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Chalk Talk: Investigating Reading Coaches' Role in Implementation

By

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Committee in charge:

Professor Cynthia E. Coburn, Chair

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## Abstract

### Chalk Talk: Investigating Reading Coaches' Role in Implementation

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

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Bridging the macro and micro levels, this dissertation uses the case of coaching to investigate how people and ideas affect implementation. I drew on institutional theory and framing theory to reveal that coaches, situated between the district and school levels, serve as intermediaries in the education system. I conducted a qualitative cross-case study of coaching in one urban school district. I collected data on the field of reading instruction, the policy environment, coaches' work, and teachers' classroom practice. To advance our understanding of instructional reform, I determined how reading coaches engaged with logics from the broader environment. I paid particular attention to coaches' political role in persuading teachers to change their practice.

I found that two logics of reading instruction, Accountability First and Just Read, co-existed in an urban school district in California. These logics held conflicting principles about appropriate and effective ways to teach reading. Coaches actively transformed and combined these logics, building them into structures and practices at the district and school-levels while generating rules, instructional materials, and trainings. Thus, coach-developed reading policies were infused with the principles and practices of Accountability First and Just Read. Coaches then actively drew upon logics from the environment to frame reading policy for teachers during implementation. Coaches differentiated their framing to meet the perceived needs of their school and teachers and used socially skilled tactics to motivate change. Ultimately, coaches' framing of the two logics of reading instruction helped influence teachers' adoption of the new reading program by persuading teachers to respond positively to particular specific pedagogical elements of the program. These findings have implications for institutional theory, research on coaching, and the preparation of educational leaders.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

For the past two decades, federal and state departments of education have become increasingly concerned with the low reading achievement of poor and minority students. According to national standardized test results, in 2011, less than 20 percent of low socioeconomic fourth grade students were proficient readers but 48 percent of middle and high socioeconomic students reached proficiency. Similarly, only 16 percent of Black students and 18 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency, while 42 percent of White fourth graders were proficient in reading on the NAEP exam.<sup>1</sup> Multiple waves of reform have attempted to close these reading achievement gaps (Cuban, 1993; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Reforms have aimed to influence the nature and quality of instruction in schools to raise student achievement. The United States' education system is currently dominated by accountability policies that specify goals for schools, such as raising test scores and refocusing reading instruction; these policies necessitate new ways to develop teachers' capacity.<sup>2</sup> Under relentless pressure to improve students' reading achievement (USED, 2004), many states and districts have turned to coaching as a policy lever to catalyze instructional change (Annenberg Institute, 2004; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Wei, et al, 2009). For example, as part of Reading First implementation, the seven largest states (California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Ohio) adopted reading coaches.<sup>3</sup> By providing funding for coaches, Reading First helped proliferate coaching initiatives across the United States.

With the intent of improving instruction, coaching is used as a policy lever to increase teachers' knowledge and skills related to a reform (Bean, 2004; Deussen, et al., 2007). In many coaching initiatives, coaches are uniquely positioned as intermediaries in the education system. Coaches are positioned between the district and school levels, so they are connected to the district as an organization plus the schools that they work in. Coaches are intermediaries that interact with state and district-level actors and work closely with teachers in schools (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). At the district-level, coaches may directly receive information from central office administrators about instructional materials, testing, and budgetary issues. At the school-level, coaches can support teachers inside and outside of their classrooms.<sup>4</sup> As instructional leaders, coaches help set a vision for reading instruction at their site and concentrate on improving instruction and managing student data (Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005; Wallace Foundation, 2012). Since coaches occupy a boundary spanning, intermediary, position, they have access to an array of ideas about reading instruction, which could influence their work, and to teachers in schools. By interpreting policy and motivating teachers to change their practice, coaches link policy and practice (Coburn, 2004; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Spillane, 2004). However, we lack an understanding of coaches' role in the dynamics of change, including how their position as intermediaries influences their role in reform. We know little about the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://voices.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Issue-Brief-NAEP-2011-Reading-4-grade-overall-findings.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> This form of policy relies on the following theory of action: set clear and measurable *outcome goals* for schools focused on student achievement; *monitor* the progress of schools, teachers, and students toward those specified goals; and provide *incentives* for successfully reaching goals, while issuing *sanctions* for failing to reach goals (Cross, et al., 2004).

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_U.S.\\_states\\_and\\_territories\\_by\\_population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population)

<sup>4</sup> Coaches are less subject to the compartmentalized structure of schools (Lortie, 2002).

relationship between forces from the macro-level and coaches or the relationship between coaches' power and position and their interactions with teachers. To understand these macro-micro issues, we need to use organizational sociology to investigate how coaches operate as intermediaries in linking the environment with teachers in schools.

At the macro-level, the environment's resources, ideas, and rules affect the trajectory of instructional reform (Coburn, 2001a; Russell, 2010; Spillane & Burch, 2006). The environment's overarching ideas about schooling play a crucial role in defining what counts as appropriate and effective instruction (Coburn, 2001a; Russell, 2010). These definitions help direct teachers and their classroom practice. And at the micro-level, organizational actors and their cognitive processes influence reform (Anagnostopoulos, 2007; Coburn, 2001b & 2006; Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer, 2002). Teachers and school leaders make a difference in reform by constructing understandings of policy and subsequently responding to policy (Coburn, 2001b; Spillane, et al., 2002). Unfortunately, much of the research on organizational change or reform only pays attention to one of these levels—macro or micro—obscuring the full view of how policy is translated into practice. For instance, Russell's (2010) research explicates the ways in which the overarching conceptualization of kindergarten changed over the past few decades, but it does not consider how people interpreted and learned about the changing nature of kindergarten. Thus, this study obscures the issue of who decided to advance what types of ideas about kindergarten. In this dissertation, I use the case of reading coaches to investigate the linkages between macro and micro. That is, I investigate the ways in which actors—in this case, coaches—draw upon the institutional environment's resources and rules to further organizational change. In so doing, I attend to the interrelationship between coaches, the environment's institutional elements, and the microprocesses of instructional reform. This approach helps answer the larger theoretical puzzle of how organizational actors draw upon the environment's rules and resources to reshape their organization's practices, furthering processes of institutional change (Kellogg, 2009). Coaching is a useful case for examining the mechanisms by which ideas from the environment and practices within organizations are linked together (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Spillane & Burch, 2006; Weick, 1976) because coaches are intermediaries with access to the broader environment, as well as the capability to influence teachers' responses to reading policy.

To extend our understanding of macro-micro linkages, this dissertation uses the lenses of neo-institutional theory and framing theory to study reading coaches' role in instructional reform. I examine how coaches, as intermediaries serving as institutional entrepreneurs, interpret and mediate the environment's ideas about reading instruction and how that shapes their interactions with teachers. My dissertation illuminates how actors' connections with the broader environment shape their work practices, which, in turn, provides insight into actors' agency during change processes. In this chapter, I review literature on coaching, neo-institutional theory, and framing theory. First, I explain how neo-institutional theory surfaces the logics, or overarching conceptualizations, structuring a field and how framing theory helps analyze how actors engage with those logics in their daily work at the micro-level. Then I present the conceptual framework guiding my dissertation research. This framework examines the logics of reading instruction, as well as reading coaches' framing activities, thereby enabling us to understand actors' role in translating instructional policy into classroom practice.



## Literature Review

Although large urban districts (e.g., New York and San Diego) and federal policy initiatives such as Reading First (Haager, et al., 2008; Moss, et al., 2008) have embraced the idea of adding focused positions to schools to boost reform efforts, we know little about how coaches deliver ideas from the environment to teachers during reform efforts. Most research on the nature and effects of coaching addresses coaches' educative role in supporting and developing teachers while ignoring their political role. As a result, there is a gap in our understanding of the political processes that coaches use to influence teachers' practices (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). How do coaches encounter ideas about instruction from the broader environment? How do coaches persuade teachers to respond to reading policy messages? The coaching research does not deal with the macro-micro linkages central to sociology's structure-agency debate. First, the coaching research fails to consider how ideas from the environment impact coaches' efforts to improve reading instruction. Second, this research does not explain how coaches emphasize or downplay elements of reading policy. Many questions remain about how coaches work to persuade teachers to translate policy into practice.

Most of the literature on coaching focuses on coaches' educative role in fostering teachers' professional learning. The coaching literature describes reading coaches' activities to develop teachers, including observing teachers' classrooms and providing feedback on instruction, conducting demonstration lessons to model particular practices, leading training workshops, and facilitating data-analysis meetings (Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003; Deussen, et al., 2007; Marsh, et al., 2009). This literature also points out that coaches have numerous responsibilities and operate on many fronts. Not only do coaches support teachers, but they work with paraprofessionals, meet with parents and administrators, and coordinate the school's literacy program (Bean, et al., 2003; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). In this way, the coaching literature tells us that coaches play a multifaceted role in shaping the nature of reading instruction in schools. In their work on the roles and responsibilities of Reading First reading coaches, Zigmond and Bean (2006) found that these coaches can be facilitators of reform who engage teachers in ongoing and school-specific professional development. Further, they stress that coaches should devote more time to support teachers with classroom observations, feedback, and demonstration lessons, while reducing the time spent conducting administrative duties, such as completing paperwork on teacher attendance at meetings or student test results.

Yet there is little research about the relationship between these coaching activities and change in teachers' reading instruction. Only a handful of studies investigate this relationship directly. Most studies have found that coaching can lead to higher quality implementation of reform practices (Matsumura et al., 2010; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010; Wei et al., 2009). However, one study did find that individual coaching practices influenced different aspects of teacher instruction to varying degrees (Walpole et al., 2010) and another study found that coaching did not have additional impact on teacher practice beyond the other professional development that had been offered (Garet et al., 2008). However, these studies do not consider *how* coaching relates to changes in classroom practice. Further, they do not consider how coaches' position or authority matters. Thus, we have a weak understanding of the mechanism by which coaching influences teachers' classroom practice and the role of power, control, and persuasion in this process. This is in spite of the fact that coaching, in the context of

policy implementation, oftentimes asks teachers to alter their practice in a particular direction. More generally, few studies have investigated how coaching operates as a lever for encouraging instructional reform. As a result, we lack clarity on the role of coaches in shaping teachers' response to policy pressures from the broader environment.

### *Neo-Institutional theory*

The coaching literature thoroughly analyzes coaches' daily work practices and lays out the types of activities that they carry out in schools. This research portrays coaches as actors with the agency to make decisions about their work and who make a difference during reform. But the research on coaching has paid much less attention to the ways in which pressures from the environment influence coaches' work. The research does not account for the structures constraining coaches' work. Since neo-institutional theory attends to the interplay between macro-level rules and ideas (e.g., reading policy) and the micro-level activities of actors within organizations (e.g. teachers' classroom practice), it can help us understand coaches' role as intermediaries in reform processes. Neo-institutional theory provides a way to conceptualize the institutional environment and its relationship with the technical core of organizations (Spillane & Burch, 2006; Scott, 2001). Thus, this theory attends to the linkages, or couplings, between the pressures in the environment and the activities occurring within organizations (Spillane & Burch, 2006; Weick, 1976). In the case of the education system, this theory provides lenses for understanding the relationship between the policy environment, including rules and ideas from the federal, state, and district levels, and teachers' practices in schools (Coburn, 2005; Spillane & Burch, 2006). Neo-institutional theory shines light on how actors are enabled and constrained by forces from the environment (Scott & Davis, 2006). In this manner, neo-institutional theory can illuminate how coaches are influenced by ideas about reading instruction and policy messages.

Education policy, reading coaches, and classroom practices are composed of, imbued with, and inextricably linked to institutions<sup>5</sup>—the clusters of broad social and cultural beliefs that enable and constrain myriad facets of human activity. Neo-institutional theory considers how institutions “provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott, 2007, p. 48), while paying attention to their logics, governance structures, and actors. *Logics* are the broad principles influencing institutional structures and activities. For example, a logic of the accountability movement is that all children can learn. And the basic skills logic of reading instruction proposes that it is appropriate and effective to teach discrete reading skills and strategies to students (Coburn, 2001a). *Governance structures* include formal and informal rules and norms that guide and constrain behavior. Formal reading policy, such as Reading First or the California Content Standards, is a governance structure guiding how districts and schools carry out reading instruction. Finally, institutional theory considers the *actors*, individual and organizational, who carry ideas and engage in cooperative and conflictual interactions (Scott, 2001). For instance, a coach who facilitates a professional development session is an institutional actor advancing policy messages for teachers. So, too, are advocates or administrators who push for particular approaches to reading policy at the state and federal levels (Song & Miskel, 2005).

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<sup>5</sup> Scott (2007) defines institutions as “multifaceted, durable social structures made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources” (p. 48).

To study the nature, characteristics, and influence of the environment and its logics, actors, and governance structures, neo-institutional theorists utilize the “organizational field” as a unit of analysis. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define an organizational field as the “organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life” (p. 148). Field-level studies investigate such issues as how a field forms, changes in a field’s dominant logics, and what accounts for a field’s degree of stability (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003; Scott, 2000; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). For example, Scott’s study of the healthcare field presented how logics, actors, and governance structures shifted over several decades, resulting in changes in how physicians’ work was conceptualized and structured (Scott, 2000). Some institutional theorists treat the field as a game, with players strategically using resources to ensure survival (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Martin, 2003). These theorists pay attention to a field’s battles, or contestation, and the strategies used to gain an advantage for organizational success. In this way, they study what’s happening in a particular field and identify the activities promoting stability or change.

Neo-institutionalism’s attention to field-level issues provides ways to study the history, values, and structures of institutions. But this theory pays less attention to how actors create, stabilize, and change institutions (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). In effect, neo-institutionalism emphasizes structures while downplaying the role of agency (Giddens, 1979; Sewell, 1992). This theory has described the ways in which external institutional forces control actors (Burch, 2007; Fligstein, 1997). The theory has its limitations for studying how actors shift the ideas, rules, and processes of institutions, particularly. Examining the interplay between structure and agency could help us understand change processes, including instructional reform. Fortunately, neo-institutional theorists are now focusing on actors’ agency. These theorists treat actors as entrepreneurs, engaging in continual contestation or negotiation and even inventing institutional practices and rules (N. Fligstein, lecture, March 17, 2008). In this way, these neo-institutionalists are illuminating the ways in which actors have the capacity to make a difference in their field (Dorado, 2005; Fligstein, 2001; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006).

### *Framing Theory and Social Skill*

Although neo-institutional theory offers lenses for investigating logics, actors, and governance structures, framing theory provides tools for studying how actors engage with logics. Framing theory also attends to issues of power. Specifically, framing theory encourages analyses of the mechanisms by which actors effect institutional change. Framing theory provides a way to understand how actors reach outward to engage with logics from the environment and then manipulate those logics while working inside organizations to motivate particular types of action. Framing theory places emphasis on issues of both structure and agency. First, the theory is concerned with the rules and ideas of logics; these logics are structures from the environment. Second, the theory highlights how actors put forth frames to promote change. While neo-institutional theory illuminates the relationship between the policy environment and schools, framing theory explicates how people within schools manipulate policy messages, as ideas from the environment, to promote or hinder instructional reform.

Framing theory focuses on how actors funnel the field’s broad logics into narrower parcels of meaning, or *frames* (Benford & Snow, 2000). An actor can put forth a frame that clarifies an

organizational issue or that shares a particular plan for action. A frame contains ideas from the environment, reflecting particular institutional logics. When actors engage in framing, they strategically define problems, propose solutions, or develop a motivating language or purpose that guides actions and experiences (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). Framing highlights some ideas and activities and downplays others; this simplifies experiences for actors (Fiss & Zajak, 2006). Framing can justify particular ideas with the goal of motivating or persuading other individuals to mobilize for change (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Frame analysis offers tools for studying the ways actors shape and package ideas to steer activity or to motivate individuals to change their practices. Frame analysis attends to the content and objectives of frames. When leaders engage in framing, they have the opportunity to “cast issues in a particular light” (Campbell, 2005, p. 48-9) by defining problems and proposing solutions. For example, coaches can present and spread their interpretation of a policy by engaging in framing with teachers. However, frame analysis pays much less attention to the characteristics of the strategic framer. For example, how does a framer’s position in and experience with an organization affect his or her capacity to motivate change? How does a framer use his or her knowledge regarding an issue or situation to motivate change? Framing theory lacks conceptual tools for evaluating a framer’s unique characteristics, which can help (or hurt) his or her framing.

To address this limitation, I draw on Fligstein’s (2001) concept of *social skill*. The concept of social skill posits that some actors are “better at attaining cooperation than others because some people will be better at making sense of a particular situation and produce shared meaning for others” (Fligstein, 2001, p. 16) to influence or change institutions. The concept of social skill should not be confounded with an actor’s manners or schmoozing skills. Rather, social skill refers to an actor’s role in processes of change, such as reframing a situation or remaining neutral. Social skill could help reveal a leader’s role during instructional reform.

To explain change processes, sociologists use the concept of social skill to analyze framers who promote ways of understanding issues and attempt to create resonance as a way to mobilize others. The concept of social skill accounts for an actor’s knowledge and awareness of an organization, including current conditions, strengths, and challenges. Socially skilled framers strategically manipulate logics to promote, shape, or block institutional change. Fligstein’s concept of social skill is particularly useful for examining coaches’ capacity as framers during periods of reform (Cooney, 2007; Fligstein, 2001). Social skill can help analyze how coaches and teachers interact, manipulating policy’s rules and ideas. Furthermore, the concept of social skill enables us to see how leaders work towards developing common understandings within an organization to promote responses to external pressures, such as policy messages.

My dissertation research examines coach-teacher framing interactions and coaches’ social skill; this reveals how reading coaches affect reform efforts by engaging with policy messages and shaping teachers’ understanding of and response to policy. On the one hand, a coach’s socially skilled framing of reading policy could encourage teachers to accept its ideas and regulations, thereby promoting reform. On the other hand, a different, less socially skilled, framing of the same policy could lead to rejection of the initiative. This points to the way in which coach’s social skill could influence how teachers come to understand a policy, as well as whether or not they are persuaded to enact or follow the policy’s ideas and rules.

### *Investigating Coaches as Intermediaries*

Reading coaches, positioned as intermediaries linking the state and district policy levels with teachers in schools, are institutional entrepreneurs who proffer ideas from the environment and attempt to motivate changes in classroom practice (Coburn, 2004; Spillane, et al., 2002). However, researchers have not examined coaches' relationship with the institutional environment or how coaches frame logics to motivate change. First, researchers have not paid attention to how coaches engage with and draw upon logics of reading instruction. These logics can be carried by policy, instructional materials, and professional publications (Coburn, 2001a). We also know little about how coaches take advantage of their access to particular logics in their interactions with teachers? How do coaches frame logics to motivate changes in classroom practice? Second, the coaching literature has just begun to explicate coaches' multiple roles in implementation, including the mechanisms by which coaches encourage or block reform. We lack an understanding of the types of strategic activities that coaches use while working with teachers. For example, how do coaches draw upon their awareness of conditions in schools, including the school's academic achievement level and teachers' current classroom practices, to persuade teachers to adopt elements of reading policy? How do coaches serve as socially skilled actors?

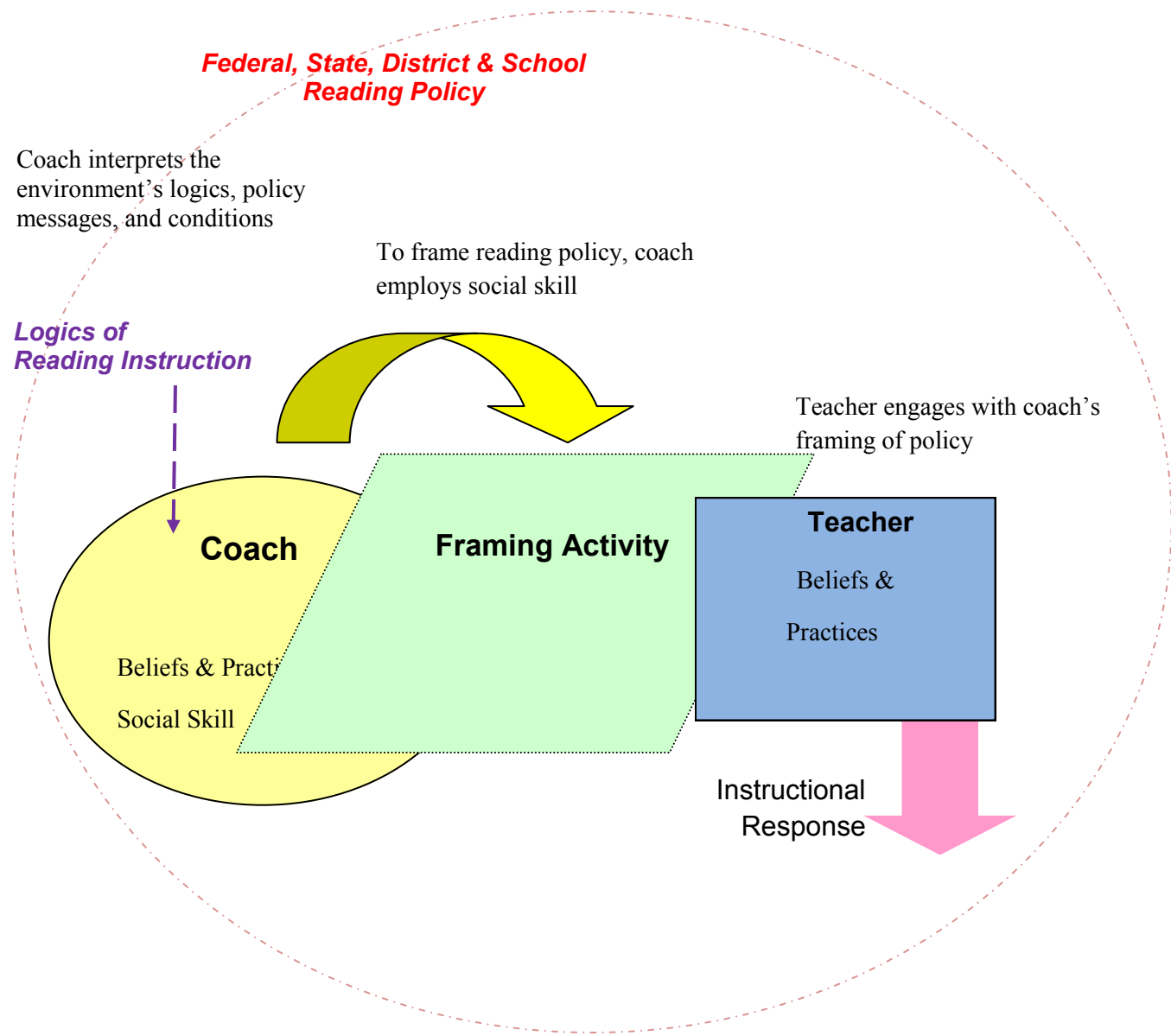
My dissertation draws on neo-institutional and framing theory to investigate coaches' role in interpreting, packaging, and disseminating policy messages to persuade teachers to change their instructional practices. These theories permit an analysis of how the actors within organizations manipulate ideas and rules from the environment. Neo-institutional theory draws attention to the structures enabling and constraining school reform, including the logics of reading instruction. Framing theory characterizes how coaches use the sets of ideas from logics to motivate change, and the theory enables me to grapple with issues of coach-teacher interaction. Together, these theories link the macro and micro levels to study coaches' involvement in efforts to alter the patterns of teaching and learning in schools. By attending to coaches' connections with the environment and their tactics to persuade teachers to shift their practice, I uncover how coaches serve as institutional entrepreneurs. My dissertation aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do coaches engage with logics of reading instruction?
- 2) How do coaches serve as policymakers at the district level?
- 3) How do coaches frame logics of reading instruction to teachers?
- 4) How, if at all, does coaches' framing influence teachers' reading instruction?

### **Theoretical Framework**

To address these research questions, my dissertation study draws on conceptual tools from neo-institutional theory and framing theory. To illuminate coaches' role in framing policy to motivate changes in classroom practice, this research is guided by a conceptual model, shown in Figure 1. In the following section, I discuss how this model depicts coaches' relationship with the broader institutional environment, attends to their strategic work with teachers, and accounts for teachers' responses to coaches' framing.

Figure 1  
*Coach-Teacher Framing*



Aligned with neo-institutional theory's perspective on the open relationship between organizations and the environment, Figure 1 looks outward to the institutional environment, including its logics of reading instruction (Spillane & Burch, 2006). I use neo-institutional theory's concept of the field, comprised of "all of the relevant organizations from the point of view of actors in any given organization" (Fligstein, 1991, p. 313). This model also represents how coaches encounter those logics from the environment, affecting how teachers engage with policy. I argue that factoring in the environment will advance our understanding of instructional reform's ground-level processes, tucked inside the technical core of schools. Logics, as the guiding principles and taken for granted ideas about teaching and learning, reside in the environment, yet they penetrate schools as organizations to shape coaches' and teachers' work in substantive ways (Coburn, 2004; Kellogg, 2009).

Constituted of rules, ideas, and beliefs, the institutional environment affects—and is affected by—organizations and actors in many ways (Scott, et al., 2000). In this model, the environment (inclusive of federal, state, district, and school level policy domains) provides logics to schools and plays a pivotal role in implementation by organizing and structuring the core activities of teaching and learning (Scott, 1987; Spillane & Burch, 2006). The logics of reading instruction help define what is appropriate in a particular context. For example, policy messages from the environment carry logics that shape coaches' beliefs and practices. District policy mandating the adoption of particular types of instructional materials for English language learners could constrain coaches' work, contributing to coaches recommending those materials to teachers. Furthermore, my model positions coaches as surrounded by the institutional environment; coaches draw on logics from the environment while working with teachers. Coaches' connection to the environment helps influence which messages they engage with. For instance, coaches who worked in Reading First schools during the early-2000's and encountered messages about using highly specified instructional materials and particular assessments may have tighter linkages to accountability-centered logics of reading instruction. Coaches with access to the accountability-centered logic may work to pressure teachers to teach reading in ways aligned with the principles and practices associated with that logic.

This model also accounts for coaches' situated interpretation of ideas proffered by different levels of the education system (Coburn, 2004). According to Weick's (1995) theorizing on sensemaking, coaches draw on pre-existing beliefs, practices, and conditions to interpret policy. This means that the district and school context shapes coaches' understanding of policy. For this reason, this study considers coaches' pre-existing beliefs and practices, as well as their interpretation of policy. Then coaches must decide how to respond to reading policy and how to advance its ideas. Importantly, coaches' interpretation of policy affects their selection and adoption of framing tactics. In this way, a coach's interpretation of a policy could modulate how he or she frames its instructional ideas to teachers.

At the school level, Figure 1's parallelogram depicts coaches' framing of ideas about reading instruction to teachers. While framing policy messages, a coach interacts with teachers, spreading his or her interpretation of the policy. The goal of this framing is to motivate teachers toward particular types of instructional change. For example, the coach may try to frame messages about how teachers should structure their reading block in a way that matches how

those teachers are currently teaching. This type of framing would assure teachers that they only need to make minor adjustments to their classroom practice. The curved arrow, extending to the parallelogram, represents how coaches act strategically by using their social skill. In this way, the model shows how coaches with different connections to the environment and pre-existing beliefs and practices may use different tactics to motivate instructional reform.

