Your request to conduct research at Elementary School as a part of the Ph.D. requirements at LSU has been received. Your request is approved as outlined in your May 7 letter. You indicated in your letter that is aware and has given her approval.

I wish you well with your study. Please call if we can help further.

Sincerely,

Assistant to the Superintendent
Appendix E
Consent Form

I agree to participate in a qualitative research case study which will investigate how peer coaching affects teachers' implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom. I understand that data will be collected through interviews, questionnaires, journal entries, and feedback from the peer coach, and my identity will be kept confidential. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to review everything I have stated and make corrections if necessary. Furthermore, I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, I have the right to withdraw at any time, and all data will be returned to me. The information gathered in this study will be used to provide information on using peer coaching to implement portfolio assessment in the classroom.

Name:____________________________________
Date:_____________________________________

Lila D. Finney
Louisiana State University

10062 Stratmore Circle
Shreveport, LA 71115
798-0461
Vita

Lila D. Finney received a bachelor of science degree in elementary education from Centenary College of Louisiana in 1972. She received her masters of education degree in educational administration and supervision from Virginia State University in 1977. She is currently completing the requirements for the doctor of philosophy degree from Louisiana State University to be conferred in August 1997.

Ms. Finney has been an educator for 25 years. She has served as an elementary school teacher, gifted coordinator, and elementary supervisor. For the past five years, she has worked as an Effective Schools program manager for the Louisiana Department of Education.
Candidate: Lila Daspit Finney

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: A Case Study Analysis of the Impact Peer Coaching Has on Assisting First and Third Grade Teachers in the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment

Approved:

[Signature]
Co-Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]
Co-Chair

[Signature]

Peter A. Enderle

[Signature]

Date of Examination:

June 27, 1997