A square, located at the right-hand side of the diagram, represents teachers who engage with ideas about reading policy from numerous sources, ranging from the state's English Language Arts framework to coaches' frames (Coburn, 2005). Teachers gain access to ideas about instruction from coaches' frames, rather than from 'raw' or unprocessed policy stemming from its source (e.g., state standards or the district's reading plan and instructional materials). In this manner, teachers interact with their coach's interpretation of a policy, and the coach's interpretation may differ from the policy's original intent. Once again, teachers use pre-existing beliefs and practices to construct a dynamic understanding of the reading policy frame. Finally, teachers may try to adopt the policy, and the down arrow represents responses to coaches' frames. For instance, a teacher may elect to respond by rejecting, by making minor adjustments to their practice, or by fundamentally restructuring their practice.

### **Dissertation Overview**

In the dissertation that follows, I argue that coaches functioned as intermediaries who link the environment's ideas with actors within schools. In so doing, they shaped both district policy and teachers' classroom practice. Their actions were both enabled and constrained by logics in the environment. While interacting with teachers, coaches strategically framed messages about the content and pedagogy of reading instruction. Coaches' framing incorporated the principles and practices of the environment's logics. Coaches employed socially skilled tactics in an attempt to persuade teachers to respond positively to the demands of an ambitious reading reform. Coaches' framing served to influence teachers' responses to certain aspects of the new reading program. Thus, I explain the links between logics, coaches, and instructional reform.

After presenting the methodology for my dissertation study in chapter 2, I argue in chapter 3 that two logics, Accountability First and Just Read, influenced coaches' work and reading instruction. I show that coaches encountered these logics from an assortment of carriers, including actors, policy, and instructional materials. Through individual and social encounters, coaches actively pulled down logics of reading instruction. Next, I begin a two-chapter elucidation of how these logics shape coaches' actions. In chapter 4, I delve into the nature of coaches' work at the district level. I argue that coaches served as district level policymakers who employed logics of reading instruction to create rules, systems, instructional materials, and trainings to structure classroom practice. In chapter 5, I use framing theory to uncover coaches' political work within schools. I argue that coaches actively drew upon logics from the environment to frame reading policy for teachers. By portraying how three coaches employed a set of tactics to motivate change, this analysis operationalizes the concept of social skill. In chapter 6, I turn attention to the content and pedagogy of teachers' reading instruction. I describe how teachers responded to coaches' frames, including how teachers incorporated elements of the new reading program. I argue that teachers' adoption of the content and pedagogy of the new reading program was influenced by the nature of their coach's reading policy frames. In



particular, coaches' framing on the district's new instructional materials persuaded teachers to refer to those materials, resulting in changes in teachers' instructional methods and routines. Coaches' framing of Accountability First resulted in teachers conducting standards-based instruction and test preparation activities. Finally, the dissertation closes with implications for theory, policy, and practice. I explain how this study extends our understanding of actors' dynamic role in linking structure and agency during periods of institutional change and emphasize how this dissertation advances our understanding of coaches' role as instructional leaders in the context of reform.

My dissertation bridges the gap between the macro and micro levels to explicate how the institutional environment influences actors' practices during the socially constructed process of instructional reform. I use the case of coaching to understand the microprocesses of implementation. With careful consideration of how coaches engage with and respond to logics from the environment, I reveal the role of reading coaches as intermediaries in the education system, thereby extending our understanding of coaching as a policy lever for reform.

## Chapter 2 Methodology

To explain how the institutional environment affects reading coaches' work, this dissertation study aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) How do coaches engage with logics of reading instruction?; 2) How do coaches serve as policymakers at the district level?; 3) How do coaches frame logics of reading instruction to teachers?; 4) How, if at all, does coaches' framing influence teachers' reading instruction? My study of coaches' role as intermediaries in reform was guided by an interpretivist theoretical perspective. My interpretivist perspective led me to pay close attention to actors' understandings of instructional policy and their work conditions and practices. I conducted an in-depth, qualitative study of reading coaches' work (Lin, 1998). Due to the state of the coaching literature, it was necessary to adopt an exploratory approach in order to advance our understanding of the relationship between policy, coaching, and implementation.

To investigate coaching, I used the case study approach (Crotty, 1998). My study is comprised of nested cases, beginning with the macro-level case of the field of reading instruction and moving down to the micro-level case of coach-teacher framing and teachers' classroom practice (Ragin, 1992). These nested cases afford an examination of the interplay between the environment's logics of reading instruction and coaches' work on the ground. I attend to the environment and its logics, at the macro-level, to understand how rules and ideas related to reading instruction enable and constrain coaches' work and classroom practice in this district. And at the micro-level, I use the coach-teacher frame to characterize strategic activities occurring during coaching. Additionally, I use the case of teachers' reading instruction to determine the consequences of coaches' framing.

### *Site Selection*

I gathered data in one purposively sampled district. I studied a single district because this enabled me to conduct an in-depth analysis of a district's coaching model and its approach to literacy instruction. Collecting data within one district permitted me see how a district's approach to reading instruction and a single model of coaching are implemented in different schools. Thus, I could determine how school conditions shape reform and coaching. To select the district, I conducted informational interviews with district administrators and coaches in four school districts in California in February and March of 2010. I asked these actors about their coaching model, approach to reading instruction, and plans for the following school year. I also conducted online research on several other districts' coaching system and reading programs, as well as their plans for instructional improvement. Due to California's education budget crisis, administrators from a couple districts were unable to assure me that they would continue to employ coaches during the subsequent school year.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, it was necessary to sample a district with a stable coaching model.

Based on information gleaned from interviews and online research, I selected Lincoln Unified, a medium-sized urban school district in Northern California.<sup>7</sup> First, I chose Lincoln

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<sup>6</sup> <http://californiawatch.org/k-12/majority-states-largest-districts-shrink-school-calendar-amid-budget-crisis>

<sup>7</sup> Lincoln Unified is a pseudonym to maintain the confidentiality of the district.

Unified because it had an established practice of funding and using site-based reading coaches. Each of its eleven elementary schools had a reading coach who supported teachers' ongoing professional development and remediates students.<sup>8</sup> Second, in August 2010, this district launched Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), a new approach to elementary reading instruction.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, I was poised to study this reform's first year of implementation in the district's schools, providing the opportunity to see how coaches and teachers engaged with and then responded to a new policy. This was useful because it enabled me to capture coaches' activities to motivate change in the direction of TCRWP. The program was an ambitious approach to reading instruction that used the pillars of mini-lessons, independent reading, and conferencing to teach students to be engaged, proficient readers. TCRWP had a set of instructional materials that promoted students spending extended amounts of time with eyes on authentic literature.

During the year of the study, Lincoln Unified served approximately 3600 students across its 11 public elementary schools. The district's student body was diverse: 26 percent African American, 18 percent Hispanic or Latino, 8 percent Asian, and 31 percent white.<sup>10</sup> Approximately 39% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch. The district was facing pressures from both the state and federal accountability systems. Specifically, subgroups had failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), and the district was in Year 3 of Program Improvement.<sup>11</sup>

To understand coaches' role in Lincoln Unified, I used purposive sampling aligning with my theoretical framework to select three reading coaches who worked with teachers in their school (Patton, 2002). Neo-institutional theory and the implementation literature emphasize the ways in which actors' pre-existing beliefs, practices, and knowledge or awareness of an organization shape their connections with the environment and affect their work within organizations (Coburn, 2004, 2006; Fligstein, 2001; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Therefore, each coach's beliefs, work practices, and experiences in different organizations mattered for my study. With this in mind, I selected three coaches with similar levels of experience working in this district who had been exposed to the district's approaches to reading instruction and reform. At the same time, I sampled coaches with a range of other professional experiences, including teaching experience, education consulting, and working as a reform facilitator. I also considered the academic performance level of each of the district's 11 elementary schools. I was interested in concentrating my data collection on coaches working in the district's lower performing schools because I wanted to see how accountability pressures—likely to be felt more keenly in low performing schools—influenced coaches' work.

To select coaches, I interviewed 10 of the district's 11 coaches in September of 2010 about their work practices, experiences in the district, and beliefs and attitudes about reading instruction and school reform.<sup>12</sup> It was necessary for me to determine how each coach had

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<sup>8</sup> Most coaches have been certified as Reading Recovery instructors. Reading Recovery is a method of one-on-one reading intervention for first grade students. This approach uses authentic literature and requires extensive training.

<sup>9</sup> <http://rwproject.tc.columbia.edu/about.html>

<sup>10</sup> California's current population is approximately 7% African American and 37% Hispanic or Latino.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ed->

[data.k12.ca.us/Navigation/fsTwoPanel.asp?bottom=/profile.asp%3Flevel%3D06%26reportNumber%3D16](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/Navigation/fsTwoPanel.asp?bottom=/profile.asp%3Flevel%3D06%26reportNumber%3D16)

<sup>12</sup> The coach who was not interviewed informed me that she solely worked with students and was considering leaving the district.

conceptualized his or her role and the types of work activities he or she carried out. Say why. I wanted to maximize contrasts among coaches' professional training and experiences, but I was interested in holding constant coaches' work routines and knowledge or awareness of the current reading reform, TCRWP. Based upon the characteristics of coaches' schools and each coach's work practices, I selected three focal coaches: Bess, Tanya, and Lauren. Table 1 provides details on the three coaches, including their professional training, teaching and coaching experience, and other professional experiences. The focal coaches had four to eight years of teaching experience in grades K-3, and they had two to four years of coaching experience in Lincoln Unified. Importantly, these three coaches focused on coaching teachers (in and out of the classroom) to promote the adoption of TCRWP, as opposed to providing intervention services to students. In this manner, the three coaches were similar with regard to their coaching routines. Two of the three focal coaches had teaching experience in districts other than Lincoln Unified.<sup>13</sup> And two of the three focal coaches had completed or were currently enrolled in the University of California-Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute, an administrative credential program. Additionally, these three coaches all reported and were observed as having a solid understanding of the demands of the new program and a plan for working with teachers on adopting the program. Thus, the focal coaches would be carrying out work related to the new program, enabling me to obtain data on how these three coaches worked to persuade teachers to adopt the new reading program. In contrast, a few (non-focal) coaches mentioned that they did not feel prepared to coach teachers on the new program, and I decided to not collect in-depth data on those coaches.

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<sup>13</sup> None of the coaches had taught in states other than California.

Table 1  
*Focal Coaches' Professional Experiences*

<b>Coach/School</b>	<b>Experience in Lincoln Unified</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; Coaching Experience</b>	<b>Teacher Credentialing Program</b>	<b>Other professional experiences</b>
<b>Bess/ Linden Elementary</b>	5 years	7 years teaching/ 3 years coaching	Private College's Credential Program	-District's teacher-leader on EL issues -Administrative credential from a public University -Reform facilitator for a Bay Area School Reform organization
<b>Tanya/ Davis Elementary</b>	5 years	8 years teaching/ 2 years coaching	Teach for America Credential Program	-National Board certified-teacher -Reform consultant in a large urban school district
<b>Lauren/ Taylor Elementary</b>	11 years	4 years teaching (also worked for 3 years as an afterschool instructor in the district) / 4 years coaching	Public University's Credential Program	-Reading Recovery certificate -Enrolled in a public University's administrative credential program

Each focal coach's school had a diverse student population and was working towards closing the reading achievement gap between high and low socio-economic status students, as well as white and non-white students. As indicated in Table 2, about 50 percent of Linden's students qualified for free or reduced lunch, and half of the students were students of color. The school had recently made large gains in its Academic Performance Index, but it was still trying to reach the state's benchmark of 800 (out of a maximum 1000). The school had a bilingual program with instruction in Spanish; this program was highly desired by parents across the city.

The school had a new principal who focused on intervention programs, and its coach focused on data-based decision making.

Table 2

*Demographic Information on Focal Elementary Schools*

<b>School</b>	<b>Enrollment (# students)</b>	<b>Students Qualifying for Free/reduced Lunch (%)</b>	<b>Students of Color (%)</b>	<b>2010 California Academic Performance Index</b>	<b>Bilingual Program</b>
<i>Linden (Bess)</i>	407	52%	50%	797	Yes
<i>Davis (Tanya)</i>	299	55%	51%	763	Yes
<i>Taylor (Lauren)</i>	316	44%	46%	851	No

Davis Elementary was similarly diverse, serving over 50 percent students of color. With the lowest Academic Performance Index (API) of the three focal schools, Davis Elementary was under significant pressure to raise its API, particularly since it hadn't made major gains in recent years. Davis had also adopted a bilingual program. The school's principal tended to deal with managerial and behavioral issues, rather than issues of curriculum and instruction. Tanya promoted standards based instruction and test preparation activities at Davis. Finally, Taylor was the highest performing of the three elementary schools; its API was 851. The school had recently won the California Distinguished Schools Award for academic achievement.<sup>14</sup> Only 46 percent of its students were students of color. However, in comparison to the other focal schools, Taylor enrolled a greater proportion of African American students. Taylor's principal conducted classroom walkthroughs and appeared to monitor teachers' lesson plans.

To collect data on the impact of coaching on classroom practice, I also sampled teachers who worked within each focal coach's school. To understand how teachers in each elementary school were implementing the new reading program, I focused on teachers at the first and third grade levels. I predicted that coaches would present frames with different content to first and third grade teachers because those grade levels focus on different elements of reading. Specifically, first grade emphasizes decoding instruction so students learn how to read, while third grade gives more attention to comprehension in the transition toward reading to learn (Pressley, Allington, et al., 2001; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).<sup>15</sup> I reasoned that collecting data at both the first and third grade classrooms would help me see similarities and differences in the implementation of TCRWP at those distinctive grade levels. In addition, I hypothesized that coaches might utilize different framing strategies with first and third grade teachers because these grade levels are differentially linked to the state's policy apparatus. Third grade participates in the California's standardized test program (STAR), but first grade is an untested grade level. By collecting data on teachers in tested and untested grade levels, I

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/41>

[http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~snow/Aspen\\_snow.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~snow/Aspen_snow.html)

reasoned that I would be able to examine how testing's pressures shapes coaches' framing, the nature of coach-teacher interactions, and teachers' responses to framing.

I only collected data on teachers' reading instruction in English. As a result, I did not attempt to study the implementation of TCRWP in the context of the district's bilingual, two-way immersion program, which conducts language arts instruction in Spanish and English. At Linden and Davis Elementary, there were two teachers at each grade level who taught reading workshop entirely in English. At Taylor Elementary, all three teachers in each grade level taught in English, so I needed to sample two teachers at each grade level who interacted with the reading coach. I asked the coach, teachers, and the principal questions about the first and third grade teachers' experiences with coaching in order to sample teachers. In the case of first grade, one of the teachers was a long term substitute teacher who rarely interacted with the coach. And among the third grade teachers, one of the teachers was a veteran teacher who tended to reject coaching and also preferred to not participate in the study. I excluded those two teachers from my study. Figure 2 depicts how I collected in-depth data on three coaches and twelve teachers in three of Lincoln Unified's elementary schools. Most of the teachers in this study were relatively experienced; 9 of the 12 teachers had greater than five years of teaching experience. However, 2 of the 12 teachers were first year teachers. 11 of the 12 sampled elementary school teachers were female, and nine of the 12 teachers were white.

Figure 2  
*Model for Data Collection*

Lincoln Unified School District											
Coach Bess				Coach Tanya				Coach Lauren			
Linden Elementary				Davis Elementary				Taylor Elementary			
1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3rd	3rd	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3rd	3rd	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3rd	3rd
Teresa	Melissa	Grace	Magda	Connie	Dorothea	Leah	Anne	Robin	Jackie	Eli	Meredith

### Data Collection

I collected data in Lincoln Unified from May 2010 until June 2011; Appendix A provides a timeline of research activities. Collecting data over an extended time period gave me deep access to actors across the district, and, in certain ways, it also embedded me in the coaches' professional community. For instance, after some meetings and trainings, coaches would ask me to share my impressions of particular discussions or activities. And coaches would occasionally email me to notify me about upcoming events at their sites. However, I attempted to maintain some distance from coaches and teachers to function as a neutral observer during data collection

activities. I followed IRB protocols and reminded informants that participation in my study was voluntary. Data collection was iterative. When possible, I used data from one method to illuminate data from other methods. In this way, observational notes of coaches' work informed—or 'talked to'—the interview transcripts from coaches and teachers by agreeing or disagreeing with each other. I attended to the ways in which actors had differing beliefs or perceptions of a situation, event, or practice. For instance, I considered the extent to which principals, coaches, and teachers had similar (or different) impressions of the district's four day professional development session on TCRWP.

To study how reading coaches served as intermediaries in reform, I employed the observations, interviews, and document analysis. In the following sections, I explain how and why I used particular data collection methods to gather the necessary data to address my research questions on logics of reading instruction, coaches' work, and the relationship between coaches' framing and teachers' classroom practice.

### *Observations*

To identify the logics of reading instruction existing in Lincoln Unified, I observed the district's professional development sessions addressing English Language Arts.<sup>16</sup> Over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, there were four district-sponsored sessions about appropriate and effective ways to teach reading. These sessions ranged from a four-day training in August of 2010 launching the new reading program to a one-hour workshop on how to differentiate instruction during a professional development day. While observing these trainings, I took field notes on the content and nature of the professional development sessions. I attended to the sets of ideas that were shared because that helped me capture the sets of ideas, or logics, that were being invoked. I noted who was sharing what types of ideas about reading instruction, and I tried to capture quotes of what actors were saying about reading instruction and the new reading program. I chose to focus on who was promoting ideas because this would provide me with data on the actors advancing different logics. In other words, which coach or principal or district administrator was emphasizing accountability issues or the tenets of the new reading program.

During the fall of 2010, I noticed that coaches were engaging in framing at the district-level during their regular meetings. For this reason, I began observing the district's monthly coaches' meetings, which were typically three hours long but a few were full-day planning sessions. These meetings aimed to support and train reading coaches and were facilitated by the lead coach. This provided data on coaches' connections to logics of reading instruction, as well as their encounters with reading policy. I chose to observe coaches' meeting to learn about coaches' role as district-level actors who design and modify district-wide systems and programs. While observing coach collaborative meetings, I considered the ways in which decision making

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<sup>16</sup>For example, in August 2010, K-5 coaches and teachers participated in a district-sponsored training on the Calkins model of reading instruction; this training was facilitated by representatives from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP).



was delegated to the coaches by district administrators. While observing these meetings, I took field notes on the ways coaches talk about reading policy and instructional reform. Once again, I concentrated on who was promoting which types of ideas about reading instruction. I hypothesized that data on coaches' district-level framing would help me determine how coaches were tied to the institutional environment and its logics.

I also collected extensive observational data to answer questions about coaches' framing of logics of reading instruction. It was critical for me to observe how coaches interacted with teachers, promoting particular ideas about reading instruction, because I needed to capture the content and nature of coaches' framing. To obtain data on how coaches frame logics of reading instruction to teachers, I observed the three focal coaches' work. I carried out three observation cycles in which I shadowed each coach in the fall, winter, and spring. My observations were on consecutive days, typically Monday through Thursday. As shown in Table 3, I shadowed each coach for approximately 15 school days distributed over the course of the 2010-2011 school year. It was necessary to collect observational data over the course of the school year in order to detect any differences in coaches' work routines during different phases of the school year. For instance, how coaches supported the early phases of implementation of TCRWP in September and October was likely different than how they balanced the demands of testing and TCRWP in the month prior to the administration of the high-stakes state test.

Table 3  
*Number of Observations of Each Focal Coach*

<b>Coach</b>	<b>Observations (# of school days)</b>
Bess	19
Tanya	15
Lauren	13
<i>Total</i>	<i>47</i>

While shadowing each coach, I observed a variety of coaching activities (e.g., in-classroom support, facilitating meetings, delivering professional development, and sorting instructional materials) that address different instructional issues (e.g., content and pedagogy of decoding and comprehension instruction, assessment, and ELD). I collected data on coaches' work from their arrival on site prior to the beginning of the school day, during recess and lunch, staff meetings, and even after-school activities. I chose to collect observational data on coaches' formal and informal work practices because I wanted to see all components of coaches' work and different forms of coach-teacher framing occurring in different contexts. When I shadowed coaches, I positioned myself next to, or preferably just behind, the coach, tried to remain neutral and quiet, yet friendly, while watching a coach's interactions with teachers or other actors. During a few observations, coaches asked me to step away for a few minutes to give them some privacy. My observation cycles enabled me to view different types of interaction between coaches and teachers and coaches' tactics for promoting particular ideas about instruction.

I wrote "behavioristic and concrete" (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 93) field notes in notebooks describing the coaches' work activities and coach-teacher interactions, as well as

general observations about the school and its teachers. The field notes noted how coaches positioned themselves as leaders who lacked formal authority, included quotations of the coach's framing utterances, and documented how teachers engaged with coaches and their ideas. This mode of data collection provided me with documentation of the content and characteristics of coaches' framing activities. Each evening, I expanded the field notes in a Word document.

Finally, I observed teachers' reading instruction to obtain data on the relationship between coaches' framing and teachers' classroom practice. The classroom observation data enabled me to answer questions about teachers' responses to the new reading program, as well as to coaching. To determine teachers' responses to TCRWP, I observed twelve teachers in three elementary schools. Over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, I observed English language arts instruction in first and third grade classrooms. I visited each classroom during the fall, winter, and spring, enabling me to observe teachers three times over the course of the school year. When visiting teachers' classrooms, I sat at the side or back of the classroom and remained for the entirety of the English Language Arts block. Occasionally, I also observed other subject areas and activities, including math, guest speakers, and visits to the classroom library. During observations, I focused on how teachers were adopting or incorporating practices related to policy messages about reading instruction, implementation of TCRWP, and evidence of coaches' framing. I wrote field notes in a notebook describing the content and pedagogy of teachers' instruction. First, the content of reading instruction involved what skills and strategies teachers were presenting. Second, the pedagogy of reading instruction referred to how teachers were structuring instruction and the methods of instruction.

My field notes concentrated on how the teacher was addressing the primary components of TCRWP: mini-lessons, independent reading, conferencing, and use of the program's instructional materials. I chose to focus on these components because the district's formal policy emphasized the implementation of those aspects of TCRWP. Thus, I noted the topic of teachers' mini-lesson; this helped me see patterns in the content that teachers were covering. I also noted whether or not there was evidence that the teacher was following TCRWP's instructional materials. For example, if I saw a teacher referring to the Units of Study teachers' guide before, during, or after a lesson, that served as evidence that the teacher's instruction was congruent with or influenced by the instructional materials. I recorded the time allotted for independent reading and judged the class' engagement level for the independent reading activity. If the teacher conducted reading conferences with students during the workshop block, I shadowed the teacher during his or her conferences, noting the content of his or her meetings with students.

### *Interviews*

I interviewed coaches, teachers, principals, and district administrators in Lincoln Unified to learn about the role of coaching in bridging the macro-level policy environment with micro-level classroom practice. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. First, I interviewed 10 of the district's 11 coaches to obtain information on their background, training, experiences, and pre-existing beliefs; these interviews were 35-70 minutes in length. The semi-structured interviews attended to the coach's background and training, sources of ongoing professional learning, their roles in this district and school, and their awareness of and connections to different waves of reading policy (e.g., balanced literacy, basic skills, standards

based, and TCRWP). Each of these waves of policy drew upon different logics of reading instruction. While balanced literacy promoted authentic literature and skills-focused instruction, standards based reading policy recommended that teachers cover the state's content standards. The district's new reading plan asked teachers to adopt TCRWP, and this program was primarily aligned with the Just Read model of reading instruction. I opted to interview coaches about their experiences with different types of policy to gain data on each coach's connections with logics of reading instruction. This round of interviewing also provided me with broad information about coaches across the district; this permitted me to identify three focal coaches who worked extensively with teachers in their schools.

To obtain information on coaches' social skill, I interviewed the focal coaches on two occasions about how they strategically selected and employed framing tactics. These interviews were approximately 60 minutes long. I developed an interview protocol incorporating descriptive and structural questions (Spradley, 1979) on: 1) how coaches worked with teachers to persuade them to change their practice; and 2) how the coach was aware of current conditions in the district and their school, as well as their awareness of different teachers' needs. For example, I asked coaches to tell me about a time that they were successful in changing a teacher's approach to literacy instruction and what helped them in that effort. I also asked the reverse question: Tell me about a time you struggled to change a teacher's approach and what were the obstacles? Interviews also asked coaches to explain how and why they chose particular framing tactics that I'd noticed in their work with teachers. It was important to conduct interviews with coaches about their framing because these interviews provided information about each coach's perception of how he or she was interacting with teachers. These interviews helped me see how each coach was strategically, or purposefully, working to motivate change.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with focal teachers and principals from the three elementary schools to learn about teachers' approach to reading instruction, as well as how teachers and principals interacted with the school's coach. I elected to interview teachers because I needed to hear about teachers' perceptions of coaching and TCRWP. Even though coaches told me a lot about their interactions with teachers, I needed to hear the other side of the story. In these interviews, I asked first and third grade teachers about their perceptions regarding workshop and the practices that I'd observed. For example, what led a teacher toward a mode of instruction (e.g., whole class, direct instruction) or type of instructional material? How, and to what extent, was the coach involved or involved with promoting a particular mode of instruction (e.g., whole class, direct instruction) or type of instructional material? The interviews with principals asked questions about the coach's position in the school, the principal's beliefs about what coaches should do to promote reform, and the school's goals for instructional reform.

Finally, I conducted interviews with four district-level administrators, including the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent. I chose to interview these administrators to learn more about the district's formal structures, budgeting, and relationship with the state department of education. In these interviews, I asked about the history of the district's coaching model and the district's decision making process for selecting TCRWP, as well as each administrator's beliefs about coaches' role in reform. This set of interviews helped me characterize the district's approach to instructional reform and provided me with fine-grained data on the district's formal structure.

### *Document Analysis*

With the aim of characterizing current reading policies and their logics, I gathered and analyzed 171 documents on Reading and English Language Arts instruction from the district and school levels. The documents ranged from the state's framework for English Language Arts and materials from district-sponsored professional development sessions to memos from principals and coaches on how to set up classroom libraries and conduct test prep. These documents were carriers of institutional logics that contained policy messages about appropriate and effective ways to teach reading. I collected and analyzed 23 documents from district wide professional development sessions on TCRWP and 72 coach-created documents, which had been primarily used in coaches' meetings. I also collected and analyzed 76 documents from the three focal elementary schools; most of these artifacts were introduced by the coach in staff and grade level meetings. I started to see reinforcement of coaches' frames in school-level documents, so it was important to collect and analyze documents about reading instruction that were handed out to teachers. The agendas and materials from professional development sessions, staff meetings, and grade level meetings provided information about logics of reading instruction in the district and its schools. I chose to analyze this set of documents because they included information about the district's formal policy and each school's objectives and plans. It was necessary to analyze these documents because they provided evidence on how rules and ideas from the broader environment were permeating this district and its schools.

### **Data Analysis**

To answer my research questions, I used the analytic techniques of coding, creating matrices, and writing memos. I systematically coded interview transcripts and observation field notes in NVivo8; I created 38 nodes in the data analysis program. Then I created coding reports for nodes; this helped me organize and collect multiple instances of a phenomenon and determine patterns across cases. I made matrices to compare and contrast cases, enabling me to track distinctions among logics, coaches, schools, and teachers. To track themes during data collection, I wrote memos addressing issues, such as the structure of professional development sessions, how each coach interacted with teachers, and the nature of reading instruction and classroom management in different schools. Throughout analysis, I considered how one source of data matched or clashed with data from other sources, such as the degree to which formal policy documents aligned with what coaches were telling teachers. While coding, creating matrices, and drafting descriptive, analytic, and reflective memos, I remained attuned to disconfirming evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also considered alternate explanations for preliminary findings.

### *Logics of Reading Instruction*

The first strand of my dissertation grapples with questions about the field of reading instruction and how coaches were linked to logics from the broader environment. To investigate these issues about the relationship between the institutional environment and actors within

organizations, I needed to identify and characterize the logics of reading instruction reaching actors in this district. To do so, I analyzed documents, observation field notes, and interview transcripts to derive the logics of reading instruction that enabled and constrained practices in the district (Russell, 2010). I started to notice references to two distinct models of reading instruction in documents and in actors' work practices and interview responses. I read the data several times in order to develop "a theoretical typology" (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 808) of two models of reading instruction: Accountability First and Just Read.

After inductively surfacing the two logics, I searched for the ways in which administrators, principals, teachers, and, most importantly, coaches were linked to the field of reading instruction, as well as how they invoked or instantiated the field's logics of reading. I gathered evidence of actors' experiences in credential programs and other work experiences that provided them with access to the broader environment, including state education policy, non-system actors, and research on reading instruction. This analysis let me learn about the ways in which logics from the environment actors were reaching actors in the district. I identified 276 logic-actor connections. I refer to the logic-actor connection as a lived logic because it was an instance of a logic that was actively connected to an actor. In other words, these logics were not just embedded in policy documents, they were apparent in actors' encounters, or connections, with the environment.

I copied the 276 lived logics into an Excel data table. I coded each lived logic for its type of carrier (e.g., policy, an actor, instructional materials, teacher credential program), as well as whether each lived logic was bolstered by regulative pressure. Then I conducted a thorough analysis of the corpus of lived logics to reveal patterns from across the district over the course of the 2010-2011 school year. I tabulated the proportion of lived logics that was carried by different means, that was accompanied by regulative pressure, and that was used at the district or school level. These analyses helped me see differences in the nature of the Accountability First and Just Read logics.

### *Coaches as Policymakers*

To answer questions about how coaches used logics of reading instruction while conducting district level work, I analyzed the nature of coaches' work in the coach collaborative meetings. First, I summarized the work activities for each meeting. I created a timeline that listed each meeting's activities. Then I coded how different activities reflected the principles and practices of Accountability First and Just Read, as two logics of reading instruction. I also coded how different actors were involved in bringing up different ideas about how to reform reading instruction in the district. Thus, I coded each discussion or activity from coach collaborative meetings as reflecting the principles and practices of Accountability First and Just Read. Finally, I created a matrix on seven cases of coaches' policymaking, and I included field note data on coaches' activities related to each case of policymaking work.

### *Coaches' Framing*

To understand coaches' strategic work in schools, I analyzed how coaches utilized various logics of reading instruction and how they conducted their coaching routines. I created within-case, conceptually clustered matrices of coaches' interactions with teachers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This type of matrix was filled with data on different aspects of coaches' interactions. These matrices helped me look within and across data on different logics of reading, forms of interaction (district-wide, grade level meeting, and one-on-one), and elements of literacy instruction (e.g., fluency, comprehension, writing) to identify analytic patterns. Additionally, I identified similarities and differences in the three coaches' work and their framing activities. For example, where did each coach engage in framing and how did each coach collaborate with his or her principal?

To analyze coaches' framing, I reviewed field notes on coach-teacher interactions to identify frames that advanced ideas about problems of reading instruction or shared solutions addressing an issue related to reading instruction. Each frame contained ideas about how teachers should or must teach reading, adopt the new reading program, or improve instruction. I identified 405 frames from the three focal coaches. Then I entered these coach-teacher frames into an Excel data table. To obtain fine-grained information on the nature of each frame, I employed a priori codes drawn from theoretical and empirical work on framing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The coding glossary in Appendix B includes a set of codes that are based on definitions from the conceptual and empirical framing literature. I conducted deductive coding for diagnostic and prognostic frames (Coburn, 2006; Snow, et al., 1986; Benford & Snow, 2000). The codes permitted me to characterize the nature of each coach's frames (Benford & Snow, 2000; Coburn, 2006; Snow, et al., 1986). Additionally, I matched each frame with the field's logics. I coded whether a frame was consistent with the principles and practices of Accountability First or Just Read. After coding each of the 405 frames along multiple dimensions, I calculated the proportion of frames aligned with Accountability First and Just Read and that had other features that had been previously coded.

### *Relationship between Coaches' Framing and Teachers' Reading Instruction*

For my analysis of classroom observation field notes, I used the reading workshop block as the unit of analysis. The district's reading plan asked teachers to incorporate an approximately 50 minute long workshop block for teaching reading skills and strategies. TCRWP specified that teachers should use the architecture of reading workshop, with teachers leading direct instruction and differentiating instruction to meet students' needs and students engaging in independent reading. After reading the classroom observation field notes, I identified 38 workshops led by the 12 elementary school teachers. I started noticing variability in whether workshop blocks included the different components from the architecture of reading workshop. For instance, some of the workshops introduced new reading strategies in a mini-lesson, while others only involved students conducting independent reading.

I listed these workshops in an Excel data table and coded each workshop for its incorporation of each of TCRWP's methods (e.g., mini-lesson, independent reading, conferencing, instructional materials); the element of reading instruction that it addressed (e.g.,

comprehension, decoding); whether or not the lesson aligned with the state's content standards; and links to coach's framing. I coded workshops for their alignment with state standards because this helped me track how instruction was tied to the Accountability First logic. For example, I coded a workshop that presented a mini-lesson on comprehension skills as providing comprehension instruction. Then I conducted within case and cross-case analysis. I wrote analytic memos on each teacher's set of reading workshops from across the school year to surface themes about the nature and characteristics of ELA instruction. I compared teachers' instruction within each school to draw out similarities and differences within each elementary school. Finally, I analyzed across the cases to compare patterns of instruction among classrooms and across schools. It was also necessary to check how teachers talked about their instruction, and I chose to review the teacher's interview transcript, specifically looking for how the teacher talked about his or her practice. I created a matrix with notes on each teacher's observed practice plus each teacher's beliefs and attitudes about reading instruction and, in particular, TCRWP and coaching.

This exploratory study of coaching in an urban school district used qualitative methods to obtain a range of data about logics of reading instruction, coaches' work, and teachers' classroom practice. On the one hand, this in-depth study employed fine grained data on actors' beliefs and practices in three elementary schools. The data, analysis, and findings from this research aim to advance our understanding of coaches' roles as intermediaries in reform and to extend framing theory. On the other hand, the findings from this case study are not fully generalizable to other states or districts. However, this dissertation's methodology does let me reveal critical findings about coaches' framing as a mechanism of policy implementation.

### Chapter 3

#### Logics of Reading: Accountability First and Just Read

This chapter portrays the nature of the logics that enabled and constrained practices in Lincoln Unified, including coaches' reform work and teachers' classroom practice. This chapter also shows how coaches, as intermediaries, encountered two logics of reading instruction. Neo-institutional theory provides a way to conceptualize the institutional environment and how its elements impact the technical core of organizations (Orton & Weick, 1990; Scott, 2001; Spillane & Burch, 2006; Weick, 1976). This theory's lenses can help reveal the relationship between education policy and teachers' classroom practice. Neo-institutional theory focuses on how institutions "provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2001, p. 48). *Logics* are the overarching principles influencing institutional structures and activities. To study the environment's logics, actors, and governance structures, neo-institutional theorists utilize the "organizational field" as a unit of analysis. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) defined an organizational field as the "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life" (p. 148). Field-level studies investigate issues such as how a field forms and how dominant logics change in a field (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003; Scott, 2000). Although neo-institutional theory's attention to field-level issues offers ways to study the history and values of institutions, it provides less guidance for studying how actors create and change institutions (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). For this reason, there are gaps in our understanding of how actors are linked to and engage with institutional logics.

For over thirty years, neo-institutional theory has been used to explicate the structures and activities of the education system. It is evident that districts and schools operate amidst a complex and turbulent institutional environment that attempts to improve teaching and learning to benefit students and our society. The institutional environment for reading instruction includes the federal, state, and district policy domains (Spillane & Burch, 2006). It also includes non-system actors, such as reform organizations (e.g., Teach for America and National Equity Project); groups advocating different approaches to literacy instruction (e.g., IRA and Reading Recovery); and universities with education credential programs that train and certify teachers, reading specialists, principals, and administrators (Coburn, 2005). Furthermore, the environment contains multiple logics of reading instruction that advance particular sets of ideas about reading instruction. These logics specify the nature of reading instruction, suggest appropriate ways to conceptualize the reading process and effective reading programs, and even characterize the role of schools, teachers, and instructional materials in supporting students' development as readers (Coburn, 2001a). The prominence of particular logics may rise and fall because, over time, actors have drawn upon different logics of reading instruction (Coburn, 2001a). While implementing Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) as part of the Lincoln District's new reading plan, actors encountered conflicting logics of reading instruction. In this chapter, I address the following questions: What logics of reading instruction were present in Lincoln District? How did coaches encounter these logics? I argue that the Accountability First and Just Read logics co-existed and issued conflicting messages about reading instruction. Coaches' connections to these logics from the environment were situated and dynamic.



## Findings

For over fifty years, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars have loudly debated what are the most appropriate and effective ways to teach reading (Chall, 1967; Pearson, 2004 & 2007). Research on the contentious topic of reading has highlighted how waves of reform have attempted to change reading instruction (Coburn, 2001a; Cuban, 1990; Pearson, 2004). A few researchers have used institutional theory to surface the logics of reading instruction that gained traction at particular historical moments, such as whole language and basic skills (Coburn, 2001a; Pearson, 2004). Here, I extend this line of work by explaining how logics of reading instruction co-existed and penetrated a district through different types of encounters and carriers.

### Logics of Reading Instruction

In Lincoln Unified, I identified two primary logics of reading instruction: Accountability First and Just Read. The **Accountability First**<sup>17</sup> logic emphasized instruction in alignment with the demands of state standards and testing to meet external goals, such as raising student achievement. In contrast, the **Just Read**<sup>18</sup> logic encouraged instruction that instills a love of reading for students. Providing formal and informal rules to structure action, these logics penetrated the district's structures and practices in different ways and helped guide the implementation of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), the district's ambitious new reading program. The Accountability First and Just Read logics arose from a specific historical period—nearly a decade after the passage of NCLB (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002).

The Accountability First and Just Read logics have differing goals and theories of change, as well as differing ideas about appropriate ways to teach reading, teachers' role, and how children learn how to read. Table 4 characterizes the principles of these two logics. These principles were derived from district policy documents, interviews with district administrators, coaches, and principals, and observations of coaches' meetings and district meetings on literacy instruction.

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<sup>17</sup> Accountability First leaned on principles from the accountability movement but was also influenced by structures and practices from Reading First policy.

<sup>18</sup> This logic's name was derived from actors' exhortations that children needed to "Just Read" high interest books in order to develop proficiency.

Table 4  
*Logics of Reading Instruction*

<b><i>Principles of the logic</i></b>	<b>Accountability First</b>	<b>Just Read</b>
<b><i>Goals for reading instruction</i></b>	-Prepare students for higher achievement on standardized tests	-Instill students with a life long love of books, reading, and learning
<b><i>Level of the system that the logic focused on</i></b>	-Relationship between state policy and schools	- Relationship between teachers and students
<b><i>Theory of change</i></b>	-Systemic reforms to raise achievement across schools (state-down)	-Working with one child at a time to promote his or her development as a reader (child-up)
<b><i>Role of teacher</i></b>	-Deliver standards based instruction and monitor student progress -Teacher has less autonomy in classroom and is expected to follow district or school reading plan -Teacher learning is treated in a behaviorist manner	-Promote students' engagement with books, guide discussions, and provide individualized instruction -Teacher has control over instruction and creates own plan for instruction -Teacher learning is treated in a constructivist manner
<b><i>Role of student</i></b>	-Complete ELA-assignments to gain proficiency with skills and standards -Demonstrate proficiency on state test	-Engage with text -Talk about his or her reading life
<b><i>Instructional practices</i></b>	-Use content standards and core reading programs to design and deliver direct instruction, guided practice, and skills practice	-Use high quality, high interest literature to design and teach mini lessons and conferences -Develop routines and systems for independent reading of leveled trade books
<b><i>Modes of assessment</i></b>	-Formal assessments, standards based assessments for monitoring purposes, district and state standardized tests	-Informal assessments, running records, observational data on student's reading behaviors
<b><i>Organization of reading program</i></b>	-Highly specified instructional materials, pacing calendars -Coverage of state standards prior to the high stakes assessment period is paramount	-Less specified instructional materials -Teachers adapt materials to meet students' needs and interests

<b>Instructional materials</b>	- Core reading programs, standards aligned instructional materials, test prep workbooks	-Trade books, TCRWP Units of Study, practitioner resource materials
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### *Accountability First*

The Accountability First logic treated reading instruction as a tool for raising students' academic proficiency. It focused on using standards-based reading instruction to improve standardized test scores to obtain legitimacy for schools. In this manner, its model of reading instruction was concerned with the relationship between federal, state, and district policy and student outcomes. It had a state-down theory of action in which pressure from the state would press into schools and teachers, thereby causing reform. The Accountability First logic tended to downplay the role or value of teachers' autonomy, as well as students' choice as readers.

First, at the district level, the ideas and rules from the Accountability First logic encouraged districts to select state adopted reading curricula to guide teachers' work and raise achievement as measured by test scores. District administrators who were guided by the Accountability First logic worked to ensure that the proper structures and systems were in place to deliver consistent, standards-aligned reading instruction across all elementary schools to prepare students for middle and high school.<sup>19</sup> For example, throughout the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, district administrators were engaged in the 2020 Initiative to close the achievement gap in Lincoln Unified; one of this initiative's pilot projects involved designing a "comprehensive, tiered student support system" that would "better monitor student progress and identify appropriate academic and behavioral interventions." In addition, the district's director of evaluation of assessment created a report for coaches and principals in September 2010 that explained that all the teachers must "give a battery of formative assessments to monitor the development of the core areas of literacy," and it provided examples of "appropriate uses of data" to improve instruction. And, in October 2010, the district's ELD coach distributed a CELDT testing planning tool asking schools about who would score, record, and evaluate the CELDT data. These examples demonstrate the presence of Accountability First's principles in the district's goals and practices.

Second, at the school level, the Accountability First logic's principles and practices encouraged teachers to deliver standards based instruction, as well as conduct test preparation activities. For example, Bess, a coach, described a grade level meeting in which teachers planned standards based instruction to maximize their coverage of standards prior to the state test:

A lot of what we did was really pay extra attention to and map out which standards they felt like they hadn't taught yet well. Because that's the other thing, to be honest, is that when you're doing kind of authentic workshop based reading and writing instruction, you teach a lot. But there are certain obscure specific standards that you just don't get to. And you have to get to them. They're gonna show up on the test. So you have to kind of make sure you know what all the

<sup>19</sup> This district was dealing with serious issues regarding an achievement gap for poor and minority students, particularly in middle and high school.

standards are and weave in all the ones that you can. And the ones that you can't weave in, you've got to at least hit them a little bit so that kids don't feel like they're being tricked. So we did a lot of that. Like what have you already taught? What have you taught well? What are some things you need to re-teach? What are some things you haven't gotten to yet? Let's map it out. I think at that point it was like ten weeks till the test.

This shows how the Accountability First logic helped define appropriate instructional practices, such as the coverage of the state's 'obscure specific standards,' as well as guided a coach's work.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to note the ways in which the Accountability First logic related to the basic skills logic, which emerged and spread in the late 1990s (Coburn, 2001a; Pearson, 2004). Both of these logics emphasized the benefits of explicit instruction of reading skills and strategies. In addition, the models of Accountability First and basic skills valued core reading programs as appropriate and effective reading instructional materials. Yet, Accountability First was also concerned with systemic change at the district and school levels, as well as with controlling teachers' work.

### *Just Read*

Actors in Lincoln Unified were also confronted with the Just Read logic. In contrast to Accountability First, the Just Read logic treated reading instruction as an interactive, or constructivist, process serving to develop children's lifelong love of books, reading, and learning. Lucy Calkins, the leader of the Reading and Writing Project at the Teachers College and the author of several practitioner resource texts associated with TCRWP, underscored that "we [educators] must not only teach children how to read well; we must also teach children how to love reading." The Just Read logic contained deep-seated ideas on teaching students how to love reading. The Just Read logic concentrated on the needs of individual students and the role of books and literature as a tool for instruction. It follows that this logic privileged authentic texts over core reading programs. And, it was clear that most coaches believed that highly specified core reading programs were not an appropriate tool for guiding instruction. One coach noted that:

the longer I've been in education, [I'm] realizing that it's really not about the teacher's manual. Every child that comes into that room they're in different places and so you can't put them through the paces of a teacher's manual and think you're covering their needs

Just Read's model of reading instruction paid close attention to the relationship between a teacher and his or her students. Thus, it had a child-up theory of action in which a child's needs guided the content and pedagogy of reading instruction within a classroom. For example, many

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<sup>20</sup> I found that most coaches conducted instructional planning with teachers in a manner guided by the accountability first logic.

coaches encountered the Just Read logic from resource materials about the Reading Recovery intervention program.<sup>21</sup> These materials explained how lessons should be:

Individually designed and individually delivered by specially trained teachers. Using a wide range of procedures, teachers make moment-by-moment decision within each lesson to support the individual child...In Reading Recovery, careful observation of reading and writing behaviors guides teaching decisions.

The Just Read logic also suggested that schools and teachers should consider children's interests when selecting books for classroom libraries. And, in the Spring of 2010, during a meeting of the district's coaches, coaches brainstormed topics that children were interested in, and then they identified and ordered trade books addressing those topics. As a result, the leveled trade books in teachers' libraries had been selected because they were thought to match students' interests.

In Lincoln Unified, the Just Read logic promoted a variety of in and out of school literacy-related programs and activities, ranging from the school library to summer reading programs to incentivize students' reading. During district sponsored professional development sessions, teachers received messages about the value of informal assessments and "getting to know your students," and this represents the Just Read logic. District administrators who were guided by the Just Read logic were committed to finding ways to support teachers' enactment of daily time for independent reading and schools' practices for sending home books with poor and minority students. For example, coaches worked to develop and implement a district wide system in which teachers sent home books in plastic baggies. And, the district's reading plan, which was presented to principals in early September of 2010, noted that: "District wide "just right" book home reading program will begin the week of September 13." By addressing home reading as a component of appropriate and effective reading instruction to support student learning, the district's reading plan incorporated the Just Read logic and encouraged school-level actors to adopt practices aligned with Just Read.

In schools, the Just Read logic hinged on the proposition that if students 'Just Read,' they would become avid and proficient readers. Joan, a coach, explained that:

What's going on now is matching kids to books both in terms of their level and their interest. You know, I love the Nancy Atwell quote we keep using about our job is to help kids be joyful, thoughtful readers, lifelong readers, independent readers on their own.

Therefore, this logic recommended that teachers provide opportunities for students to have ample time with "eyes on print" during independent reading. Over the course of the school year, district administrators, principals, and coaches, and teachers boasted about how students were devoting substantially more time with "eyes on print" than in previous years. For example, in the fall of 2010, Nick, the lead coach, advertised to the team of coaches that:

Kids now have eyes on print with lots of talking, and they're experiencing TCRWP's curriculum of talk...And this year, the district will see more eyes on print.

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading\\_recovery/lessons/index.asp](http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading_recovery/lessons/index.asp)

Additionally, according to the Just Read logic, teachers' primary role was promoting students' engagement with books through class discussion, meetings with students about their reading, and brief strategy lessons—rather than standards-based or skills-focused lessons.

Finally, as compared to Accountability First, the Just Read logic paid less attention to preparing students for higher grade levels or to fostering coherency across grade levels. For example, the principal of Bess' school noted how:

This system here in [Lincoln Unified] is much more teacher driven and relies much more on teacher expertise and is much trickier to manage as an educational leader. And I think it's much trickier as a teacher to teach in, although I think much more professionally fulfilling.

Thus, this administrator noted the way in which the Just Read model was predicated upon notions of teachers' autonomy and professionalism and relied on educators' expertise.

In some ways, the Just Read logic was congruent with the whole language logic. Many of the actors from Lincoln Unified who articulated messages associated with the Just Read logic had also been educators during the era when whole language was dominant in California<sup>22</sup> (Coburn, 2001a); this could explain some of the overlap between the Just Read and whole language models. In particular, both logics conceptualized the reading process as a constructivist process. And, both logics value the usage of authentic literature, as opposed to core reading programs, as reading instructional materials. At the same time, the Just Read logic emphasized one-on-one reading instruction and underscores the need for teachers to know and understand their students' strengths and needs, while whole language valued small group, guided reading instruction.

### *Balance of Logics*

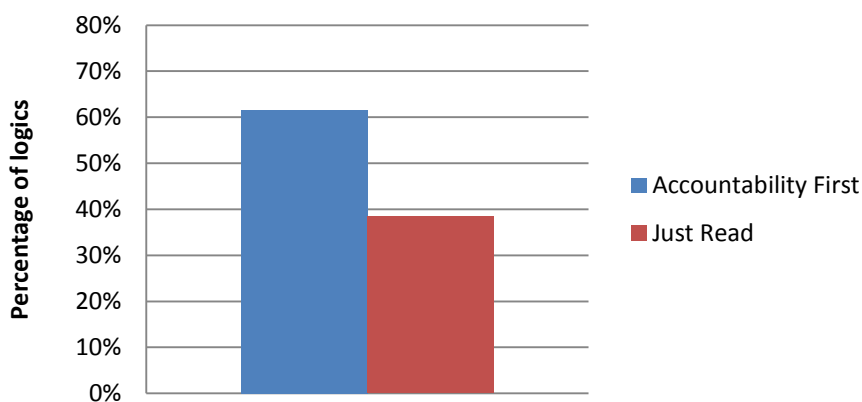
Although Accountability First and Just Read promoted competing models of reading instruction, both of these logics were present in the district's policies, materials, and practices. This offers evidence of the way in which two logics from the environment penetrated an organization during one period of time. Coaches, teachers, principals, and administrators were connected to a flurry of conflicting ideas, rules, and norms from the environment. To understand actors' encounters with these logics of reading instruction, I determined the prevalence of the Accountability First and Just Read logics. As shown in Figure 3, about 62% of the lived logics, or encounters with sets of ideas or principles of reading instruction existing in the broader environment, were Accountability First while 38% were associated with Just Read. This indicates that district administrators, principals, coaches, and teachers dealt with a larger proportion of ideas and rules from the Accountability First logic, as compared to the Just Read logic. It appears that Accountability First was a dominant logic within the district, as an organization. However, various school and district-level actors engaged with a different mixture of messages, rules, and practices associated with the Accountability First and Just Read logic. Some actors, including the district's Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Jen, a coach at

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<sup>22</sup> Among the district's coaches, 7 of the 13 coaches were trained or teaching during the whole language period.

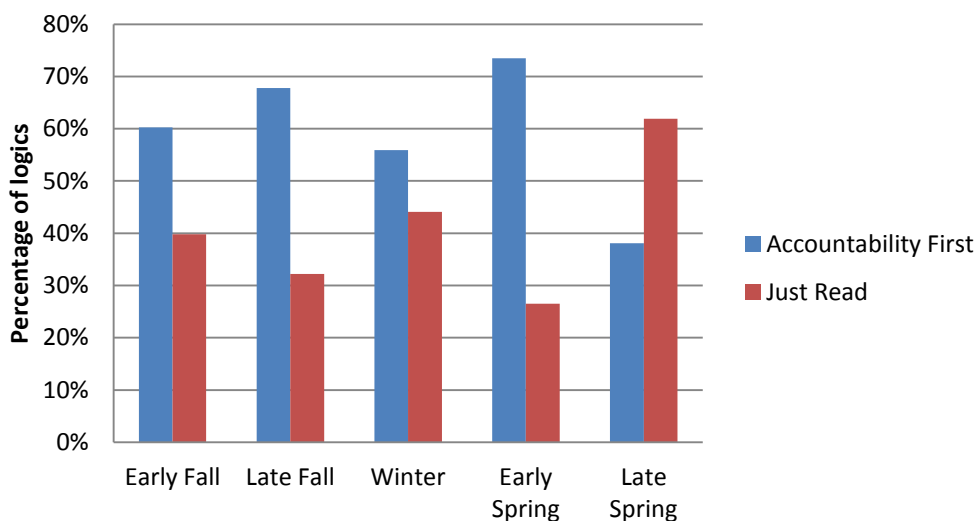
Linden Elementary, had more extensive linkages with Accountability First, while other actors, such as Nick, the Lead Coach, had more extensive linkages with Just Read.

Figure 3  
*Logics of Reading Instruction in Lincoln Unified*



Although the Accountability First logic had greater prevalence in the district's structures and practices guiding reading instruction, the balance of the two logics did not remain constant over the course of the school year. Figure 4 illustrates the ways in which the two logics had greater and lesser prominence throughout the year, indicating that different phases of implementation or events leaned on ideas or encouraged activities associated with either Accountability First or Just Read. It is evident that, across most of the school year, the Accountability First logic was more common than the Just Read logic. However, in the early spring, over 70% of the lived logics reflected the Accountability First logic. During this period of time, many coaches and most principals were reaching out to the environment to employ the ideas and rules from Accountability First. This matches the ways in which administrators, principals and coaches were turning their attention toward preparing for the state's standardized test, which was administered in March for fourth grade writing and in May for students in grades 2-5.

Figure 4  
*Logics during the 2010-2011 School Year*



In particular, administrators and coaches were gearing up for high stakes testing by meeting with teachers about how to prepare for tests, distributing test preparation workbooks, and identifying the focal students who were ‘on the bubble’ and would receive reading intervention services (Booher-Jennings, 2005). For example, Bess described how, in the early spring of 2011, she modeled a test prep lesson in a fifth grade classroom and told students:

Okay, so you’re doing this as readers all the time. On the CST they’re gonna ask you to do the same thing, and here’s what it’s gonna look like. Then I put up a CST released question that had a sentence pulled out from the text. We talked, we made guesses about what the word meant, and they all got it right.

This pattern of logics in Lincoln Unified suggests that there were periods during the school year in which one model of reading had greater or lesser prominence. This suggests that district and school level actors were juggling competing priorities over the course of the school year—with ebbs and flow from the first days of school in the fall to high stakes testing in the spring. And, actors’ efforts to deal with the competing priorities could hinder their ability to put forth clear and consistent messages about reading instruction for teachers. In other words, on one day an actor may emphasize the principles and practices of Accountability First, but on another day or another week, the same actor could be highlighting ideas from Just Read. If different actors were referring to the two models of reading instruction at different rates and at different periods of the school year, it may prove challenging for teachers to understand how to shift their practices and or to learn to adopt the new reading program.

### How Logics Reached Coaches

How did coaches become connected to these different logics? Here, I argue that these logics did not just trickle down from the environment in order to reach actors situated within Lincoln Unified. Rather, coaches engaged with the two logics through individual and social



experiences that enabled coaches to learn about and then draw upon logics' ideas and rules. Coaches were able to pull down both logics because different types of carriers, including policies, instructional materials, and actors, carried these logics. And some logics were accompanied by regulative force, while others were accompanied by normative pressure. I identified distinct strategies that linked the environment's logics of Accountability First and Just Read to actors situated within the district. My findings on the relationship between the macro and meso levels have implications for institutional theory, policy, and reform practices.

### *Individual and Social Encounters*

Sometimes coaches encountered Accountability First and Just Read individually and, other times, through social means. The cognitive approach for studying implementation attends to the individual and social factors shaping how actors make sense of policy (Coburn, 2001b; Honig, 2006; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002); with this in mind, I considered coaches' individual and social encounters with the two logics of reading instruction. On the one hand, the individual mechanism involved an actor encountering logics through his or her own training, experience, and ongoing learning. An actor's individual encounters frequently relied upon non-system actors, such as teacher credential programs and professional development organizations. I found that the majority of lived logics were brought to the district via individual encounters. For example, Nick encountered the Just Read logic when he attended a Reading Recovery conference session that discussed the value of classroom libraries. On the other hand, the social mechanism involved two or more actors collaboratively engaging with logics through discussion in a training session, meeting, or other setting. So, actors were spreading the logic through their interaction. For example, three coaches encountered the Accountability First logic while attending a district meeting on the Response to Intervention (RtI) program; this meeting emphasized the role of screening assessments to identify students for intervention.

Individual encounters accounted for 66 percent of coaches' connections to the logics in Lincoln Unified. For example, Tanya, a reading coach, had individual encounters with the Accountability First logic through her previous work in another school in which she analyzed reading achievement data with the principal. This coach's experience with data analysis and instructional planning exposed her to the principles and practices of Accountability First. Each coach's professional background and training, work experience in Lincoln Unified as well as in other districts, and ongoing learning gave them access, through individual encounters, to different logics at different times. In other words, a coach's work history influenced his or her connections to logics in the environment. For this reason, some coaches had more extensive experience with the Accountability First or Just Read logics. On the one hand, Tanya and Bess had intensive links to Accountability First. In the case of Tanya and Bess, their work experiences as a consultant and reform facilitator during in California's standards-focused accountability era exposed them to Accountability First's ideas and rules, enabling them to continually draw upon that logic's ideas. On the other hand, Nick and Lauren had numerous connections to Just Read. This is because those two coaches' teacher credential programs and Reading Recovery training issued numerous Just Read messages.

At the same time, coaches also became connected to logics through social interactions with these logics of reading instruction, particularly during professional development sessions, staff meetings, and coach collaborative meetings. About 34 percent of the lived logics were linked to social encounters with the Accountability First and Just Read logics. For example, in

the coach collaborative, coaches met together to decide how to promote the new reading program and support teachers. In this social context, coaches grappled with the Accountability First and Just Read logics. Specifically, coaches presented their views on dimensions of the district's reading policy and how it aligned (or didn't align) with their own views of reading instruction. In this manner, the coach collaborative was a site for elucidating and surfacing logics. As a result, other coaches learned about, and became connected to, Accountability First and Just Read during the coach collaborative meetings. This means that these meetings were places where different coaches emphasized either Accountability First or Just Read. For example, in the fall, Nick, the Lead Coach, reiterated that coaches should check-in with teachers about how they're organizing their classroom libraries, and this advocated for practices aligned with Just Read.

The Accountability First and Just Read logics relied on similar proportions of individual and social encounters to reach the district. Coaches' individual encounters played a key role in linking both models of reading instruction, which existed in the environment, with actors, suggesting the important role of non-system actors, such as teacher credential programs and professional development organizations and publications, in bringing ideas to actors working within a district. Thus, to surface any differences in the transmission of Accountability First and Just Read, it's necessary to consider other dimensions for how actors became connected with the two logics.

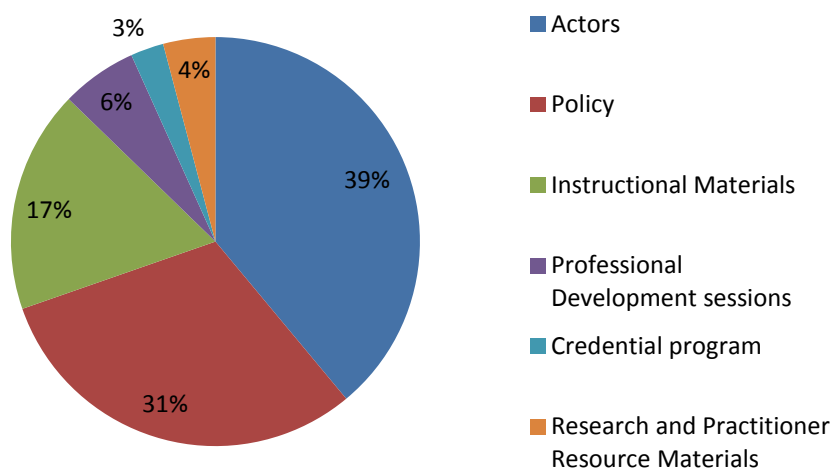
### *Carriers*

Carriers transmit the ideas and rules of institutional logics (Scott, 2001). Thus, carriers facilitate the movement of logics across different settings, permitting these logics to exist in different contexts and in different time periods. By looking at different types of carriers, we can advance our understanding of the mechanisms by which actors engage with elements of the environment. Following Coburn's (2001a) research on logics of reading instruction, I surfaced multiple carriers of the logics of Accountability First and Just Read: actors, policies, instructional materials, professional development, credential programs, and research and practitioner resource materials. Actors served as carriers by voicing and advancing a logic's ideas and practices. In particular, people talked about the logics of reading instruction. Policies (e.g., state standards and the district reading plan) and instructional materials (e.g., TCRWP Units of Study and assessment forms) were able to carry a logic's ideas and rules. This means that overarching ideas from logics were embedded in policy documents and instructional materials. Professional development sessions, as well as teacher and administrative credential programs, were also instrumental in promoting ideas tied to the two models of reading. Lastly, research and practitioner resource materials on reading instruction (e.g., articles on DIBELS and books on small group instruction) were imbued with logics of reading instruction.

Figure 5 shows that 39 percent of the lived logics in Lincoln Unified were carried by actors. When actors advanced the ideas and rules of Accountability First and Just Read, they were engaging in framing (Benford and Snow, 2000). For example, during a June 2011 coach collaborative meeting, Nick instantiated the Just Read logic by telling the group that "reading for pleasure and talking about text—That's what we're shooting for." In this case, the lead coach, as an actor, was the carrier that spread the Just Read logic to other coaches. 31 percent were carried by policies. For example, the district's reading plan carried the Accountability First logic by

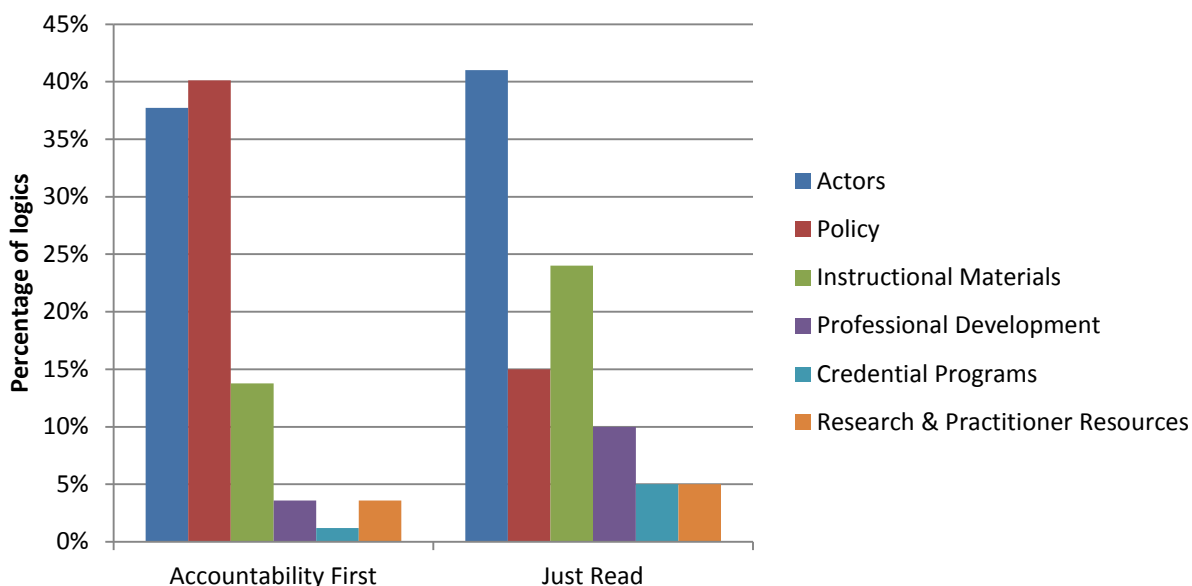
setting reading proficiency benchmarks that were aligned with CST scores. It follows that, when coaches and teachers engaged with the reading plan, they were exposed to the Accountability First logics. These examples indicate how different types of carriers helped transmit the Accountability First and Just Read logics. In particular, actors played a key role in bridging the environment with the district's other actors. Although other types of carriers, such as professional development sessions, research and practitioner resource materials, and credential programs, carried a substantially smaller proportion of logics, they still assisted in connecting the Accountability First and Just Read logics with actors in Lincoln Unified.

Figure 5  
*Proportion of Lived Logics Using Different Carriers*



To understand the mechanisms by which the two distinct logics travelled from the environment to the district, I compared the carriers of the two models of reading instruction. As shown in Figure 6, the Accountability First and Just Read logic used a different balance of the different types of carriers. The two logics were carried by actors at similarly high rates. This finding on the usage of actors as carriers reveals the importance of actors in carrying institutional logics to coaches in Lincoln Unified. However, as compared to Just Read, Accountability First was more likely to be carried by policies or programs (40% of Accountability First logics were carried by policies, as compared to 15% of Just Read). California's English language arts (ELA) framework and content standards were imbued with the Accountability First logic, promoting a skills-based approach to reading instruction. And, the district's intervention programs oftentimes encouraged teachers to analyze student assessment data and then deliver targeted instruction of discrete skills, thereby promoting the accountability logic. Since policies were advancing particular logics, this finding draws attention to the relationship between the policy context and the institutional environment containing broad ideas about reading instruction.

Figure 6  
*Types of carriers used by Accountability First and Just Read*



In contrast, the Just Read logic was more likely to be transmitted through instructional materials (24% of Just Read logics were carried by instructional materials, while 14% of Accountability First logics were carried by instructional materials) or professional development (10% of Just Read logics were carried through professional development, while about 4% of Accountability First logics used professional development). First, the TCRWP instructional materials issued numerous messages congruent with Just Read, and these materials were an artifact that carried this logic to coaches. For example, TCRWP's instructional materials included scripts of lessons in which teachers should teach students about how to read a book 'Like it's gold!.' This form of lesson carried the principles from Just Read to coaches and teachers who studied the instructional materials. Second, professional development sessions provided opportunities for the ideas and rules of the Just Read model to reach actors in Lincoln Unified. During the summer of 2010, teachers attended a professional development session on TCRWP, and the facilitators from Columbia's Teachers College shared ideas about how to structure instruction and work with students in ways aligned with the Just Read model. Specifically, the facilitators emphasized how third grade teachers should identify and advertise high interest books so that students would select and read highly engaging books. In this way, the professional development session carried the Just Read logic. And, this reveals that structures and systems for professional development and collaboration play a role in bridging actors to particular portions of the environment. In other words, these learning opportunities for district and school level actors permitted them to reach out to the broader field of reading instruction. Furthermore, this analysis draws attention to the ways in which different logics from the environment may rely on different mechanisms, such as coaches' usage of instructional materials and professional development sessions delivered by non-system actors, to move ideas and rules from the environment to the organizational level.

### *Regulative and Normative Pressures of Logics*

An assortment of carriers delivered logics to actors, and it is also necessary to consider how normative and regulative forces, including formal rules, were involved in coupling logics and actors. Analyzing the regulative and normative pressures attached to logics helps characterize the relationship between the environment and actors (Coburn, 2004). By examining these pressures, I reveal the force accompanying some logics, as well as explicate the political dimensions of actors' linkages to logics. When actors engaged with Accountability First and Just Read, some lived logics were accompanied by regulative pressure while the majority used normative pressure to advance their ideas and rules. The majority of the instantiated logics utilized normative pressure. Thirty percent of lived logics were accompanied by regulative pressure; that is, these logics were accompanied by rules for how actors *must* conduct reading instruction or used monitoring to ensure compliance. By contrast, 70 percent of lived logics relied on normative pressure by issuing suggestions for how actors *should* approach reading instruction. This suggests that when actors engaged with the two logics of reading instruction, they were typically *not* bound by rules, monitoring, or sanctioning to adopt the logics' principles and practices.

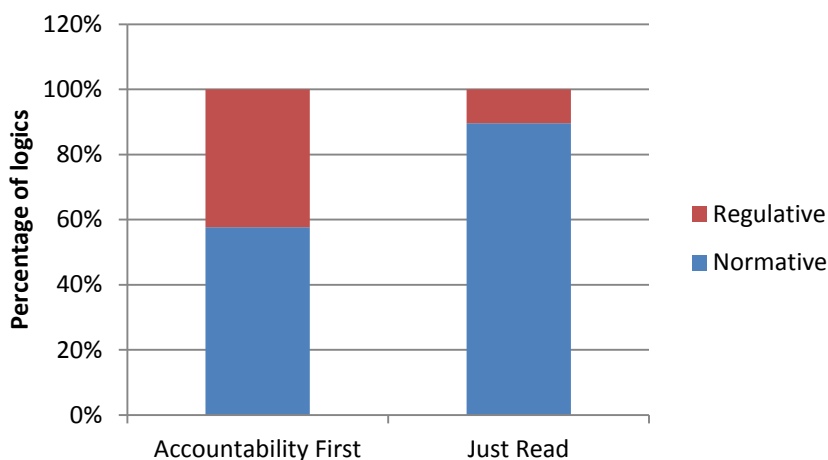
However, there were striking differences in the types of pressure attached to the Accountability First and Just Read logics. Figure 7 shows the proportion of the two logics utilizing regulative or normative pressure. In comparison to the Just Read logic, actors' encounters with the Accountability First logic were much more likely to be regulative. For example, Helen, a district administrator, explained that Response to Intervention (RtI), a practice associated with the Accountability First logic as it uses skills-focused instruction to respond to gaps in proficiency data, included regulative pressure:

The RtI [Response to Intervention] has to get off the ground for a variety of reasons. We're under sanctions in special education because of disproportionality. And...RtI was one of the things you can implement, which we actually wanted to do anyway. But now we have this Special Ed mandate and the mandate requires money being spent. You know, it's strong enough that it's something we can't ignore.

This shows the way in which Accountability First's principles were embedded in policy and then supported by formal rules and monitoring to regulate practices associated with RtI across the district. Specifically, the district was mandated by the state to launch an RtI program which matched the principles of Accountability First.

Figure 7

*Pressures attached to Accountability First and Just Read logics*



In contrast, the majority of actors' engagement with the Just Read logic was accompanied with normative, rather than regulative, pressure. For example, a coach encountered the Just Read logic during her studies of Calkins' books on reading instruction. This coach studied the new instructional materials and noted how:

Calkins said it best—steer the child toward books, but steer the teaching... You can draw on your knowledge of books [during instruction].

The Just Read logic here encouraged teachers to learn about characteristics of books to help guide students toward books. However, the coach's encounter with this Just Read logic was not bolstered by any rules or monitoring. Instead, Calkins' practice of learning about books was just a suggestion regarding an appropriate way to teach reading. The Just Read logic was rarely backed up by regulative forces to pressure teachers to adopt this approach to literacy instruction. This points to the way in which actors within organizations face conflicting logics that may or may not be accompanied by rules, monitoring, or sanctioning. Furthermore, these examples demonstrate how the two models for reading instruction relied on different types of force to bolster their ideas, goals, and practices, as well as different mechanisms involving different carriers to link actors to logics.

## Conclusions

There are multiple conflicting logics in the field of reading instruction; these logics play an important role in setting the rules for the field. I portrayed the Accountability First and Just Read logics to characterize the dominant ideas about reading instruction in Lincoln Unified during the 2010-2011 school year. By defining appropriate ways to teach reading, Accountability First and Just Read enabled and constrained coaches' work and teachers' instruction. There were distinct differences in the ways in which these two logics proposed that teachers should teach reading. While Accountability First's objective was to raise test scores, Just Read aimed to

cultivate students' love of books and reading. This definitional work on these two logics advances our understanding of the current field of reading instruction.

I highlighted that Accountability First and Just Read co-existed in this district, resulting in discord between the logics' principles and practices. This finding on the co-existence of logics reveals the basis for contestation among actors. For instance, there was friction between coaches who proposed enacting reform efforts aligned with Accountability First or Just Read. For instance, several coaches promoted the adoption of standards-based instruction, and even specific test preparation activities, that matched Accountability First. But other coaches pushed back and wanted to encourage forms of literacy instruction that aligned with Just Read. I also contribute by revealing that the dominance of institutional logics can shift within a relatively short time period, illuminating issues related to the stability of institutions. Within this district, the pressures of state testing contributed to a stronger presence of the Accountability First logic during the spring. This finding on changes in the balance of logics over time exemplifies that logics are situated in a particular historical moment.

Coaches encountered institutional logics through a complex process. Coaches' connections with the Accountability First and Just Read logics were forged through individual and social encounters, but they were also shaped by the nature of carriers (e.g., teacher credential program, professional development session, instructional materials) and whether or not regulative pressures were attached to logics. Each coach had diverse opportunities to encounter the Accountability First and Just Read logics. Coaches' previous experiences and ongoing professional learning enabled them to individually encounter logics. In particular, coaches had rich professional experiences, ranging from multiple years of teaching and coaching in schools across California to working as school reform facilitators and trainers for the Reading Recovery program, which exposed coaches to different sets of ideas about reading instruction.<sup>23</sup> Coaches also became linked to logics through social encounters. For example, when coaches met as a group and studied the new reading program's instructional materials, they encountered the Just Read logic. This finding on the relationship between coaches and logics illuminates that, as intermediaries, these actors had access to the environment's logics of reading instruction.

I explained how Accountability First and Just Read used different paths to travel from the environment to actors within organizations. This advances our understanding of how logics reach actors through a contextualized and dynamic process. First, I surfaced how Accountability First was particularly reliant on policy as a carrier. Policies from the federal, state, and district levels were imbued with the principles and practices of the Accountability First logic. This finding on the relationship between policy and logics indicates that policy can play a key role in carrying and disseminating logics. Second, I determined that some logics are more or less likely to be accompanied by regulative pressure. Accountability First relied on regulative pressure, involving rules and monitoring, to motivate change within the technical core of organizations. In contrast, Just Read was usually accompanied by normative pressure telling actors how they should conduct reading instruction. These findings on the pressures attached to logics surface differences in how actors encounter ideas about reading instruction.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading\\_recovery/facts/index.asp](http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading_recovery/facts/index.asp)

## Chapter 4

### Coaching Policy, Making Policy: How reading coaches construct district-level policy

The journey of policy—from legislation to teachers’ and students’ desks—is riddled with obstacles. Only after traversing the United States’ multilayered education system does policy reach teachers and students (Coburn, 2005; Cohen & Spillane, 1992). Implementation involves adaptations of a policy to fit local conditions (McLaughlin, 1976). Additionally, ‘street level’ actors play a role in interpreting and modifying policy (Lipsky, 1980; Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer, 2002). Research on the implementation of instructional policy underscores the obstacles for policy to get through the classroom door and shift teachers’ classroom practices in significant ways, including the ambiguity of policy goals, the complexity of the multilayered system, and the challenges that teachers face to learn new instructional approaches in workplaces poorly designed to support them (Cohen, 1990; Cuban, 1993; Lortie, 2002). However, recent studies offer compelling evidence that policy *can* and *does* affect the structures and activities of teaching and learning—though not necessarily in the ways intended or imagined by policymakers (Correnti & Rowan, 2007; Hoffman, et al., 2001; Coburn, 2004). Thus, it is necessary to advance our understanding of the complicated route of policy, including the ways in which policies are adapted and the actors involved in carrying out the processes of implementation.

Reading coaches are actors who work in elementary schools to provide “hands on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom” (Joyce & Showers, 1980, p. 380). In schools across the United States, coaches serve as instructional leaders who support teachers and promote reform efforts (Bean, Swan & Knaub, 2003; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007; Haager, Dhar, Moulton, & McMillian, 2008; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2010; Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson, 2008; Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003). Reading coaches, positioned to link the state and district policy levels with schools and classrooms, are involved in translating policy’s broad ideas into concrete actions, including changes in instructional practice (Coburn, 2004). Scholars are beginning to portray coaches’ role in translating reading policy into practice (Matsumura et al. 2010; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010; Wei et al., 2009). This has surfaced how coaches highlight some ideas from a policy, while ignoring other portions of a policy (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). But scholars have not yet considered coaches’ role as policymakers. It would be fruitful to trace coaches’ work in making and implementing reading policy. This is because coaches are situated between the district and school levels, enabling coaches to manipulate ideas about reading instruction and steer teachers’ implementation across a district.

The previous chapter discussed how coaches encountered and engaged with the conflicting logics of Accountability First and Just Read. I surfaced how these logics of reading instruction influenced coaches’ efforts to reform instruction. In this chapter, I turn attention to coaches’ work with Lincoln Unified’s new reading program. To extend our understanding of policy implementation and the nature of coaches’ work, I attend to coaches’ role as policymakers. I argue that coaches, as intermediaries between the district and school levels, drew upon logics of reading instruction while conducting policymaking work. Then I show how the district structure, coach collaborative, and role of the lead coach enabled coaches to serve as policymakers. To advance this argument about coaches’ agency, I offer analyses that answer the



following questions: How did coaches utilize logics of reading instruction while generating policy for the district? What factors enabled coaches to serve as policymakers? What does this illuminate about the relationship between coaches and reading policy?

## **Findings**

The coaching literature tends to focus on coaches' work within schools, paying particular attention to coaches' activities for supporting a reform effort—from observing teachers' instruction and leading data meetings to ordering instructional materials (Bean, 2003; Deussen, et al., 2007). Coaches in Lincoln Unified did carry out a *mélange* of tasks associated with improving, monitoring, and managing literacy instruction. However, I found that these coaches also conducted policymaking work as they designed policies for elementary school teachers across the district. While adapting and creating policies, systems, and trainings, coaches used the logics of Accountability First and Just Read. I argue that, in so doing, coaches played a political role at the district level by shaping the nature of reading policy, including the district's formal reading plan. As political actors, coaches emphasized particular sets of ideas from the institutional environment and structured systems for teachers to follow. This means that coaches influenced policy's path from the formal district reading plan in ways that went far beyond their one-on-one work with teachers in their classrooms.

### Episodes of policymaking: How coaches created reading policy for the district

In Lincoln Unified, coaches engaged in work that touched upon diverse elements of literacy instruction—from first grade decoding activities and fourth grade writing skills to schoolwide systems and practices for analyzing data and planning instruction. My observation and interview data indicate that this work occurred at the district level, as coaches from multiple sites collaborated to create, specify, and refine reading policies that reached teachers across the district. To illustrate how coaches shaped multiple dimensions of Lincoln Unified's reading policy, I identified and analyzed what I call policymaking episodes. Each episode was constituted of the set of coaches' work activities related to generating policy to address a particular issue. Over the course of 2010-2011 school year, I identified a total of six episodes of coaches' policymaking that addressed issues ranging from planning professional development on assessment and revising the district's reading plan document to creating a system for monitoring the progress of intervention students. Table 5, below, summarizes the features the six policymaking episodes.

Table 5  
Coaches' Policymaking Episodes

<b>Policymaking Episode</b>	<b>Dimensions of Reading</b>	<b>Factors that Coaches Leveraged</b>	<b>Engagement with Logics</b>
<i>Assessment System*</i> (Fall 2010)	-Assessment  -Reading volume	-District structure enabled coaches to plan and facilitate the district wide PD -Lead Coach advanced ideas about reading volume	-Bolstering ideas from Just Read -Infusing practices aligned with Just Read in a district-sponsored PD that also reflected Accountability First principles
<i>District Reading Plan</i> (Fall 2010)	-Pedagogy for teaching reading, including TCRWP's instructional routines  -Assessment	-District structure enabled coaches to draft and revise the district wide reading plan -Lead Coach communicated with the Assistant Superintendent about elements of the Reading Plan	-Emphasizing ideas and practices from Just Read
<i>Classroom Libraries</i> (Fall 2010)	-Instructional materials for teaching reading	-District structure gave coaches responsibility for the practical and technical aspects of implementing TCRWP, including ordering and sorting books, as well as developing systems for teachers to organize these books -Lead Coach was a proponent of using classroom libraries with leveled books as the primary resource for teachers' reading instruction	-Drawing upon the Just Read logic while proposing to use leveled books as instructional materials in the district's elementary schools
<i>Writing Test-prep</i> (Winter 2010)	-Assessment  -Writing  -Test prep	-District structure gave coaches the responsibility of informing teachers of the state writing test for 4 <sup>th</sup> grade students -Lead Coach was focused on continuing to raise test scores on the writing test	-Advancing Accountability First by calling attention to the high stakes test and asking teachers to shift instruction in response to policy pressure -Layering principles from Accountability First to the writing curriculum, which aligned with Just Read
<i>Intervention Form</i> (Spring 2011)	-Intervention  -Assessment	-District administrators asked coaches to create an intervention form that teachers would use to record data on intervention students; this would guide Response to Intervention services -Lead Coach was interested in using TCRWP scores to monitor students' progress	-Advancing Accountability First to meet the demands and interests of district administrators -Layering principles from Accountability First and Just Read by using practices from Just Read, such as TCRWP assessment scores, to monitor students' progress towards meeting the district and state academic proficiency benchmarks

<p><i>Scope and Sequence*</i></p> <p><i>(Spring 2011)</i></p>	<p>-Standards-based instruction</p> <p>-Test prep</p>	<p>-District structure provided an opening for coaches, as opposed to administrators, to create a specified, year-long plan for teachers</p> <p>-Lead Coach prioritized the activity of developing a scope and sequence for TCRWP</p> <p>-Coach collaborative enabled coaches with different connections to Accountability First to share ideas about the role of standards based instruction</p>	<p>-Drawing attention to principles of Accountability First</p> <p>-Layering principles from Accountability First with a program and practices aligned with Just Read</p>
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Note: Episodes marked with \* are focal episodes.

In this chapter, I present two focal episodes that deal with: 1) coaches' policymaking to develop the TCRWP assessment system; and 2) coaches' policymaking to write a standards-aligned scope and sequence to guide the implementation of TCRWP. I selected these two episodes because they represented coaches' activities from two points in the school year on two distinct issues. The first episode discusses how coaches advanced the Just Read logic while planning and leading a professional development session on assessment. The second episode explains how coaches bridged, or layered, the ideas from Accountability First and Just Read while developing a scope and sequence for teaching TCRWP. While depicting the episodes, I attend to the ways in which the district structure and contextual factors put coaches in a position to conduct policymaking work. Then I show the ways in which coaches used the environment's logics strategically while generating policy during the first year of implementation. My data and analysis illuminate coaches' role as policymakers who manipulated the ideas and rules regarding reading instruction in Lincoln Unified.

### *Assessment System*

In August and September of 2010, coaches conducted policymaking work related to reading assessment. I use this episode to explain when, where, and how coaches in Lincoln Unified conducted policymaking work related to the new reading assessment. This policymaking work involved coaches bolstering the ideas from Just Read. It is evident that coaches manipulated engaged with ideas about reading instruction while designing the structure and content of the professional development session on the district's new, mandated assessment. In this case, coaches were responsible for developing the specific policy messages that teachers and principals encountered about reading instruction in Lincoln Unified.

After the district wide TCRWP summer institute in August 2010, the district's assistant superintendent, Daniel, asked the lead coach to work with the coaches to organize a follow-up training on the new assessment system. Thus, the district administrator delegated the planning and execution of the assessment training to the coaches. In addition, the assistant superintendent notified principals that coaches would lead a mandatory, one hour training during a staff meeting in late September. By making this training a mandated, high priority activity in all of Lincoln

Unified's elementary schools, Daniel bolstered the coaches' authority and underscored the importance of the TCRWP assessment.

Over the course of two coaches' meetings in September 2010, coaches undertook a series of activities that, in effect, formulated the district's on-the-ground assessment policy. Coaches worked to assemble the materials for the assessment training plus the materials that teachers would use while assessing students. Nick decided that the assessment training must address the topic of reading itself, not simply assessment of reading in order to raise reading proficiency. In particular, he felt that the training should emphasize that teachers need to provide opportunities for students engage in extended periods of independent reading and to have more time with 'eyes on print.' He incorporated Just Read's principles in a handout he'd written, entitled *A Pretty Good Guide to Reading Volume*. This handout cited Allington and Calkins, two prominent scholars and advocates in the field of reading instruction who are strong supporters of using authentic literature to teach reading to children. The handout asserted that "if a child is going to maintain the expected year-by-year reading growth, they will need to read, read, read," so it included the Just Read logic. *Reading Volume* directed teachers to match students with high-interest books, check student's reading rate and reading log, and send home 'just right' books with their lowest readers each night so they "develop the habit of reading." In addition, this handout urged teachers to: "Be persistent! Deeper literate abilities are built on the foundation of happy habitual reading." The coaches decided to include this handout, carrying messages associated with the principles of Just Read, in the district's assessment binder that was distributed to all teachers at the assessment training.

Coaches also worked to plan the one hour training for the district's K-5 teachers on the new assessments. In the first step of coaches' policymaking, coaches attempted to learn about the new assessment. It appears that, through their learning opportunities, coaches engaged with logics of reading instruction. During a meeting in September, Nick assigned coaches to administer the new assessment, study the new assessment materials, and read about assessment practices in practitioner resource materials and online. By administering the assessment with a few students at their site, coaches gained an understanding of how the assessment works and what kind of advice to give to teachers. In addition, this assignment led coaches to review materials distributed in the TCRWP summer institute and to access and study the Teachers' College website<sup>24</sup>, which provided resources related to assessment. The website provided several messages aligned with the Just Read logic, including information on the three cueing systems and the role of informal assessments.

At the following meeting, prior to selecting the content of the K-2 and 3-5 trainings, the coaches shared what they'd learned about the new assessment and spent about thirty minutes trouble shooting the district's new assessment system. For example, coaches clarified the correct way to measure students' reading fluency for the assessment. And, they talked about how upper grade teachers could obtain the K-2 assessment materials for assessing their lower reading. Additionally, they discussed how they anticipated teachers would respond to the assessment, and two coaches mentioned how teachers may feel overwhelmed by the new assessment. One coach expressed a concern that "teachers will push back because this is a mountain of stuff...[and ] because push back is common in [Lincoln Unified]."

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<sup>24</sup> <http://tc.readingandwritingproject.com/resources/assessments>

Next, coaches drew upon their knowledge of the assessment and their awareness of teachers' capacity and will to design the format and content of the assessment training. And, by structuring this training, coaches shaped the district's reading policy, as well as how teachers were exposed to this policy. With regard to the training's format, the coaches decided to lead two separate, grade-level specific trainings for K-2 and 3-5 teachers. This meant that K-2 and 3-5 teachers within each school would be exposed to different messages about the district's reading plan and the new assessment system. The coaches chose to cover the proper administration and scoring of the assessment, rather than addressing how teachers would use the results from the TCRWP assessment to plan instruction. This indicates that coaches were selecting which specific strands of reading instruction to emphasize. And, coaches elected not to cover ideas about how teachers could use data from the TCRWP assessments to inform their reading instruction.

The coaches also shaped district policy by selecting the content for the training. To guide the coaches' planning efforts, the lead coach defined the primary goal of the assessment training by invoking the Just Read logic. Nick declared that "The message is—Here's how you [teachers] give this thing [TCRWP assessment]... Teachers need the big picture. Reading is a problem solving process with three sources of information [visual, meaning, structure]." Nick was encouraging coaches to advance a model of reading, in alignment with Just Read, in which readers utilize the three cueing system (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

In the coach collaborative meetings, coaches made a series of decisions about the ideas that should be conveyed to teachers in the assessment training. The coaches decided that teachers should read the assessment's directions and pose questions about the assessment. The coaches also decided that teachers should learn how to record students' fluency and phrasing on the assessment form. In addition, coaches believed that teachers would benefit from observing the steps to administer the assessment. So, coaches designed an activity in which teachers would watch a video of a coach administering the TCRWP assessment with a student and then would practice completing an assessment form, including a running record, for that student.

Later in September, coaches facilitated trainings at each school site that introduced the district's elementary school teachers to the TCRWP assessments. Coaches disseminated information and ideas about the new reading program, assessment, and reading volume. In the trainings for K-2 and 3-5 teachers, coaches walked teachers through the parts of the assessment binder which had been designed and assembled by the team of coaches and also explained the multiple steps of administering the assessment.<sup>25</sup> The training also used a video of a coach modeling the administration of the assessment with students to help clarify and standardize what it takes to pass an assessment level, as well as to demonstrate to teachers the components of the assessment.

While educating teachers about the new assessment, coaches shared messages aligned with the Accountability First and Just Read logics. In the training at Bess' site, the coach compared the TCRWP assessment with the district's previous assessment while leading the training at her school. This coach announced that "[the new assessment is] not dramatically different than what we were doing in the past with QRI." But this coach also told teachers that "another major shift" is that teachers are "no longer assessing students' instructional levels and

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<sup>25</sup> I observed two coaches' assessment trainings at two school sites.

now assessing independent reading level.” Then Bess cautioned teachers that they are “probably going to find that kids’ scores are lower” because “we’re [the district] raising the bar...in terms of what we expect.” In this way, the coach was utilizing the Accountability First logic while training teachers on the assessment.

During the assessment training, coaches also infused the session with messages aligned with the Just Read logic by sharing the handout on Reading Volume with teachers and encouraging teachers to find ways to increase students’ reading volume. In the training at another site, Carol asked teachers to look at the Reading Volume section of their binder and then read through a few points from the Reading Volume handout. She told teachers to consider “the number of books that students read in a day...[and] check students’ reading logs every day.” As a result, teachers were exposed to principles and practices associated with the Just Read model of reading instruction.

Coaches were able to take on this policy making role because their authority was bolstered by district administrators. In Lincoln Unified, coaches were intermediaries who were charged with developing policy that would reach teachers across the district. When coaches created policy, they were responsible for designing materials that guided teachers’ assessment practices and for planning a professional development session that would educate teachers about the assessment. Coaches employed the logics of reading instruction strategically while assembling professional development materials. Nick, the lead coach, attempted to saturate this professional development session with Just Read, and he incorporated ideas from Just Read into a handout for the training. Thus, coaches’ policymaking efforts were affected by the logics of reading instruction.

### *Scope and Sequence*

In the spring of 2011, coaches developed a plan to guide K-5 literacy instruction in the following school year. I share this episode to explore how coaches bridged the Just Read and Accountability First logics to provide teachers with a structure for literacy instruction. Coaches, rather than district administrators, were responsible for writing a year-long pacing guide for literacy instruction—a “scope and sequence,” that attempted to influence and coordinate (or standardize) practices across elementary schools. Coaches worked together to create scope and sequence documents<sup>26</sup> that provided teachers with guidance on when and how to teach Calkins’ Units of Study for reading and writing, the California standards addressed by those instructional units, and the mentor texts to use in teaching the units. I will show how, in this effort, coaches linked the ideas of standards based instruction with the content and pedagogy of TCRWP.

To understand coaches’ efforts in the spring of 2011 to layer TCRWP and California’s content standards, it is important to consider coaches’ beliefs about the nature of the new reading program. In the fall of 2010, a few coaches bemoaned the way in which TCRWP did not explicitly address the California standards. Those coaches had strong connections to Accountability First because of their professional experience as reform facilitators and teachers in other districts. For example, in a coaches’ meeting in September, Tanya shared that she felt

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<sup>26</sup> During Reading First, a reading policy associated with No Child Left Behind, district administrators frequently developed scope and sequence documents that specified when teachers would cover particular units from core reading programs, such as Houghton Mifflin and Open Court.

“angst...[that TCRWP is ] not standards based enough” and that that the new approach to reading was “a little murky around standards.” Tanya told the group that there was a need to create a template aligning Calkins and standards. And, during a November coaches’ meeting in which coaches discussed the reinstatement of the state’s fourth grade writing test, Bess said that “teachers need more hand holding” on how to teach the ELA standards in the context of the TCRWP program. This coach also suggested creating an instructional plan for the rest of the year with the “theme of the marriage of reading, writing, and CST preparation.” Thus, Bess was advocating for guiding teachers’ adoption of the TCRWP materials in a way that would align with standards to prepare students for the CST.

Other coaches also had ideas about how to specifically link TCRWP’s units with the California ELA standards in order to help produce gains on the state test. In an interview, Nick, the lead coach, stated that:

Coaches will focus on creating a scope and sequence for the reading program so that there’s consistent coverage of the Units of Study that addresses standards and assists students in preparing for the state test. You know, I think one thing that we have to sort out is which units are we gonna teach and when. And then the materials for 3-5 are really the same materials...So it’s just a matter of which books are we gonna use in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

Nick acknowledged that coaches would serve as policymakers by devoting time and attention to create the district’s scope and sequence documents, which would encourage standards-based instruction and coherent teaching of TCRWP Units. And, in November, Tanya met with grade level teams at her site to create standards maps. This activity matched some of the principles from Accountability First. Tanya facilitated meetings in which teachers placed TCRWP units and California ELA standards in matrices, and then the coach typed up the matrices and distributed them to teachers. This indicates that some coaches were beginning to create their own standards-aligned structures for the new reading program at their school sites. Although some coaches were interested in bringing Accountability First logics to the structures and practices of TCRWP, the team of coaches did not work in the fall to link TCRWP with standards-based instruction.

However, by the winter, coaches were experiencing pressure from district administrators who were proponents of Accountability First to develop a structure to guide teachers’ use of TCRWP’s instructional materials and raise achievement. In particular, Nick explained to coaches that he would like to be able to “go back to [Daniel, the assistant superintendent] and tell him how everything lines up and has a standards based thing, in order to beat back the wolves.” The lead coach also warned coaches that “if they don’t want a top down message” from the district, then they needed to close the reading achievement gap within the next few years.

In response to pressures from the district, as well as from teachers who wanted greater specification on how to use TCRWP’s complex instructional materials, coaches developed a standards-aligned scope and sequence for TCRWP that layered Accountability First principles atop TCRWP’s ideas and practices<sup>27</sup>. District administrators had some concerns about TCRWP

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<sup>27</sup> While developing the scope and sequence documents, coaches instantiated the accountability first logic 8 times and the Just Read logic 1 time.

as a reading program that was not state adopted or standards-aligned. And, many teachers wanted guidance on when and how to teach TCRWP's units and lessons; teachers felt that the nature of the TCRWP instructional materials<sup>28</sup> were confusing or overwhelming. Coaches responded to these issues by writing scope and sequence documents that were designed to guide instruction across the district in the following year.

Coaches' policymaking efforts related to the TCRWP scope and sequence were infused with the logics of reading instruction. Coaches drew upon the Accountability First logic's principle that instructional materials should align with standards to ensure that teachers covered standards to prepare students for the state test. And, even Nick, usually a strong proponent of Just Read, expressed how the reading plan should help prepare students for testing:

And then considering the length of our school year and when standardized tests happen, which units does it make sense for us to teach before the standardized test comes around? You know, which ones will really – you know, we really have to make sure that we're spending a good chunk of time studying the non-fiction unit probably before the state test comes up. Because and it's an important piece of reading, but it's also something that will help so that the good work that we're doing is also being represented on standardized tests which are incredibly high stakes.

This shows Nick's awareness of the policy pressures from the state's standardized test, as well as the ideas and rules of Accountability First. He believes that planning instruction that targets testing's demands is a necessary step in order to legitimate the district's "good work" with TCRWP.

To create scope and sequence documents for each grade level, the coaches worked together over the course of three meetings<sup>29</sup> to complete matrices. These matrices were organized by the period of the school year and listed the TCRWP units that should be covered, the standards addressed by a unit, as well as key lessons and mentor texts to use in those lessons. However, coaches had different attitudes about the value or necessity of adding principles and practices from Accountability First to the district's new reading program. While designing the matrices, Bess advanced ideas from Accountability First, arguing that "the standards piece is good so people remember all the standards that they need to teach." Other coaches argued that it was not necessary to layer Accountability First's practices onto TCRWP to raise achievement. These coaches felt that if classrooms had lots of reading and if teachers were facilitating rich discussions about characters with their students, then students would be proficient on the state test. Specifically, Nick expressed that "if that [TCRWP instruction] was really happening, then kids would do well."

To carry out this policymaking work, coaches divided into grade level teams. Each team referred to the TCRWP instructional materials and documents listing California ELA standards while completing the matrix for a particular grade level. In this way, coaches' work in creating the standards-aligned scope and sequence for district drew upon Accountability First. For example, three coaches worked on the first grade scope and sequence matrix. During a March

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<sup>28</sup> In particular, teachers found Calkins' lengthy narratives on instruction to be challenging to review and translate into discrete lessons.

<sup>29</sup> Coaches worked on the scope and sequence matrices from March-June 2011.



coaches' meeting, Carol suggested examining the standards and matching them with specific TCRWP reading units. She read a standard on retelling a story, and then the group of coaches agreed that that comprehension standard would fit with a unit at the beginning of the year. So, they added it to appropriate grid of the scope and sequence matrix. The group also talked about how teachers could address that standard during read aloud activities associated with TCRWP's instructional approach.

This policy making episode reveals how coaches drafted scope and sequence policy documents with the potential to shape the nature and sequencing of reading instruction across the district. By aligning the state content standards with the reading program's lessons, coaches created district-level policy that incorporated *both* the Accountability First and Just Read logics. In light of accountability pressures, coaches constructed policy that layered two distinct visions of reading instruction. The coaches' policy making work to align TCRWP and the California standards was initiated by the identification of a problem. In the fall of 2010, a few coaches noted that TCRWP failed to address the California standards, and those coaches drew attention to issues related to the district's new approach to reading instruction. Those coaches had strong connections to Accountability First, and they advocated for guiding teachers' adoption of the TCRWP materials in a manner aligned with the demands of state testing. These coaches wanted to steer TCRWP implementation to raise test scores. By the winter, the lead coach responded to pressures from district administrators and began to shift coaches' attention towards Accountability First. The lead coach encouraged and led coaches in engaging in policymaking work that aligned TCRWP with the ELA content standards. In this way, he supported the layering of Accountability First and Just Read to raise achievement on the high stakes state test. Yet coaches had different attitudes about the necessity of adding principles and practices from Accountability First to TCRWP in order to raise achievement. This indicates that there was conflict among coaches about the degree to which Accountability First should be layered on TCRWP.

### *Across Episodes*

These policymaking episodes illustrate how coaches were involved in constructing district-level policy that targeted different elements of reading instruction. In these episodes, coaches were not merely responding to the district's current policies and plans for reading instruction. Rather, these actors were formulating district-level policy, including planning professional development and writing scope and sequence documents that provided instructional guidance to steer TCRWP implementation across the district. When coaches formulated policy, they drew upon institutional logics.

These episodes demonstrate coaches' agency in their work with policy and logics. Coaches wielded the Accountability First and Just Read logics while engaging in policymaking, bringing logics to teachers in schools across Lincoln Unified. They often did so strategically, layering Accountability First and Just Read on top of each other to preserve their own ideas of reading instruction while being responsive to district demands. For example, in three of the six policymaking episodes (Scope and Sequence, Writing Test-prep, and Response to Intervention), coaches layered ideas and practices from Accountability First atop the structures and practices of TCRWP, which put forth the Just Read logic. In so doing, coaches worked to adapt TCRWP to

fit the demands of the current policy context. Coaches attempted to ensure that TCRWP could be taught in a standards-aligned manner and that teachers' implementation of TCRWP would lead to gains in test scores. In contrast, coaches purely employed Just Read in two of the six policymaking episodes (Reading Plan and Classroom Libraries). In these cases, a few coaches who were tightly connected to the Just Read logic, as well as the Whole Language movement, worked to promote practices related to Just Read.

### Conditions Enabling Coaches to Serve as Policymakers

In Lincoln Unified, coaches generated policy that impacted multiple elements of reading instruction in schools. For this reason, it is necessary to consider the factors that enabled coaches to act as district level policymakers. Here, I argue that three factors contributed to coaches' policy making: district structure, nature of the coach collaborative, and the role of the lead coach.

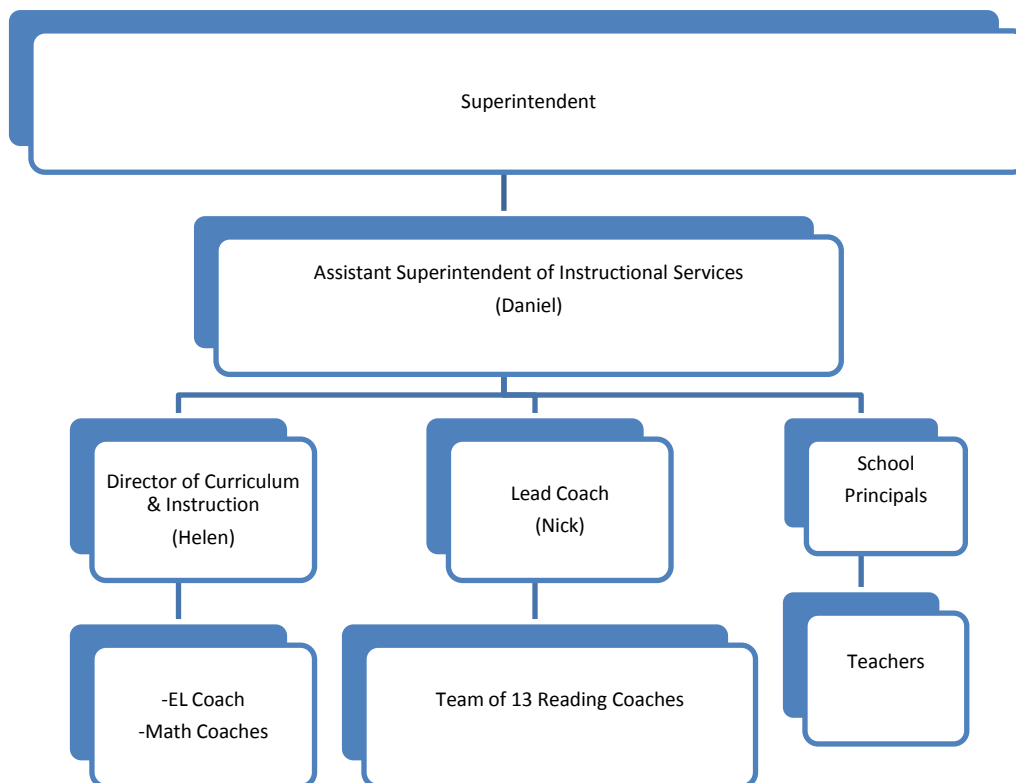
#### *District Structure*

The district's structure contributed to coaches' role as policymakers. Districts can use different structures to allocate power and delegate decision making. These structures play a role in determining who has the authority to make which types of decisions. Figure 8 depicts Lincoln Unified's formal structure for governing elementary English Language Arts instruction. The district's decision making structure influenced the relationship between people and policy by distributing power and expertise (content knowledge) in particular ways (Shulman, 1986; Cohen & Ball, 1999). As shown in Figure 8, Daniel, the assistant superintendent of instructional services, directly supervised the director of curriculum and instruction (a central office administrator with greater formal authority<sup>30</sup> than the lead coach) and the Lead Coach (who served as a site based coach and as the leader of the team of 13 coaches). This structure directly connected the lead coach and assistant superintendent. This positioned Nick and the team of coaches so that they could easily bring ideas to the attention of the assistant superintendent. The coaches' direct communication with the assistant superintendent reduced roadblocks by reducing interaction with other district administrators (such as the director of curriculum and instruction), so coaches could impact policy.

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<sup>30</sup> For example, Helen was responsible for submitting accountability-related reports to the state department of education and for reporting CST results at board meetings.

Figure 8  
*District Structure*



The director of curriculum and instruction, Helen, had weaker control over elementary ELA, as compared to her decision making power over other subject areas and at other grade levels. In this district, the director of curriculum was not asked to plan or facilitate professional development sessions on elementary school literacy, but this administrator did plan and coordinate trainings on math and for middle and high schools. Helen, the director of curriculum and instruction (who conducted budgetary and accountability reporting) did not fully understand the coaches' role and was surprised by their power to make district-level decisions, such as coaches' selection of a non-state adopted reading program. This administrator did not feel that she controlled the elementary school literacy program. She said:

But literacy coaches are really almost a kind of a set aside group that have their own dynamic and there's one per site, whereas every other coach is one per subject area for the entire district. So it's a really different structure and they've been together for a long time. So they have their own dynamic and it's kind of been just what it is. And so I don't really work with them – [the Lead Coach] pretty much dictates what the coaches are doing and how they're implementing the reading program.

Thus, in practical terms, there was only one layer of hierarchy between coaches and the assistant superintendent.

To achieve the district's goal of higher reading achievement, Daniel, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, granted authority to Lincoln Unified's coaches. Daniel had established a tradition of delegating work related to elementary school literacy instruction to coaches. As a result, he passed authority for carrying out this policymaking work to the coaches. He entrusted the team of coaches to research literacy programs and plan and facilitate trainings for teachers that reflect the unique needs of the district. For example, in 2007, Daniel suggested that coaches identify a program to guide writing instruction that could promote consistency across the district's elementary schools. So, coaches researched several writing programs and studied their instructional materials to get a sense of their different approaches to writing instruction. After deliberating the strengths and weaknesses of different programs and the needs of the district, coaches selected the TCRWP writers' workshop program, and then the district formally adopted this writing program. The relationship between the assistant superintendent and coaches enabled coaches to act as decision makers with regard to literacy instruction and to make the critical decision on the type of writing program to adopt. In particular, this illustrates how district administrators relinquished control of decisions related to literacy policy and practice—ranging from the content of professional development to programmatic decisions—to the coaches.

### *Coach Collaborative*

The coach collaborative served to develop coaches' knowledge and skills, but it also functioned as a venue for coaches to make policy. On the one hand, these meetings provided a venue for coaches to construct understandings of TCRWP as an approach to literacy instruction and to deepen their understanding of elements of literacy instruction. Specifically, coaches had opportunities to learn about how children learn how to read and the nature of various assessments, such as DIBELS. Nick provided professional development to coaches<sup>31</sup> and shared relevant research (e.g., articles by Allington and Pearson) and excerpts from practitioner resource materials (e.g., books on differentiation and *Choice Words* by Peter Johnston) that tended to be aligned with the Just Read logic. Importantly, the coach collaborative also permitted coaches to have intense engagement with logics, reading policy, and the new reading program. Coaches were exposed to—and had opportunities to learn about—both the Accountability First and Just Read logics.

Coaches' meetings were a space for policymaking. In the collaborative, coaches shared how teachers at their sites were adopting (or rejecting) elements of the district's new reading plan, and then coaches constructed ideas about how to adapt or generate reading policy. For instance, at the beginning of the year, many coaches shared how some teachers were overwhelmed or confused about expectations related to the new program. In the winter, several coaches raised the issue that teachers were very concerned about whether or not students would show progress on the new assessment. After sharing these anecdotes from across sites, coaches discussed specific ways to modify assessments to resolve teachers' problem. Thus, the coaches worked together to develop the district's approach to TCRWP and reading instruction in the context of the collaborative.

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<sup>31</sup> Many coaches expressed learning a great deal about the nature of reading instruction from their involvement in the collaborative.

### *Lead Coach*

The lead coach's leadership was another factor that enabled coaches to act as district level policy makers. Specifically, the lead coach acted as a liaison between coaches, principals, and district administrators, and this permitted coaches to make decisions about elementary school literacy instruction. Nick's responsibilities included planning and facilitating coaches' meetings, promoting the reading plan at principal meetings, and coordinating with central office administrators. By working with principals and district administrators, Nick served a coordinating role that linked coaches with districtwide actors who had greater power. Several times over the course of the school year, Nick was invited by the assistant superintendent to present facets of the reading plan at the district's weekly principal meetings. For example, Nick explained the new assessments to the principals and also talked with them about the importance of setting up school wide systems for reading homework and for sending home books with students.

Importantly, throughout the school year, the lead coach had formal and informal communication with several contacts in the district's central office, including the assistant superintendent and the director of evaluation and assessment. Nick's communication with district administrators tended to deal with the practical or technical details of implementing the new reading program. During the fall of 2010, Nick worked with administrators in the data and assessment office so that the coaches' decisions related to the proficiency levels of the new TCRWP assessments would be used on the district's standards-based report cards. Thus, he made sure that the district's data and assessment administrators adapted the report card so that it reflected the coaches' plan. In this manner, the lead coach linked coaches' priorities and activities with district administrators, thereby facilitating coaches' involvement in district-wide decisions about literacy instruction.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter unpacks the relationship between coaches, policy, and logics by depicting the policymaking efforts of Lincoln Unified's coaches. First, this chapter uncovered how reading coaches designed policy related to multiple elements of reading. I detail how coaches designed professional development sessions and scope and sequence documents; this policymaking work helped coordinate, or standardize, teachers' practice. Importantly, I found that coaches, as intermediaries, drew upon the Accountability First and Just Read logics while making policy. By selecting the ideas and rules that should be emphasized for teachers, coaches played an important role in prioritizing aspects of the new reading program and the district's reading plan (Coburn, 2006). Importantly, the district structure, the coach collaborative, and the lead coach were factors that contributed so that coaches could engage in district level policymaking. In this district, a great deal of policymaking work was delegated to the coaches. Therefore, coaches, as opposed to district level administrators, were constructing assessment systems, pacing guides, and other policy levers.

Policies can be made by actors situated at many levels of the education system (Hill, 2001). School-level actors and intermediaries, such as coaches, have the capacity to draft instructional guidance and develop policy levers. I reveal how district level policies were continually constructed (and re-constructed) by coaches. Coaches capitalized on their position and authority in order to craft district-level policy infused with the principles of Accountability First and Just Read. Coaches' policymaking work was frequently a response to a pressing problem of practice and occurred in a collaborative and iterative fashion. In this manner, coaches' policymaking was responsive to local conditions.

## Chapter 5

### Skillfully Opening Doors: How reading coaches frame policy

As Daly and Finnigan (2011) declare, “reform efforts are socially constructed” (p. 44). Instructional reform is a complex change process involving the interplay of policy, people, and places (Honig, 2006; Hubbard, Mehan, & Stein, 2006). Throughout instructional reform, administrators, coaches and teachers in districts and schools learn about and respond to policy’s ideas (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Spillane, 2004). School leaders play an important role in carrying and shaping policy messages, with consequences for teachers’ implementation (Coburn, 2006; Coburn and Woulfin, 2012). However, there are gaps in our understanding of how coaches, as instructional leaders, play a role in bridging the macro-policy level with the micro-instructional level. In particular, how do reading coaches capitalize on connections to the field of reading instruction? And, how do coaches advance policy messages in schools to motivate change?

Coaches have multiple roles in districts and schools. The research on coaching offers an in-depth discussion of coaches’ educative role—the kinds of activities they undertake to support teachers’ ongoing professional learning. Existing research highlights that coaches serve as facilitators of reform by engaging teachers in ongoing and highly contextualized professional development (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010; Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003; Zigmond & Bean, 2006). These professional development activities include coaches observing teachers’ classrooms, providing feedback on instruction, conducting demonstration lessons, working with groups of teachers to examine student data, and facilitating professional development sessions (Bean et al., 2003; Dole, 2004; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). However, reading coaches can also play a political role vis a vis instructional policy (Coburn and Woulfin, 2012; Deussen, 2007). Coaches’ political role involves pressuring teachers to respond to policy in a particular way. As political actors, coaches promote a policy’s ideas and practices in order to motivate change in a certain direction. Because coaches are intermediaries who are connected both to the district level and to teachers, they broker ideas and communicate messages about policy. As intermediaries, coaches present policy messages to teachers and can serve as socially skilled actors with the ability to motivate change (Fligstein, 2001).

In the previous chapters, I depicted coaches’ connections to the broader environment and their work in formulating district level policy related to reading instruction and assessment. This chapter digs deeper into the political aspects of coaches’ work with teachers. I address the following questions: How did coaches frame reading policy in Lincoln Unified? What tactics did coaches employ in an attempt to motivate change? I explain how coaches’ framing played a crucial role as mechanism to translate the district’s reading policy into classroom practice. I argue that, to influence teachers, coaches engaged in framing that drew upon particular logics and tactics in different settings. Coaches selected the particular logics, venues, and tactics for framing that could resonate in their specific school context and motivate changes in teachers’ reading instruction. But the nature of coaches’ framing activities, including coaches’ options for using various logics, venues, and tactics was constrained by the environmental structures and the specific school-level contexts in which these coaches were embedded.

## Coaches' Work in Schools

In schools across the United States, coaches promote instructional reform and provide “hands on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom” (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Joyce & Showers, 1980, p. 380). This chapter uses conceptual tools from framing theory to advance our understanding of the relationship between the logics from the environment, actors’ work, and policy implementation. To share the context for how coaches influenced the implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP), I begin by portraying the coaching models of three focal coaches: Bess, Tanya, and Lauren. Next, I explain the nature and characteristics of coaches’ framing activities, arguing that framing was influenced by the school context. This analysis of coaches’ framing draws attention to the ways in which coaches drew upon broad ideas about reading instruction from the environment while interacting with teachers to promote reform. Finally, I operationalize the concept of social skill by comparing the strategic tactics used by the three focal coaches in their framing. I show how, during implementation, coaches incorporated logics of reading instruction in their reading policy frames, constructed venues for framing, and enacted socially skilled tactics. Coaches’ agency, at the macro, meso, and micro levels, was enabled and constrained by district and school conditions.

### *Terrain of Coaches’ Work*

Aiming to develop teachers’ knowledge and skills and support the district’s TCRWP adoption, Lincoln Unified’s coaches engaged in the majority of activities that the coaching literature commonly identifies as components of coaches’ educative role (Bean, 2003; Deussen et al., 2007; Poglinco et al., 2003). Over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, the three focal coaches led trainings and meetings and conducted coaching cycles to support teachers and advance district level reform; they also carried out administrative and managerial tasks supporting the technical aspects of implementation.<sup>32</sup> To provide context for each coach’s framing, I introduce each focal coach’s model of coaching with distinctive work practices. I argue that, within this district, each coach employed her own coaching model while working to implement TCRWP, and, in turn, each model affected the coach’s framing.

#### Bess: Literacy Central at Linden Elementary

In her second year of coaching at Linden Elementary, Bess was an instructional leader who trained and supported teachers. She also played an administrative role by monitoring the school’s reading and writing data (this coach acted as a data guardian), coordinating the school’s intervention program, and communicating with district administrators. The principal of Bess’ school said:

I really rely on [Bess]. She leads our staff developments around literacy. She’s leading the ship around where we’re going with literacy.... I mean, she’s...kind of like a sub-director [of literacy instruction].

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<sup>32</sup> Additionally, with regard to district-level work, Bess, Tanya, and Lauren played an active role in the coach collaborative, in which Lincoln Unified’s coaches met to adapt and refine the reading program.



Thus, the principal had given Bess significant authority over the realm of reading instruction.

This coach's work routines reflected her belief that fostering change required building consensus among staff members. Bess explained that:

one thing I've been thinking about a lot lately –I feel like the way that I am most comfortable working is...bringing a group of people together and kind of coming to a shared understanding or a shared agreement, and then figuring out how individually I can support each person in that group to move toward that shared agreement or shared goal

Bess used meetings and trainings to develop common understandings and shared goals for teachers. And although Bess conducted coaching cycles with second, third, and fifth grade teachers, her model for coaching leaned more heavily on grade level team meetings and whole staff professional development sessions for promoting changes in classroom practice.

First, Bess provided grade-level specific support during the team meetings, which frequently addressed the elements of assessment, data, and standards-based instruction.<sup>33</sup> During these meetings, teachers would analyze and discuss data on students' reading and writing. Then Bess would assist teachers in generating ideas for improving instruction or would help teachers plan lessons. Second, Bess promoted reform during staff meetings, and she encouraged teachers to share ideas and concerns to get on the same page and to build consensus. During the 2010-2011 school year, Bess facilitated several staff meetings in which she led trainings on: TCRWP instructional materials, how to administer the TCRWP reading assessment and analyze students' scores on that assessment, and reading homework and the school wide reading log.

#### Tanya: Opportunities for Learning at Davis Elementary

As a first year coach at Davis Elementary, Tanya supported teachers by leading trainings, conducting coaching cycles, and coordinating testing and data management. This coach's work routines aimed to raise teachers' skill-level. Tanya planned and led a variety of trainings—for the whole staff and grade level teams—to provide learning opportunities for teachers on assessment, standards based instruction, test preparation, and designing instruction for intervention students. Davis' principal frequently delegated professional development planning to the coach. And the principal counted on the coach to prepare posters and handouts for trainings and meetings at the site. The principal mentioned

I think that she's [Tanya's] focused on the ELD and supporting the ELD, which is the best thing that could happen. She's very, you know, open to the professional development, the process that we're going through with the backwards mapping.

Tanya also conducted in- classroom coaching cycles with two novice second and third grade teachers. The principal had directed Tanya to focus on supporting novice teachers. Many of Tanya's coach-teacher interactions were private, and this contrasts with Bess' public interactions with groups of teachers.

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<sup>33</sup> Linden Elementary was in its second year of using a structured routine for grade level team meetings in which, every six weeks, the coach met with teachers from each grade level during their collaboration period.

Tanya's coaching was impacted by her school's program improvement status. In an attempt to raise achievement, Davis Elementary was simultaneously engaged in conflicting reforms related to reading, intervention services, Special Education services, and English Language Development. Tanya played a role in focusing the principal's attention to help create and broadcast consistent messages to teachers about appropriate and effective forms of reading instruction. For example, during a leadership team meeting, the coach reminded the principal about features of the TCRWP instructional materials that could help teachers plan rigorous and effective lessons. In this way, the coach redirected the principal's attention and helped manage the flurry of reforms at Davis.

#### Lauren: Push-in Coaching at Taylor Elementary

Lauren was in her third year of coaching at Taylor Elementary. She supported teachers through intensive coaching cycles. Specifically, Lauren utilized a push-in coaching model in which she modeled mini-lessons and observed teachers across one grade level team for a four to eight week period. And, on a weekly basis, she debriefed with the grade level team to talk about aspects of lessons, planning instruction, and next steps for coaching. Lauren relied on this form of in-classroom coaching, rather than trainings or meetings, to promote instructional improvement. This coach described her model of coaching:

My philosophy is really try to build on their strengths or what they think that they're strengths are, because what I see as their strengths may not be the same strengths that they see. So, when I first go in I try to just observe and figure out what they're doing really well, whether it's just having a good relationship with the kids or differentiating...I try to look for those leverage points so that when we do talk about things that I think needs working on so that it's not coming from a negative place.

Lauren advanced TCRWP's ideas and practices while modeling instruction and debriefing with teachers, as well as in her informal conversations with teachers. This coach believed that teachers needed to see a reform's practices in action before they could adopt the new approach to literacy instruction.

The principal of her school declared

what's been amazing is what has occurred when she goes in rooms and models and then has teachers model for them. That relationship in building the teacher's practice raises all kids' learning. And I think that is a real key.

Over the course of the school year, Lauren conducted push-in coaching with kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers. Lauren's model of push-in coaching reduced the individualism of teaching by placing the coach within a classroom and by providing opportunities for teachers to share their practices with colleagues from their grade level team.

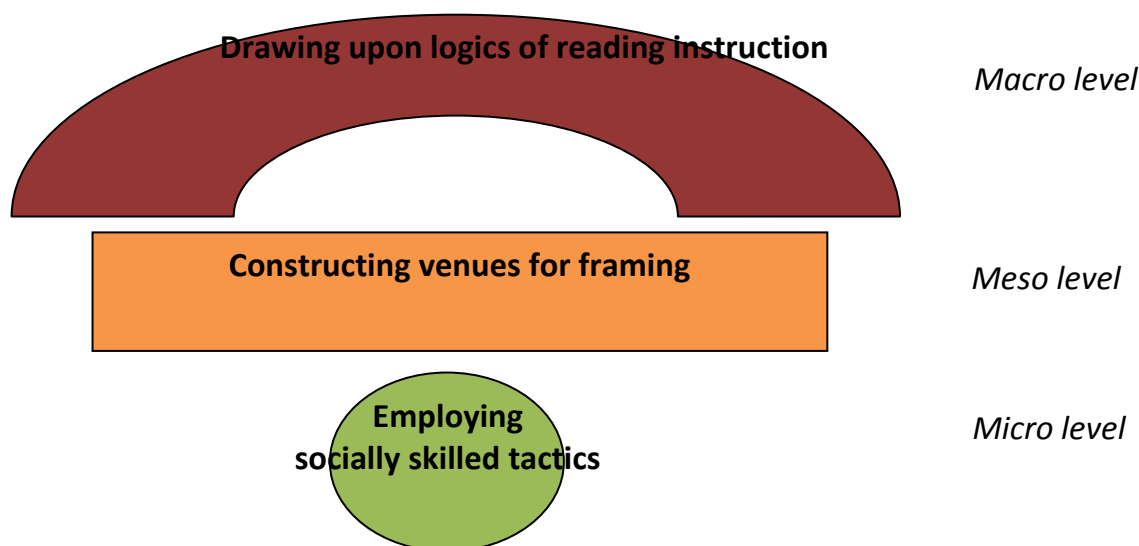
### *Coaches' Framing*

Though Bess, Tanya, and Lauren employed different models for coaching and carried out an assortment of coaching activities, they all engaged in framing with teachers to motivate reform. Framing is a strategic way for actors to define problems, propose solutions, and develop a motivating language or vision to “organize experiences and guide action” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). In this manner, actors’ discussions and negotiations to justify, package, and deliver ideas can motivate and persuade other individuals to change (Benford & Snow, 2000). This means that coaches’ interactions with teachers helped steer the course of implementation. I use framing theory to dig deeper into the political dimensions of coaches’ work. I focus on coaches and how they promoted ideas about reading instruction in order to explicate how framing served as a mechanism for the implementation of reading policy. Therefore, my analysis of coaches’ framing, as one dimension of their work, explains how coaches interacted with teachers to link logics with practices in schools. To understand how coach-teacher framing affected the translation of reading policy into classroom practice, I grapple with the content of coaches’ frames and the nature of coaches’ framing activities (where and how coaches framed). I argue that coaches actively drew on logics of reading instruction, constructed venues for framing, and employed socially skilled tactics to engage in framing during the implementation of TCRWP. Coaches’ work was bounded by the district and school context.

#### From the Environment: The Content of Coaches’ Framing

While working to support and motivate teachers, coaches framed a broad array of ideas about reading instruction. To understand the types of ideas promoted by Lincoln Unified’s coaches, I analyzed the content of coach-teacher frames to identify the logics of reading instruction contained inside coaches’ frames. I argue that coaches’ agency involved pulling down logics from the institutional environment. Figure 9 represents how, during implementation, coaches actively selected logics of reading instruction from the macro-level to package and subsequently deliver to teachers in frames. Frames incorporated particular ideas about reading instruction and aspects of reading policy that coaches determined that they should highlight or emphasize for teachers.

Figure 9  
*Coaches' Agency at the Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels*

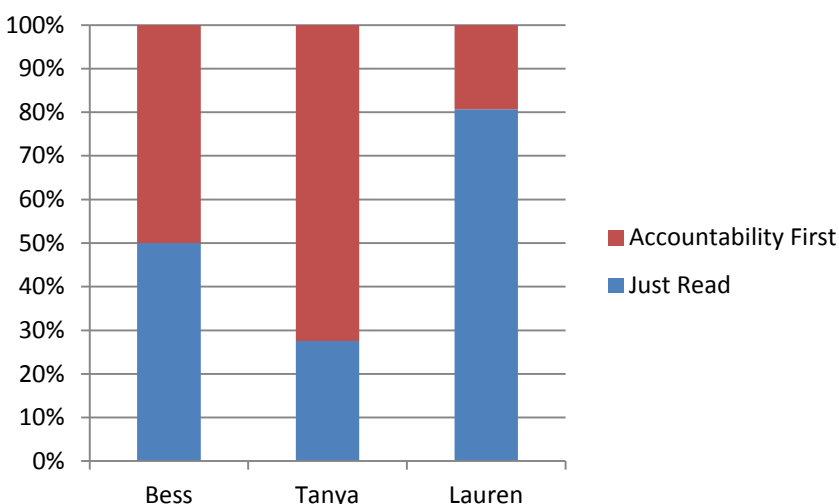


### *Logics*

Frames include strands of the environment's broader logics (Benford & Snow, 2000). One more sentence here to explain what you mean by this. Over the course of the first year of TCRWP implementation, coaches actively selected ideas and rules from the environment to emphasize in their work with teachers. Yet they neglected to choose (and invoke) other ideas and rules from the environment, thereby downplaying other aspects of reading policy for teachers. This means that coaches selected the logics to frame from the environment. Across the three coaches' framing, 52 percent of frames were associated with Accountability First, while 48 percent of frames addressed Just Read.<sup>34</sup> While all three coaches promoted aspects of both logics, they did so in varying degrees. As shown in Figure 10, each coach engaged in a different balance of framing on the logics of Accountability First and Just Read.

<sup>34</sup> As discussed in the earlier chapter on the logics of reading instruction, about 60 percent of logics instantiated across Lincoln Unified were associated with Accountability First, and nearly 40 percent were associated with Just Read. Thus, coach-teacher framing was more likely to reflect the Just Read model of reading instruction.

Figure 10  
*Coaches' framing of Accountability First and Just Read*



Even though TCRWP, the core of the district's new reading policy, aligned with Just Read, there was considerable variability in the extent to which each coach's framing drew upon Just Read. The variability indicates that each coach actively selected logics from the environment, as opposed to routinely advocating for the district's reading policy. Bess' framing work addressed Accountability First and Just Read at equal rates (50 percent of Bess' frames aligned with Just Read). She engaged in accountability first framing while introducing test prep practices during staff and grade level meetings. This coach communicated with fourth grade teachers about the state writing test and provided a series of suggestions for how to prepare students for the test. For instance, she reminded teachers that "we have a binder with the practice tests." In contrast, during a grade level team meeting, Bess presented a Just Read frame by urging first grade teachers to monitor students' home reading with a reading log; she was engaged in framing on the pillars of TCRWP. Therefore, Bess drew upon Accountability First plus Just Read logics from the environment. This clearly shows that this coach was framing ideas about both of the models of reading instruction Bess' framing attempted to link teachers with accountability-focused principles and practices from the current policy environment, as well as with the district's own reading plan in equal proportions.

Since fewer than 30 percent of Tanya's frames represented the principles and practices from Just Read, this coach was not engaging in intensive framing work around the principles and practices of the new reading program. She rarely promoted ideas about cultivating students love of reading or using the new instructional materials. The majority of Tanya's frames reflected the principles of Accountability First. She advanced ideas about standards-based instruction, testing, and how to change practices to meet external goals for the school. For instance, during grade level team meetings, staff professional development sessions, and in leadership team meetings, this coach reiterated the importance of standards-mapping as an activity that would help solve the school's problem of low reading scores. Tanya noted that, in her work with third grade teachers, "the standards mapping, that's where I spent the most time kind of getting at the meat with them [third grade team]." This finding on the content of Tanya's frames points to the extent to which this coach was drawing upon ideas about reading instruction from the broader policy environment. In

effect, this coach's framing was forming tighter couplings between teachers and the accountability-centered environment, as compared to teachers and the district's reading plan.

In contrast, about 80 percent of Lauren's frames addressed Just Read, and they frequently contained ideas regarding TCRWP's principles and practices. This coach was issuing intensive messages about how teachers should adopt the district's new, Just Read-aligned program. Specifically, Lauren's framing work emphasized the principles and practices associated with using the program's new instructional materials, developing classroom libraries, and fostering students' love of reading. For example, while meeting with a group of second grade teachers, Lauren pointed out the structure of the TCRWP unit in the instructional materials, and she told the teachers how they could adapt this structure when teaching mini-lessons three days per week. Lauren's specialized frames delivered information about the new reading program, and she highlighted aspects of the new program and elements of Just Read for teachers at her school. This meant that her framing served to couple teachers at Taylor Elementary with the district's reading reform, rather than the broader policy environment. However, Lauren rarely drew upon the Accountability First logic in her framing.

### Constructing Venues for Framing

To motivate reform, coaches drew upon the environment's logics for the content of their frames and also constructed venues for framing that were distinctly shaped by district and school level conditions. In addition to selecting logics of reading instruction to package and advance with frames, coaches made decisions about where to engage in framing with teachers. The selection and formation of framing venues occurred at the organizational or meso-level. Specifically, coaches chose sites for framing with groups of teachers, as well as with individual teachers, in formal and informal settings. Throughout implementation, coaches' agency was enabled and constrained by district and school level structures and conditions. How were coaches interacting with teachers around issues of reading policy? Where were these coaches engaging in framing? What explains coaches' venues for framing?

On the one hand, coaches constructed and utilized formally-structured venues to engage in framing for groups of teachers. Most of the focal coaches' framing targeted a group of teachers in formal settings; about 73 percent of coach-teacher frames were in the group format. Over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, Bess, Tanya, and Lauren led meetings and trainings that provided a platform for presenting sets of ideas about reading instruction. During grade level team meetings, staff meetings, and district-wide professional development sessions, coaches engaged in framing in the group format. This meant that coaches' group framing spread policy's ideas and rules in formal settings. For example, during a grade level team meeting, Bess told first grade teachers how they should monitor students' home reading with a reading log. When coaches framed in the group context, they employed a single frame to promote a set of ideas to a group of teachers—who may or may not have matching beliefs with that particular frame. Framing in the group context advanced generic, unspecialized coach-teacher frames that failed to be differentiated to meet teachers' particular needs.

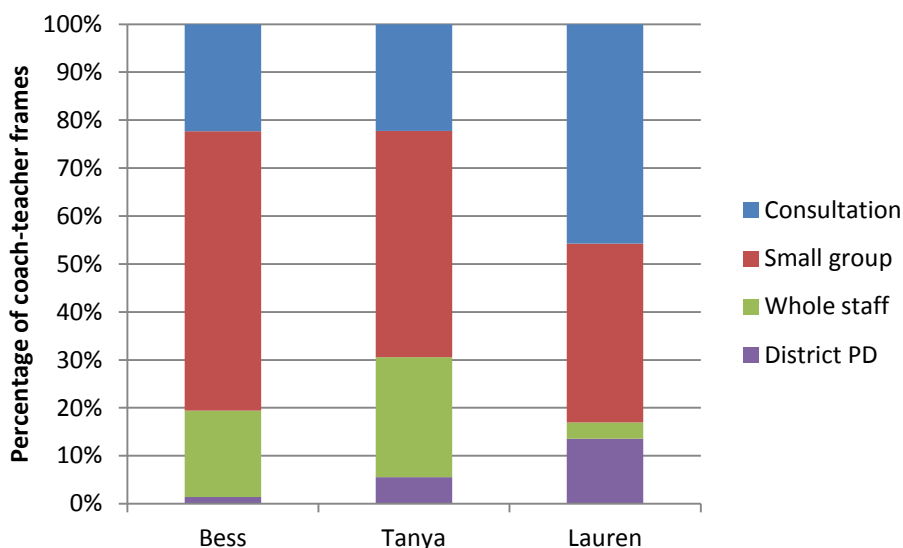
On the other hand, coaches used informally-structured venues to engage in consultation framing with a single teacher. When conducting consultation framing, a coach would meet with

an individual teacher and advance particular ideas related to reading instruction; 27 percent of coach-teacher frames were in the consultation format. While conducting cycles of observing and demonstrating instructional practices, coaches oftentimes asked individual teachers to meet and debrief the coaching process; the debriefing meetings were sites of consultation framing. For example, Lauren chose to conduct consultation framing while meeting with Meredith, a novice third grade teacher, to talk about effective and engaging ways to teach particular writing standards and skills. In this case, the coach selected a space to meet informally with Meredith in order to carry out framing work.

Consultation framing frequently occurred within an informal context, and this tells us that coaches, as instructional leaders, were advancing policy outside of formal meetings and trainings. As a result, coaches elected to carry out strategic framing work in their offices, in teachers' classrooms, and in the hallways of their schools. Many of these one-on-one coach-teacher interactions occurred during a teacher's lunch period or prep time, before or after school, and even while a teacher was teaching a classroom full of students. For example, a fourth grade teacher stopped by Bess' office to ask a question about how to use two different types practice tests for the state's standardized test. The teacher showed the practice tests to the coach, and then the coach offered advice on effective and manageable ways to fold the test-practice activities into the school day. In this 'caught the coach' moment, Bess was clarifying how teachers should prepare students for California's standardized test. Bess actively constructed a venue for framing by taking advantage of her brief interaction with the teacher in order to advance ideas about Accountability First.

To reveal the ways in which coaches acted within the structure of the district and its schools, I compared where each coach engaged in framing. Figure 11 shows how each of the three focal coaches conducted framing in different formats. Figure 11 shows several differences among the venues of coaches' framing. Some coaches relied more or less heavily on coach-teacher framing in the small group and whole staff formats. Coaches were constrained by schools' organizational structure and were only able interact with teachers at limited times and in particular places. To promote instructional reform, coaches took advantage of collaboration routines and their authority in their school site.

Figure 11  
*Formats of each Coach's Framing*



Bess was more likely to conduct framing with small groups of teachers. Linden Elementary's structure for coach-led grade level team meetings provided a site for coach-teacher framing of reading policy.<sup>35</sup> For instance, during a third grade team meeting, Bess put forth an assessment frame telling teachers how they should teach spelling skills to prepare for the CST.

In comparison to Bess, Tanya conducted a larger proportion of their framing during the district's professional development sessions on TCRWP's practices, instructional materials, and assessment. For example, Tanya framed ideas in the professional development sessions about the role of teacher-student conferences and how to implement this element of TCRWP. Coaches were positioned as facilitators of these mandatory trainings, and they took on a trainer-role in which they could present ideas to groups of teachers from Lincoln Unified. Thus, these coaches were able to use the district's professional development sessions as a venue for advancing policy frames in a formal setting. In the case of Tanya, she was comfortable presenting a larger proportion of her frames in the context of district professional development sessions.

Finally, as compared to the other coaches, Lauren was much more likely to engage in consultation framing. Lauren's routine of push-in coaching led her to create venues for framing policy messages in the context of one-on-one interactions with a teacher. At times, Lauren would even frame while working with a teacher inside of their classroom in the context of reading workshop. For example, after modeling a TCRWP lesson from Units of Study, she talked with a second grade teacher about how to extend the lesson by reviewing the strategy with his students.

Each coach's level of power and authority helped determine how and where to conduct framing work. When coaches were granted greater authority over reading instruction and over meeting agendas, coaches were able to engage in additional framing in the whole staff and small

<sup>35</sup> During the 2009-2010 school year, Bess had worked to establish the structure and data analysis activities for team meetings.



group formats. In contrast, when coaches were not positioned to lead these types meetings, their framing was more likely to unfold in informal settings, such as during one-on-one consultations with teachers. The three schools utilized different types of staff and grade level team meetings, resulting in different routines and norms for coach-teacher interaction. The meeting structures and norms enabled and constrained coaches' framing work. Linden Elementary had an established routine for grade level meetings in which Bess would meet with teachers to analyze student achievement data on a regular basis. This routine enabled this coach's framing of specialized messages about assessment and reading instruction for groups of teachers in a formal setting. However, both Davis and Taylor Elementary had adopted the practice of using grade level meetings for teacher collaboration and planning time. In those two schools, teachers rather than coaches facilitated most grade level meetings. This meant that Tanya and Lauren had to seek out other venues for framing issues of reading instruction.

### *Social Skill & Coaches' Tactics*

In the previous sections, I portrayed coaches' agency vis a vis the macro and meso levels, illuminating how coaches pulled down logics of reading instruction and created venues for persuading teachers. But how were coaches advancing frames to mobilize change in their schools? What tactics, or 'moves,' bolstered coaches' framing? What micro-level processes were associated with coaches' framing? I use the concept of *social skill* to characterize coaches' strategic framing activities. Social skill "highlights how certain individuals possess a highly developed cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people in the service of these action frames" (Fligstein & McAdam, i.p., p. 11). To answer critical questions about how school-level actors mobilize instructional reform, I analyzed coaches' ability to 'read' teachers and their schools (Hagan & Levi, 2004). Fligstein and McAdam (i.p.) emphasized that promoting change "requires that strategic actors be able to "get outside of their own heads and work to find some collective definition of interest" (p. 11). I turn attention to how coaches tried to develop collective understandings of reading instruction. I argue that the three coaches enacted socially skilled tactics. Coaches actively selected tactics that matched school-level conditions.

After analyzing coaches' framing trajectories, I identified the socially skilled tactics used by these coaches. Table 6 provides information on the extent to which Bess, Tanya, and Lauren utilized five tactics that were inductively derived from my observation data on coaches' framing. I argue that coaches, as implementers at the micro-level, employed socially skilled moves in an attempt to catalyze changes in teachers' reading instruction.

Table 6  
*Socially skilled tactics employed by each reading coach*

Coach	Socially Skilled Tactics			
	<i>Lucy Says</i>	<i>It's a Project</i>	<i>Building Consensus</i>	<i>Delegating</i>
<i>Bess</i>	◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆
<i>Tanya</i>	◆	◆		◆◆◆
<i>Lauren</i>	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆	

◆ = Tactic used 1-2 times

◆◆ = Tactic used 3-4 times

◆◆◆ = Tactic used 5 or more times

First, when coaches used the Lucy Says tactic, they invoked Lucy Calkins, the founder of TCRWP and the author of numerous instructional materials and practitioner resources materials, to frame ideas about reading instruction. To promote changes in practice, coaches cited experts and their research in their frames, thereby shifting expertise away from the coach and towards the program. Second, the It's a Project tactic involved coaches assuring teachers that the new reading program was a work in progress, almost like a fix-it project, so that teachers could feel free to choose how to tackle this approach to instruction. When using this tactic, coaches emphasized the level of flexibility for teachers' adoption of the district's reading plan. Third, when coaches used the Building Consensus tactic, they attempted to get teachers on the same page in order to arrive at a common understanding of the problem or solution. Thus, coaches would engage in consensus building with teachers to clarify problems and present solutions. Finally, the Delegating tactic involved coaches asking teachers to engage in framing to promote particular ideas. This meant that coaches passed off responsibility for framing to teachers, enabling teachers to advertise ideas about reading instruction.

There were some commonalities in how coaches took advantage of their awareness of the organization and its actors while framing policy messages for teachers. Table 6 shows that all three coaches used the tactics of Lucy Says and It's a Project to mobilize support amongst teachers. When carrying out Lucy Says, coaches used Calkins' materials to develop teachers' understanding of the reading reform. In this manner, the coaches positioned Lucy (and other experts)—rather than the coaches themselves—as the knowledgeable agents advocating change. In a districtwide professional development session, Bess emphasized that “Calkins wants us to get the kids thinking, talking, [and] then [doing] more reading.” Coaches tended to reiterate ideas from Calkins or other sources to develop common understandings that could motivate collective change. Coaches lacked formal authority and were not always clearly positioned as experts, and they invoked Calkins and other experts as a way to bolster their efforts in promoting reform.

Second, all three coaches adopted the tactic of It's a Project. When coaches' framing used this tactic, they highlighted that TCRWP was a fluid, flexible, ongoing project to improve

reading instruction, rather than a highly formalized reform effort. First, in a districtwide training in the fall of 2010, Lauren emphasized the project aspect of the new reading program. She told teachers that they're "co-creating" the district's approach to reading and that teachers "should feel comfortable making mistakes." This coach's framing attempted to convince teachers that the reform was continually evolving and low-stakes.

In another example, in the winter of 2010, after a whole-staff conversation on adopting the reading workshop structure, Bess told teachers that they would "continue this conversation... It is a work in progress." Bess was framing the new approach to reading in a low-pressure manner. This flexibility around the implementation of reading policy is congruent with the district's tradition of teacher autonomy and instructional freedom. So, coaches exhibited an awareness of the district's approach to reform efforts, as well as to teachers' desire for flexibility. When using this tactic, coaches told teachers to take up the elements of TCRWP that worked for them and that they could ignore or discard other elements of the program. Bess stated that:

there are so many pieces [of the district's reading plan] and people feel overwhelmed by them. I feel like my message as a coach has been—You're right, it's overwhelming. There's a lot of pieces. Find some pieces that you can grab hold of and work with and make your own and feel good about. And don't beat yourself up over the pieces that you can't, which I think is a legitimate message as a coach.

This approach supported incremental change because coaches were inviting teachers to respond to individual strands of the program. Coaches issued recommendations that teachers take up pieces of TCRWP rather than attempting to demand deeper or more radical or comprehensive changes. In this manner, coaches empathized with teachers' anxiety regarding altering practices to meet TCRWP demands. Coaches, as intermediary actors lacking formal authority, employed the It's a Project tactic to engage in framing to let teachers know that they could use their discretion while implementing TCRWP.

I reveal aspects of each coach's leadership strategies by distinguishing among coaches' use of socially skilled tactics. Table 6 indicates that, in their framing, coaches employed different combinations of the five tactics. At the micro-level, each coach selected differing sets of socially skilled tactics. Bess used all five tactics while framing, but she most often used the Building Consensus tactic. Bess was able to capitalize on her school's meeting structure to frame messages for grade level teams and the whole staff. Bess was aware of teachers' needs to discuss different elements of TCRWP and their need for clarity around aspects of this program. She was also aware of differences between grade levels with regard to adopting TCRWP. For example, she understood that the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were much more comfortable with the practice of teacher-student reading conferences, as one aspect of TCRWP, than K-2 teachers. So, she worked on building consensus among teachers in both of those groups (K-2 and 3-5). Bess attempted to create a shared identity among teachers while facilitating meetings. While enacting her meeting-centered coaching model, Bess engaged in consensus building. At several points in the school year, the coach asked teachers to share obstacles to implementing the program, as well as to make agreements about what portions of the reading plan that they could commit to. For example, during a staff meeting, she asked teachers to share how they were using the new instructional materials and to set goals, as a group, for how they'd used the instructional materials for the remainder of the school year. In December of 2010, to facilitate this discussion, Bess created posters that were titled with different elements of TCRWP, such as conferencing

with students and classroom library. Then teachers volunteered to work with other teachers, sharing their successes and challenges with that element of the new reading program. The teachers in the classroom library reported that “we’re sending home the books” and that “kids now know how to choose books [at their independent reading level].” In contrast, teachers in the instructional materials appeared to be overwhelmed by the verbose lessons in Calkins’ Units of Study. They expressed concern, to Bess and their colleagues, that they were unsure “when can we move to the other unit.” In this manner, the consensus building tactic retained flexibility for teachers’ adoption of practices associated with the district’s reading policy. Additionally, the consensus building tactic gave teachers a role in crafting school-level reading policy because teachers were asked by the coach to help make decisions about the school’s reading program.

In contrast, Tanya did not use the tactic of consensus building at all. She did employ several other socially skilled tactics, including the Delegating tactic. Her leadership strategy involved handing off some framing to other actors. Tanya’s delegation brought in other actors and drew upon their practices to provide support for her frames. In particular, Tanya asked other actors to promote systems and practices to help promote change. The coach positioned these actors as leaders or facilitators in staff meetings to help create common understandings and mobilize support; this means that the coach was distributing leadership. In staff meetings, Tanya asked other teachers and the school improvement coach, Adam, to introduce ideas and initiatives. For example, she asked a second grade teacher to introduce a type of reading conference that could be conducted with struggling readers. She also asked a fifth grade teacher to explain a new type of grade level team collaboration, in which teachers completed a form related to their intervention students and how teachers were supporting those students’ learning. In this example, during a staff meeting in January of 2011, the teacher stood in front of the staff, and he held up the form that he’d filled in with data on five struggling readers. He pointed to different sections of the form, telling the group that he’d filled in data on his own students but talked with members of his grade level team about “how can I reach these students.” The Delegating tactic shifted expertise towards others. In a manner similar to Lucy Says, this socially skilled tactic shifted the source of expertise away from the coach.

When using the Delegating tactic, Tanya’s frames also used other teachers’ practices as models for how teachers should teach. In this way, the coach shared information about how other teachers were adopting TCRWP. Thus, rather than declaring how all teachers should approach reading instruction, the coach’s frames promoted practices that other teachers were already successfully implementing. For example, in a meeting with first grade teachers, she mentioned how second grade teachers were structuring their reading workshop period. In this way, Tanya used the second grade teachers’ practices as a model to motivate change in the direction of the reform. In so doing, Tanya amplified other teachers’ practices to create normative pressure for other teachers. When Tanya framed messages that included ideas about other teachers’ practices, she reduced the compartmentalization of teachers’ practice by enabling teachers to learn about instruction occurring within other classrooms.

Finally, Lauren only used three of the socially skilled tactics in her interactions with teachers: Lucy Says. When Lauren employed the Lucy Says’ tactic, she concretely referenced how Calkins’ program suggests teaching reading and writing. During a districtwide professional development session for third grade teachers, Lauren explained to the group that “this program wants kids to read the just right books at school, at home, so they keep reading.” To bolster her

frames, Lauren displayed instructional materials and practitioner resource materials that were associated with the TCRWP program. For example, in a debriefing meeting with a group of second grade teachers, Lauren used the adopted instructional materials strategically. She opened a TCRWP teachers' guide to a lesson on 'reading longer and stronger' and placed the book on the table where the group was sitting. Then Lauren reminded teachers about the specific steps of the lesson, as written in this teachers' guide. So, this coach used these materials as artifacts while invoking Calkins and urging teachers to change their instruction. In this example, Lucy, rather than this coach, was the expert delivering ideas about reading instruction. Thus, Lauren shifted expertise away from herself and towards the instructional materials. Lauren was aware that some teachers at her school were not comfortable working with a coach. In particular, a few teachers were concerned about the evaluative or punitive aspects of coaching. Lauren shared that a veteran second grade teacher told her that the in-classroom coaching:

just feels evaluative to him. And so I said, you know, can you tell me more about why this feels evaluative, because as a coach I don't want my role to be interpreted to be that, and I wanted my first intention to support the teachers. And he said it makes me nervous when you come in and take notes while I'm teaching.

She emphasized her role as a trainer, rather than as an evaluator, by referring to Calkins' ideas and program materials. Lauren attempted to position herself as someone providing tips on using instructional materials—rather than as a leader who evaluates classroom practice.

## Conclusions

Coaches' framing helped steer the implementation of TCRWP. The focal coaches interacted with teachers and engaged in framing to motivate instructional reform. As intermediaries within the education system, coaches' agency operated at the macro, meso, and micro levels. Coaches pulled down logics of reading instruction from the institutional environment. Bess, Tanya, and Lauren actively selected when and how to frame Accountability First and Just Read for teachers. In so doing, they acted to couple some aspects of the environment with actors in schools.

In Lincoln Unified, coaches used different models of coaching, carrying out diverse coaching practices. Some coaches led meetings with groups of teachers, while other coaches (such as Lauren) provided individualized coaching within teachers' classrooms. It is evident that Bess, Tanya, and Lauren created sites for framing ideas about reading instruction. Coaches issued frames about assessment and TCRWP's pedagogical practices in district-sponsored professional development sessions. But coaches also presented frames to individual teachers in informal settings that tended to address discrete classroom practices. Coaches' selection of venues for framing was influenced by district and school level conditions. Finally, coaches' actions involved enacting socially skilled moves to catalyze change. Bess, Tanya, and Lauren were capable of utilizing a range of socially skilled tactics—from invoking Calkins and working build consensus among teachers to delegating framing. At the micro-level, coaches were selecting how to frame the logics of reading instruction.

Coaches, as organizational actors, had the capacity to make choices about how to catalyze change. Importantly, in Lincoln Unified, it was not just administrators or leaders making decisions and promoting reform efforts. Instead, coaches, a type of middle manager in the education system, worked strategically to increase teachers' willingness to adopt TCRWP. Coaches' position and power enabled them to carry out this persuasive work while interacting with teachers. Specifically, coaches took advantage of their awareness of conditions in each school and access to teachers' classrooms to effect change. However, coaches' framing was constrained in various ways by ideas from the environment and organizational structures. It is evident that Accountability First and Just Read guided coaches' work.

This analysis of coaches' work permits us to see the ongoing interplay between structure and agency (Giddens, 1979). Throughout this reform effort, coaches' work was constrained by structures, including logics and the schools' organization. At the same time, coaches' work influenced and affected those structures; coaches' routines played a role in institutionalizing particular structures in the district and its schools. For example, coaches' framing on analyzing reading achievement data to monitor students' progress bolstered the district's approach to analyzing data. In this way, coaches' activities were 'building up' to form institutional structures.

Coaches' framing is a mechanism of policy implementation. Coaches capitalized on their position—in the district and within schools—to tell teachers how they should and must adopt TCRWP's pedagogical practices. Importantly, coaches varied in the extent to which they drew upon the logics of Accountability First and Just Read. Thus, each coach advanced his or her own set of policy messages, directing teachers to enact certain aspects of the district's new reading program, while ignoring others. This variability in the content of coaches' framing means that teachers were exposed to some elements of the policy more than others, and this helps explain differences in teachers' responses to the new reading program. Coaches also constructed venues for framing. Some coaches presented ideas to groups of teachers and others to individual teachers in formal and informal settings. The conventional structures of schools, including compartmentalized classrooms and limited time for teacher or coach-teacher collaboration, constrained coaches' work practices. As a consequence, coaches were forced to remain flexible as to when and where to carry out strategic work to persuade teachers to adopt the district's reading plan.

Finally, the three focal coaches served as socially skilled actors, but did so in different ways. They used a range of tactics while attempting to catalyze instructional reform. Coaches remained cognizant of their own unique role in the district and school. Interestingly, several tactics involved transferring expertise away from the coach. To fully understand coaches' social skill, it is also necessary consider how teachers responded to coaches' framing. For that reason, the following chapter will share how various dimensions of the reading plan were implemented in teachers' classrooms, thereby drawing connections between coaches' framing and reading instruction.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Like It's Gold:**

#### **Coaches' Role in Shaping the Patterns of Classroom Practice**

Researchers, reformers, and practitioners all bemoan the great divide between policy's ideas and directives and the instruction that actually occurs inside classrooms. Reading policies contain sets of ideas about how teachers should teach reading. Previous research emphasized how teachers close their classroom doors, reject new ideas from policies, and, in effect, decouple policy from practice (Cohen, 1990; Cuban, 1993; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Conservatism is a norm of the teaching profession that contributes to the inertia for changing instruction (Lortie, 2002). However, a line of more recent research indicates that teachers can and do change the content and pedagogy of their instruction (Coburn, 2004; Correnti & Rowan, 2007; Diamond, 2007). Studies of the implementation of accountability policies indicate that, indeed, reform efforts have altered what teachers teach, as well as how teachers deliver instruction (Anagnostopoulos, 2003; Coburn, 2004; Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2001; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007). Studies have revealed that some aspects of instruction, such as the content that teachers deliver in classrooms, tend to be more malleable than others. For this reason, it's critical to grapple with when and under what conditions policy penetrates classroom to restructure the content and pedagogy of reading instruction. It appears that coaching, as a policy lever, can play a role in catalyzing instructional reform (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Matsumura, Garnier, & Resnick, 2010). As intermediaries, coaches can teach teachers about how to implement a reading policy, and coaches can also promote a policy's ideas.

To understand the relationship between coaches' framing of reading policy and classroom practice, I pay particular attention to how teachers adopted the content and pedagogy of the district's new reading program, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). The in-depth analysis of teachers' adoption of the four pillars of TCRWP lets me draw attention to the ways in which coaches' framing generated particular patterns of implementation in schools and classrooms. Thus, this chapter answers questions about coaching's influence on the patterning of instructional practices in three elementary schools. I argue that coaches' use of logics and socially skilled tactics shaped teachers' incorporation of the content and pedagogy of TCRWP. To advance this argument, I first introduce four pillars of reading workshop and present the district-wide adoption of those pillars. This analysis reveals differences in the extent to which teachers implemented the pedagogy and content of TCRWP. Then I show how each coach's framing impacted instructional practices within each school. Coaches used the logics of Accountability First and Just Read to emphasize and prioritize specific pillars of reading policy. In particular, coaches' Just Read framing related to the instructional method of mini-lessons and the program's instructional materials led to deeper implementation. Each coach strategically used socially skilled tactics to advance reading policy frames in their work with teachers.

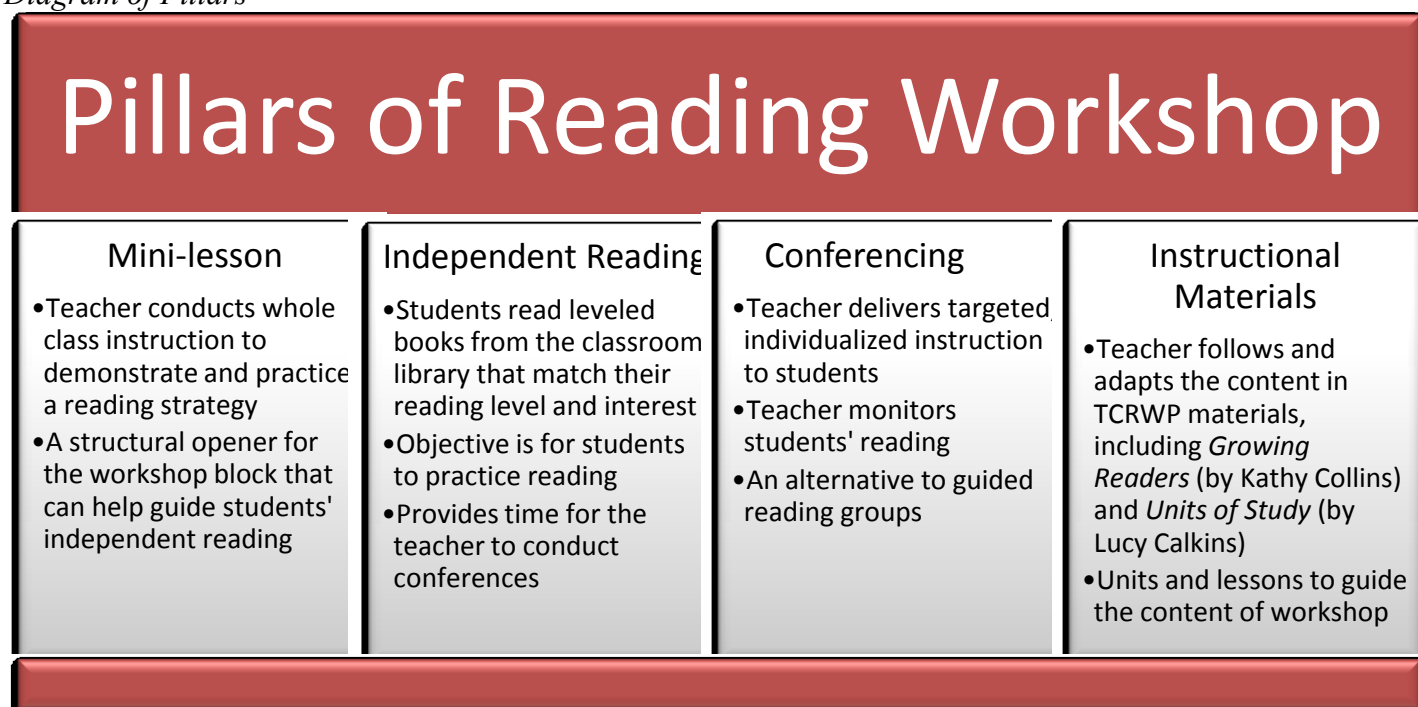
### **Findings**

#### *Pillars of TCRWP*

TCRWP, as the district's reading program, had many components, asking teachers to enact a host of instructional methods and follow a series of instructional materials. Therefore, it

is not sufficient or appropriate to evaluate how teachers adopted TCRWP as a single program. Instead, it's necessary to ascertain how teachers adopted its multiple components. To do so, I identified the critical elements of TCRWP. I refer to these elements as pillars because they serve as the foundation for this approach to literacy instruction. Figure 12 describes four pillars of this model of reading instruction: mini-lessons, independent reading, conferencing and instructional materials. Although the content of workshops changed across grade levels and throughout the school year, the architecture of workshop remained constant. In particular, TCRWP stipulated that “many aspects of the teaching of reading will not evolve over the year, but will, instead, remain consistent” (Overview, First Grade, p.1) because teachers should consistently deliver explicit mini-lessons aligned with the program’s instructional materials, provide time for independent reading, and engage in conferring. Thus, the pillars are constant pedagogical features—across grade levels and over the course of the school year. To understand the nature of this reading program, I share how each pillar was defined and promoted by policy messages and actors.

Figure 12  
*Diagram of Pillars*



### Mini-lesson

In mini-lessons, teachers present “direct and explicit strategy instruction” that “rallies children’s commitment and sense of purpose, and it instructs them in the essential reading skills” (Overview of the Year for First Grade Readers, 2010, p. 1). These lessons may include instruction on comprehension, decoding and accuracy, or fluency. In an interview, the principal of Taylor Elementary, explained that mini-lessons

are so important. And I’ve been in rooms where a teacher did a mini lesson in two minutes. I mean, they can be a little longer, they can be a little shorter. But the beauty is



to keep coming back with the children talking with the teacher about what they know for sure and what strategies they know and are gonna use.

Trainings and instructional materials specified that mini-lessons should only be about 10 minutes long and should include a clearly stated teaching point, as well as a demonstration of what students will learn to do. Nick, the lead coach, stated that

there has to be some brief direct instruction in some key areas in reading, spelling and studying of vocabulary and in writing. And then the instructions should be brief and clear and then followed up by lots of independent practice... We'll give you some little lessons in the beginning to get you [students] something new to think about, something new to try.

Teachers received multiple messages specifying that “mini-lessons include a clear teaching point that crystallizes the message of the lesson” (Overview, First Grade, 2010, p. 1). For example, the facilitators of the summer professional development trained teachers to explicitly state the objective of the mini-lesson by announcing: “Today, I will teach you that readers \_\_\_\_.” Finally, teachers were encouraged to create and use anchor charts, with text and visuals related to the teaching points for the unit or lesson. These charts, or posters, guided and reinforced the teacher’s delivery of the mini-lesson.

### Independent Reading

TCRWP hinged on the proposition that the reading workshop should include extended periods of time for students to engage in independent reading. The summer professional development materials declared that “the most important part of a reading workshop is the actual reading time” (Overview, First Grade, p. 2). Across the district, administrators, coaches, and teachers frequently talked about the role of independent reading and the importance of high reading volume. Lauren, the coach at Taylor Elementary, succinctly described independent reading as: “twenty minutes of hardcore reading. We want you [students] to be lost in a book.” During the summer training, the facilitators explained that, while working independently, students should spend most of their time reading and deeply immersed in their books, rather than talking, moving around the room, or writing.

Robin, a first grade teacher at Taylor Elementary, described independent reading as an activity in which

they [students] go and they have time in independent reading where they’re reading books. This is also another really important part, reading books at their own level for a sustained period of time, so they have their book boxes where they read books at their own level, that they shop for every week for a sustained period of time by themselves.

Her description of independent reading reveals how each student had a set of appropriately leveled books to read independently. The instructional routine of independent reading served an important structural role in freeing up the teacher to move around the room, observing and taking notes on students’ reading, in order to conference with students on their reading.

## Conferencing

Conferencing involves teachers conducting one-on-one or small group reading instruction while the majority of students engage in independent reading. It is important to note that this pillar contrasts with and attempts to replace guided reading, which was the district's previous method for differentiation. Policy messages, professional development materials, and instructional materials stated that teachers should conference with students, individually or in small groups, to deliver differentiated instruction and strategy lessons to meet students' needs. Nick, the Lead Coach, described how, in implementing this pillar

The teacher comes around and conferences with kids. You know, tell me about what you're reading so far. Oh, that's interesting. What do you think might happen next? Could you read a little passage to me? And then the teacher's thinking alright, sounds pretty fluent. The child is reading in phrases, that's good, you know, seems to be understanding what they're saying, what they're reading. And then if I ask them to retell a little bit they have a clear sense of the story thread and their prediction seems reasonable. This is good, keep reading.

You know, you stop another child and it's like, oh it's kind of word by word, you know. What's happening so far? They're kind of confused. Well, something needs to happen because the child is developing an inefficient system....But that means the teacher going around and checking in individually with children to see what's happening.

Nick's depiction of conferences as a pedagogical method lays out how teachers should monitor students' reading and then make on-the-fly decisions about how to best support a particular student. His description also hints that teachers should allocate more time to meeting with struggling over proficient readers.

## Instructional Materials

Many high-profile reading reforms, such as Reading First and Success for All (SFA), have relied upon highly specified core reading programs and implementation checklists to alter the content and pedagogy of instruction (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Kersten & Pardo, 2007). In contrast, TCRWP used a broad collection of practitioner resource materials that granted substantial amounts of discretion to teachers. For instance, the professional development materials issued messages to coaches and teachers regarding how the

curriculum calendar suggests one possible way that a first grade classroom might unfold across the year. We are mindful that these curricular units probably do not exactly match what any one of us (or of you) might do in any one particular situation....the best curricular calendar is one that a teacher, working with a group of colleagues, co-authors.

This surfaces how the program valued teachers as curriculum developers, rather than just as followers of particular instructional materials or pacing mandates. Nick, the Lead Coach was emphatic that

At the core of the Teacher’s College project is that, you know, the teacher is the most important ingredient in the classroom. You know, it’s not really the stuff. It’s not the script. Even though they write scripts [in the instructional materials], they say feel free to invent your own or to break this up or to use this in different ways. This is here to help you, you know, scaffold you to make good decisions – and, if your class responds this way, you may want to try this route. And, if they respond this way, you may want to go this route.

The lead coach’s description of the TCRWP materials as a scaffold to support responsive instruction—rather than just a script to routinize instruction—offers evidence that TCRWP treated teachers as knowledgeable agents with the capacity to plan and deliver effective instruction. However, TCRWP did recommend that teachers draw upon its instructional materials, particularly as a source of mini-lesson objectives with a series of critical teaching points.

Furthermore, the district’s reading plan requested that grades K-2 teachers explore the Units of Study in Growing Readers, while grades 3-5 teachers commit themselves to teaching the first three Units of Study by Calkins this year. The principal of Linden Elementary declared that

I think the district expects all teachers to implement it. But when you look at “it”, it is a big thing of books. And when you really start to read “it”, and when you have all those books for every grade level, there’s quite a bit to it.

This indicates that the district was requiring teachers to adopt the program’s instructional materials, and this principal was acknowledging the complexity of the new materials.

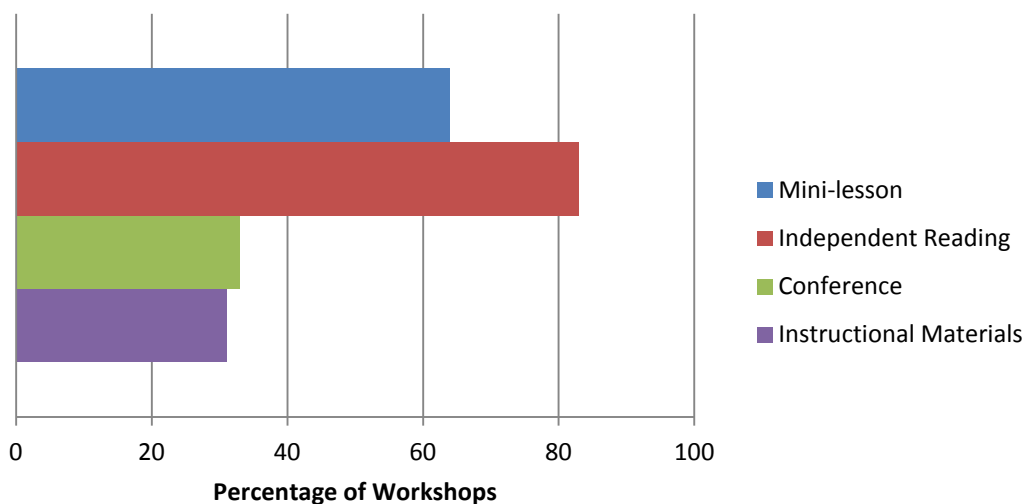
The four pillars of mini-lessons, independent reading, conferencing, and instructional materials composed the foundation of reading workshop. While mini-lessons, independent reading, and conferencing were the program’s pedagogy, or methods for instruction, the instructional materials played a role as the content of TCRWP. District policy included many messages about these pillars, and coaches presented frames about the pillars. As discussed in the previous chapter, coaches crafted frames incorporating a variety of ideas about reading instruction. Ultimately, teachers were responsible for enacting these pillars in their classrooms. Next, I will turn attention to the extent to which teachers across the district adopted these different pillars of TCRWP. The analysis of the implementation of the pillars helps illuminate the state of reading instruction in Lincoln Unified, including how teachers were responding to the pedagogy and content of the district’s reading policy.

### *District-level implementation of the pillars*

Coaches, professional development sessions, and instructional materials carried sets of ideas about TCRWP’s pillars. Across the district, teachers engaged with policy messages about the new reading program. Most first and third grade teachers responded positively to the pillars of TCRWP by teaching mini-lessons, providing time for independent reading, and developing a classroom library. To understand how the district’s reading policy was translated into classroom practice, I compare the adoption of the four different pillars of TCRWP. I argue that teachers were more responsive to the instructional methods of independent reading and mini-lessons than

conferencing, but they rejected TCRWP’s instructional materials, which served as the content for this reading reform. Figure 13 presents the proportions of observed reading workshops that included particular pillars, showing the extent to which teachers across Lincoln Unified incorporated each of the four pillars of Reading Workshop. In the first year of implementation, 64 percent of workshops included mini-lessons on reading strategies and skills (e.g., how to analyze a character’s emotions or how to figure out the meaning of a new word). A whopping 83 percent of workshops devoted time for independent reading, suggesting that teachers embraced this instructional activity in which students quietly read the district-provided leveled books. Teachers rarely rejected the pillar of independent reading.

Figure 13  
*Proportion of Workshops Implementing Pillars of Workshop*



The policy’s emphasis on independent reading over conferencing or instructional materials influenced teachers’ rate of adoption of these pillars. Over 40 percent of policy messages on the pillars dealt with independent reading. Teachers were inundated with messages during the summer training about setting up routines for independent reading to ensure that all students spent time with eyes on print. Facilitators introduced numerous tips for teachers to train students to conduct independent reading. District administrators, principals, and coaches tended to treat independent reading as a foundation for TCRWP or a first step in implementation. For example, Bess said

And I think that the library organization and reading volume were kind of taken for granted as like we have to make sure those are in place....So I think by that point we had a pretty good sense that most people were trying their best to implement this program and that most people were getting – had their kids in Just Right books and that they were reading for good chunks of time every day.

Bess’ statement was accurate in that, across the district, most teachers were facilitating independent reading during the workshop period. For many teachers, this meant replacing literacy centers with independent reading.

When teachers implemented this particular pillar, they experienced benefits. Because classrooms were calm and quiet when students engaged in silent reading, this activity reinforced teachers' longstanding preference for a "tranquil learning environment" (Kennedy, 2005, p. 23). Indeed, in most first and third grade classrooms, the independent reading period appeared to be particularly tranquil—with the majority of students staying seated and engaging in some manner with their leveled books.<sup>36</sup> Students' willingness to engage in independent reading played a role in encouraging teachers to adopt this pillar. Several teachers, including Meredith, Teresa, and Anne, reported that students were enthusiastic about independent reading and would even request time for independent reading. In several classrooms, students cheered when their teacher announced the beginning of the independent reading period.

At the same time, only 33 percent of workshops included teacher-student conferences; teachers did not typically engage in conferencing to differentiate instruction. Conferencing, as a pedagogical method, rested upon an alternative set of assumptions about the nature of instruction in which brief, yet highly focused and differentiated, teacher-student interactions lead to student learning. To deliver individual instruction during conferences, teachers needed to relinquish management duties and trust that students would concentrate on their reading. Teachers could only conduct (and concentrate on) conferences when students were fully engaged in independent reading. In fact, Robin was the sole focal teacher who conducted conferences during each of her observations; she developed a system for managing conferences in which she wrote notes students' reading on a clipboard. Teachers appeared to conduct conferences infrequently, and two teachers were never observed carrying out conferences.

In comparison to the other pillars of TCRWP, teachers received far fewer messages about conferences (only 16 percent of policy messages on the pillars dealt with conferences). The components of reading policy regarding conferencing, when compared to other dimensions of the policy, were more loosely coupled to teachers' practice. During the summer training, teachers received some training on how to conference with students. Some teachers also encountered messages about conferences during the district's January training when coaches led a voluntary session on conferences.<sup>37</sup> There were few concrete resources or materials from TCRWP or the district on conferencing, so teachers needed to plan their own conference lessons. Four teachers also designed their own forms to manage student conferences.

Teachers were differentiating instruction with small groups rather than purely following TCRWP's instructional routine of conferencing. Connie, a first grade teacher, noted that

And now I'm conferencing much more and going around and trying to see them be on task and make sure they're moving in their reading and they understand what they're reading. But I do have small groups where I'll debrief the story and put them on the same level and take turns listening to them reading and make sure I ask some good comprehension questions.

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<sup>36</sup> While observing independent reading, it was not always possible to precisely evaluate students' reading versus browsing of books.

<sup>37</sup> For this training, teachers were able to choose from a menu of sessions on different topics related to TCRWP.

Teachers layered the conferencing practice from TCRWP over their pre-existing practice of guided reading, in which teachers meet with small groups of students.

Finally, Figure 13 shows that only 31 percent of workshops followed the program's instructional materials. Five teachers only occasionally used the materials, including teachers' guides and practitioner resource materials, that the district had purchased to structure and align reading instruction across its schools.

### *Portraits of Reading Instruction in Lincoln Unified*

It is clear that teachers enacted the pillars of independent reading and mini-lessons more frequently than conferencing or instructional materials. Here, I illustrate what this variability looked like in the classroom. Painting a picture of what reading instruction looked like in Lincoln Unified is not a straightforward task. There was tremendous variability in the nature of reading instruction, from day to day, week to week, classroom to classroom, and school to school. To portray how teachers orchestrated the pillars of TCRWP, I share two vignettes on teachers' classroom practice. The first vignette comes from a third grade classroom whose teacher implemented most pillars of reading workshop, while the second vignette is from a first grade classroom whose teacher chose not to adopt the basic structure of reading workshop.

#### Vignette #1: Meredith's Reading Instruction

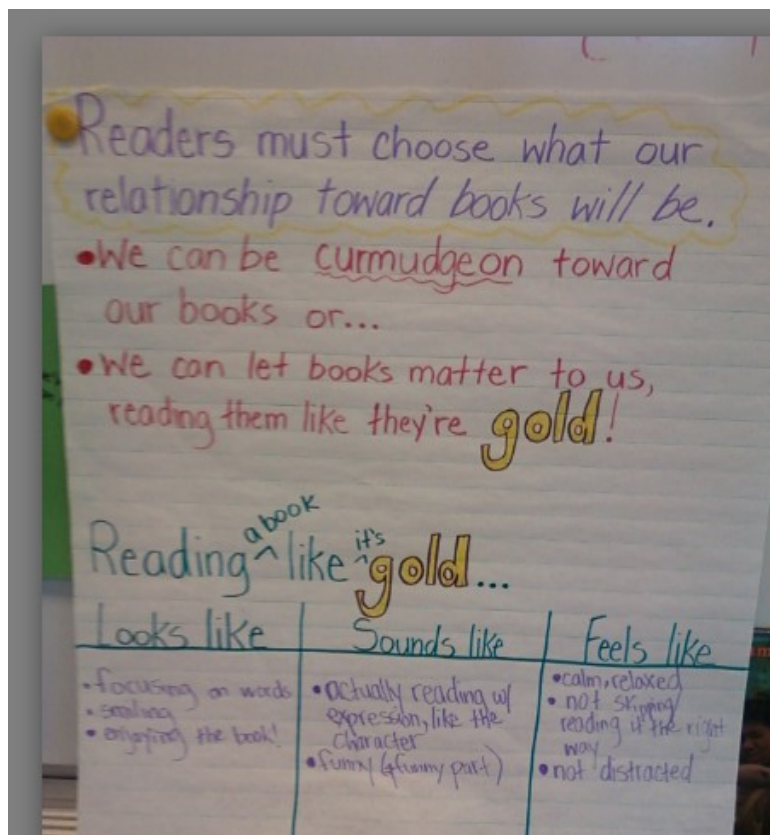
In Meredith's third grade classroom at Taylor Elementary, students gathered on the carpeted area near the whiteboard for reading workshop. Meredith, a first year teacher, sat in a chair in front of the class and opened the Units of Study book—replete with sticky notes with the teacher's own notes for how to teach particular lessons. The teacher announced that they “will go over something we did yesterday...read like a curmudgeon.” She asked the class: “What is reading like a curmudgeon? Can you show me with your face?” Students made sad expressions that represented reading like a curmudgeon. Next, the teacher asked, “Can you show me with your face what it's like to read *like it's gold*?” Once again, students made expressions, and their faces looked gleeful and energized.

Meredith announced that she'd be reading a book aloud. She told students that they should listen and should put their thumbs up if she was reading it like gold or put their thumbs down if she was reading like a curmudgeon. The teacher began reading a book, *Chrysanthemum*, aloud. She read with very little expression, skipping words and, generally sounded like a bored reader. She paused, asking the class to evaluate her reading and reminding them to “show me your thumbs.” Most students gave her reading a thumbs-down. The teacher read the text again, but, this time, she read with interest, intonation, and expression and did some think alouds. The teacher asked student to evaluate her reading, telling them to put their thumbs up if she read like gold but down if like a curmudgeon. This time, most students put their thumbs-up, indicating that they felt that she was reading the book like it was gold.

After engaging the class with this read aloud activity, Meredith asked the class, “What does it look like to read a book like it's gold?” She referred to a poster on the whiteboard (see Figure 14) on “Reading a book like it's gold.” The teacher led the class in reviewing the points on the poster, which they'd created earlier that week. The teacher elaborated on the point to smile and enjoy the reading. The teacher called on a boy who said that you should read with

expression as if you were the character. Then the class chorally read points from the poster. Finally, Meredith explained that, during today's independent reading period, students should work on reading their books like they're gold.

Figure 14  
Poster from Third Grade Reading Workshop



As portrayed in this vignette, Meredith faithfully stuck to the content and pedagogy of TCRWP by drawing upon the mini-lesson script from TCRWP's instructional materials, which was written by Lucy Calkins and her colleagues, that children should be reading books like gold and by reminding students about their specific tasks as readers.<sup>38</sup> She referred to posters with Calkins' reading strategies or tips. Then students conducted independent reading—another pillar of TCRWP. The teacher circulated, asking a few students about their reading.

### Vignette #2: Teresa's Reading Workshop

In this first grade classroom at Linden Elementary, students sat in rows on the rug. Teresa, a veteran teacher, sat in a chair near an easel. She doled out a few "Way to Be!" incentive cards to students who were sitting still to reinforce on-task behavior.<sup>39</sup> The teacher then

<sup>38</sup> The Units of Study were published by Heinemann: <http://unitsofstudy.com/iuos/default.asp>

<sup>39</sup> The cards were associated with the school's positive behavior support initiative.

announced, “We’re going to start something different today called partner reading.” She told the class that “we’ve been talking about what makes a good partner for a while.” Teresa then reviewed a poster on what good partners do, such as listening and sharing. Several students were chatting on the rug. Next, the teacher gave directions for the day’s reading activity: “Today what we’re going to do is start out with independent reading. And, today, for our partner reading, you are going to pick a story and read it to your partner. I’m going to tell you who your partner’s going to be.” She gave special directions to students who were reading chapter books. A couple students asked questions about the procedures for partner reading, and the teacher briefly responded to their questions about what to read with their partner and where to sit with their partner.

After taking a few moments to look around to find the piece of paper with the list of reading partnerships, Teresa read aloud the names of the partnerships. Students sat and listened to learn who would be their partner. When several students heard their partner’s name, they cheered, “Yeah!” The teacher also announced the names of the students who would be book shopping today. Finally, she announced the names of six students who should come to the U-table with their guided reading books. She ended this procedural mini-lesson on how to carry out partner reading in workshop by telling the rest of the class to go to their desks to begin independent reading.

As portrayed in the second vignette, in this first grade classroom, Teresa briefly presented the new routine of partner reading. Teresa’s construction of workshop was only loosely related to the content and pedagogy of TCRWP. Her approach to direct instruction only engaged a few students. To manage student behavior, she relied on incentive cards. She elected to continue the practice of guided reading, rather than adopting the workshop practice of conferencing with students.

The two vignettes showcase differences in the extent to which teachers used TCRWP’s instructional methods and instructional materials. While Meredith adopted the pedagogical method of a mini-lesson aligned with Calkins’ instructional materials that engaged her third grade students in reflecting on their reading habits to develop as readers, Teresa used the structure of a mini-lesson to introduce first graders to the procedures for partner reading. This means that Teresa did not deliver any instruction on reading skills or strategies to the class. Teresa only introduced academic content during one of four observed workshops. Additionally, although Meredith’s lesson was drawn directly from TCRWP’s instructional materials, Teresa’s instruction was not aligned with the content of the program’s instructional materials. The variations from classroom to classroom arose while teachers faced a district reading policy asking them to follow the pedagogy and content of TCRWP.

These variations cannot be solely explained by district and school resources or teachers’ level of experience. In Lincoln Unified, teachers received multiple professional development opportunities regarding this new approach to reading instruction. For instance, both Meredith and Teresa attended the summer training, as well as follow-up, coach-led trainings on conferencing, assessment, and using the instructional materials during the school year. Additionally, each school had a site-based reading coach to provide contextualized support to teachers related to TCRWP. Meredith and Teresa received ongoing training on this model of instruction from their coaches. Likewise, all three elementary schools had instructional materials for teachers and adequate amounts of leveled books for each classroom. The two teachers each had well-stocked



classroom libraries and copies of all TCRWP-associated instructional materials. Therefore, teachers had access to the materials associated with TCRWP. Although some novice teachers struggled to implement the routines and practices of TCRWP, other novice teachers, including Meredith—a first year teacher—responded positively to most elements of TCRWP. And although three veteran teachers rejected the majority of the principles and practices of TCRWP, two veteran teachers responded positively to the elements of TCRWP.

Instead, the differences in teachers' enactment of the pillars of TCRWP can be accounted for, at least in part, by examining the role of coach framing. In each school, the coach prioritized and clarified particular aspects of reading policy, such as the pillars of TCRWP or standards based instruction. Coaches' frames reflected institutional logics and strategically linked teachers to the environment's broad ideas about reading instruction. This, in turn, influenced what and how teachers enacted TCRWP.

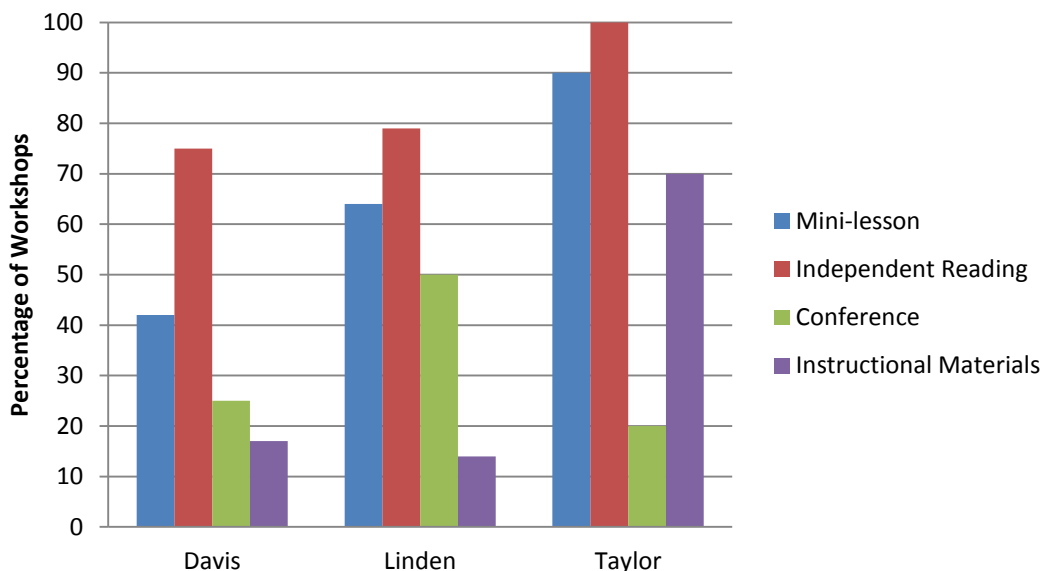
### *Coaching the Pillars of Reading Workshop*

Coaches' framing on the four pillars of TCRWP played a role in catalyzing changes in classroom practice. In each school, teachers interacted with coaches, gained access to ideas about reading instruction from those coaches, and then translated various components of the new reading program into practice. How did each school's coach motivate the adoption of TCRWP's pillars? To answer these questions, I analyze the relationship between coaches' framing and the enactment of the new reading program. I draw connections between each coach's policy framing at her school and teachers' instructional practices. I argue that coach's use of logics of reading instruction and socially skilled tactics affected the patterns of teachers' implementation of TCRWP pillars. In particular, coaches who put forth Just Read frames were able to motivate pedagogical changes in teachers' practice, including the enactment of mini-lessons, conferencing, and independent reading.

Coaches influenced patterns of implementation. We can see this because there are systematic differences in the adoption of the pillars across the three focal schools. More specifically, there were higher levels of implementation at Taylor Elementary as compared to Davis and Linden. Figure 15 shows differences in the implementation of the TCRWP pillars across three schools. As shown in Figure 15, across all schools most workshops (over 70%) included independent reading. But, due to each coach's framing, each school had different levels of implementing mini-lessons, conferences, and instructional materials. For each school, I will explain the ways in which coaches' policy framing influenced teachers' responses to TCRWP. I argue that Davis had low implementation of the pedagogy and content of TCRWP, while Linden had moderate implementation of the pedagogy of TCRWP. At Davis, teachers had limited opportunities to receive frames from Tanya about the pedagogy and content of TCRWP; their coach used Accountability First framing to target standards based instruction. At Linden, teachers adopted the pedagogy of TCRWP layered with standards-aligned content. Linden's coach, Bess, invoked frames about TCRWP's instructional methods while drawing upon Accountability First to promote standards based instruction. In contrast, Taylor had high implementation of both the pedagogy and content of Lincoln Unified's reading reform. I will present how Lauren carried out Just Read framing that highlighted and clarified the nature of

TCRWP's instructional methods. I will also note how teachers' professional training and collaboration helped advance teachers' implementation of TCRWP's pillars.

Figure 15  
*Implementation of Pillars in Three Schools*



### *Davis*

At Davis, the pedagogy and content of teachers' reading instruction was weakly aligned with TCRWP's pillars. Davis had a lower degree of TCRWP implementation than the other focal schools. In many ways, teachers' doors were closed to the district's reading reform. In many classrooms, teachers did not consistently enact the instructional methods associated with TCRWP, such as independent reading, mini-lessons, and conferencing. Several teachers rarely referenced TCRWP's instructional materials. Teachers' reading instruction was frequently standards based or involved test preparation activities, reflecting the principles and practices of the Accountability First logic; the content of this instruction clashed with the content from TCRWP's instructional materials. Tanya issued high intensity frames about standards based instruction plus low intensity frames about TCRWP's instructional methods plus. This confusing *mélange* of framing steered teachers toward the principles and practices of Accountability First rather than helping them adopt the pedagogy and content of TCRWP. This coach's framing of reading policy drew upon Accountability First, pressuring Davis' teachers to adopt standards based instruction over TCRWP's Just Read-aligned methods or materials. Tanya's superficial framing of the new reading program encouraged tinkering rather than substantive changes in classroom practice.

Reading instruction at Davis was incoherent. Of the three focal schools in my study, Davis had the lowest Academic Performance Index, and it also had the weakest implementation of reading workshop. The content and pedagogy of reading instruction varied greatly from classroom to classroom. Some teachers attempted to implement the new program and struggled with its methods and materials, while others ignored components of the program to preserve their

pre-existing practices. A few teachers embraced the principles and practices of the district's new approach to reading instruction, especially the pedagogy of TCRWP. Connie, a first grade teacher, said that the workshop model "resonates to my style of teaching pretty well." But the new program did not resonate with Dorothea, another first grade teacher. This veteran teacher declared "I don't like the new reading program...It wouldn't work without supplements...there's a need to supplement it." She explained that she "will use any, every, thing so kids learn how to read." In this classroom, students read decodable mini-books and selections from the Houghton Mifflin anthology and completed packets of phonics worksheets. Therefore, most aspects of Dorothea's reading instruction clashed with the pillars of TCRWP.

Consistent with the broader patterns in the district, most first and third grade teachers at Davis adopted independent reading in which students spent 10-30 minutes reading (75 percent of workshops included independent reading). However, only 42 percent of teachers' workshops included a mini-lesson. Teachers commonly just directed students to read leveled books—without providing any explicit instruction on reading skills and strategies. For instance, Leah, a novice third grade teacher, displayed posters related to the strategies from TCRWP instructional materials and consistently allocated time for independent reading and conferencing, but she did not teach a mini-lesson in any of the observed lessons. And Anne, another third grade teacher at Davis, noted:

I really did a fraction of all of the lessons that are in the units that we've covered. Although I had, specifically, of the Calkins lessons, although I have followed many of the ideas and I've implemented the structure, I think there was much, much more richness there that I didn't get to.

This veteran teacher's practice of using the program's architecture—but not its lessons—raises questions about the balance between independent reading, as an activity in which students practice reading, and lessons that purposefully deliver instruction on key strategies and skills to students. The coach at this school conducted minimal framing on TCRWP's instructional practices and rarely worked with teachers on how to teach mini-lessons.

How did coaching address TCRWP and accountability pressures at Linden? The school's coach issued a hodgepodge of frames addressing various elements of TCRWP, including independent reading, mini-lessons, conferencing, and assessment.<sup>40</sup> But in comparison to the other two coaches, Tanya advanced far fewer Just Read frames. Instead, as detailed in the previous chapter, she framed the principles and practices of Accountability First. Thus, accountability pressures made their way into teachers' classrooms, subsequently altering teachers' adoption of TCRWP's pillars. While Davis implemented several of TCRWP's pedagogical features at lower rates than the other two schools, the school had a high degree of implementation of standards-based instruction and test preparation activities. This indicates that the content of teachers' instruction was tied to standards, rather than the new reading program. 50 percent of workshops included standards based instruction or test preparation activities. For example, both first grade teachers taught explicit lessons on English language arts standards, such as spelling and writing conventions, during workshop.

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<sup>40</sup> Tanya's frames had much breadth (by addressing many topics) and little depth.

Tanya engaged in extensive framing on standards based instruction and test preparation. She frequently talked with teachers about the necessity of teaching standards-based mini-lessons, as opposed to teaching mini-lessons aligned with TCRWP's instructional materials. Leah, a third grade teacher explained that:

She [Tanya] was really instrumental in helping us do backwards mapping at the grade level. And that was very useful and wonderful. Well, another thing about the teacher's guide, the Teacher's College stuff is that it's not [indiscernible] to California State Standards at all, and so it allowed me to know like, oh right, these are these discreet things that aren't embedded in any program that I'm teaching naturally that I need to find a place for. So, teaching about homophones, teaching about antonyms and synonyms.

A first grade teacher, Connie, declared that the coach-led collaboration attended to accountability-focused issues over the technical details of TCRWP. Coach-teacher interactions focused on bolstering standards-based reading instruction in classrooms, rather than supporting teachers in implementing TCRWP's methods or content.

### *Linden*

Reading instruction at Linden Elementary was moderately aligned with the pillars of TCRWP. Teachers at Linden heeded policy messages about the pedagogy of TCRWP reading instruction yet ignored messages about the content of reading instruction. Inside Linden's classrooms, it was evident that the state's English Language Arts standards functioned as the curriculum. Figure 15 shows that most teachers used TCRWP's instructional methods, including independent reading, mini-lessons, and conferencing, while rejecting the program's instructional materials. Teachers elected to continue to plan their own standards-based lessons rather than teach lessons from the new program's instructional materials.

Bess' framing of TCRWP's instructional methods and standards based instruction influenced teachers' responses to the new reading program. As Linden's coach, Bess issued connecting frames that linked TCRWP's pedagogical practices with teachers' pre-existing beliefs and practices about appropriate and effective reading instruction. In her interactions with teachers, Bess also drew upon the Accountability First logic to promote standards based instruction at Linden Elementary. The coach's intensive framing of standards based reading instruction encouraged teachers to create and teach lessons with standards-aligned, rather than TCRWP-aligned, content. This coach emphasized and prioritized standards based instruction. Grace explained that her coach, Bess:

She [Bess] prioritized. She [Bess] is – really synthesizing is the word I really feel like describes what she does. And, in so synthesizing, can prioritize and help us, you know, give a name to things—to prioritize. And figure out next steps.

The socially skilled coach worked to build consensus around the purpose of and goals for implementing the new reading program. During meetings, she engaged teachers in forming shared commitments that they would stick to. Bess' socially skilled tactic of Building Consensus among groups of teachers enabled her to motivate changes related to conferencing and standards based instruction.

Linden's first and third grade teachers responded positively to policy messages about TCRWP's instructional methods, or pedagogy. Following the district-wide pattern of high levels of implementation of independent reading, the majority (79 %) of first and third grade workshops at Linden included that activity, and over 60 percent of workshops included teacher-directed mini-lessons. As shown in Figure 15, in comparison to the other schools, teachers at Linden were much more likely to conduct conferences (50 percent of workshops included conferences).

Linden's teachers rarely used the district's new instructional materials, indicating that they rejected TCRWP's content. Only 14 percent of workshops followed the TCRWP instructional materials. In contrast to the other schools, first and third grade instruction at Linden was much less likely to reflect the lessons and objectives from TCRWP's instructional materials. Though Bess did work with teachers during grade level and whole staff meetings to discuss and review how to use the TCRWP instructional materials, the coach engaged in less framing regarding instructional materials than the other coaches. A first grade teacher at this school, Teresa, shared how *Growing Readers*, as the teachers guide for K-2 teachers, "was pretty overwhelming... And, you know, we really have implemented *so little* of what is offered in that book [*Growing Readers*]." It appears that low-intensity coach framing on instructional materials was not sufficient to persuade teachers to consistently use TCRWP's complex and verbose instructional materials.

Accountability pressures also influenced the implementation of TCRWP's pillars at Linden. When Linden's teachers designed their own mini-lessons, they frequently based the content on the state's content standards as opposed to TCRWP's instructional materials. Teachers melded standards-based content with the pedagogy from TCRWP. In fact, a large proportion of workshops (71%) incorporated standards based instruction or test preparation activities. For example, Grace, a third grade teacher, covered the content standards of syllabication and dictionary skills in her mini-lessons. She covered the syllabication and dictionary skills to prepare students for standardized testing, but she used TCRWP's instructional method of mini-lessons. Similarly, Magda, a third grade teacher, explained how she was in the middle of teaching a unit for test prep and would then transition to teaching a standards-aligned unit:

Currently, we are doing the nonfiction unit. And I am in a bit of a lag right now because I'm doing a mini-unit on test prepping. But a biography will happen and that will be our focus for the nonfiction because our writing standard is summary writing.

Thus, Linden's teachers were substituting TCRWP's content, as put forth by the program's instructional materials, with standards-aligned content. Teachers' incorporation of standards based instruction and test prep activities makes sense in light of the coach's Accountability First framing.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The school was in its fourth year of Program Improvement, and it had been making large gains in achievement, as measured by the state's testing program.

## Taylor

Finally, teachers' classroom practice at Taylor Elementary strongly matched the principles and practices of reading workshop. Because most teachers incorporated both the pedagogy and content of TCRWP, this school had a higher degree of TCRWP implementation than the other focal schools. Figure 15 reports that Taylor's teachers commonly carried out the pillars of independent reading, mini-lessons, and instructional materials. In comparison with the other schools, a much larger proportion of workshops at Taylor delivered a lesson; the majority of workshops (90%) included a teacher-directed mini-lesson, similar to the lesson in the vignette from Meredith's classroom.

Lauren's framing of TCRWP's instructional methods and materials influenced teachers' positive responses to TCRWP. At Taylor, the socially skilled coach invoked ideas from Calkins to promote teachers' implementation of the program's content. In her interactions with teachers, Lauren leaned extensively on the Just Read logic to promote particular forms of instruction, neatly aligned to TCRWP. This coach rarely diluted this framing with the principles and practices of Accountability First. The coach's intensive framing on TCRWP's instructional methods motivated teachers' adoption of mini-lessons. While coaching at Taylor Elementary, a great deal of Lauren's leadership activities dealt with the instructional practices associated with TCRWP. As described in the previous chapter on routines of coaching, Lauren modeled the instructional routines of TCRWP, including mini-lessons and conferences, in first and second grade classrooms in order to motivate change. Meredith, a first year teacher, described coaches' work at her school:

They [coaches] are observing. They are giving you constructive criticism. They are supportive. They understand that this is no easy task trying to teach Lucy Calkins, and I think that's number one for me. They *don't* think it's, like, a piece of cake. They get it... What I see with coaching is I see them checking – a lot of check-ins, any questions that we might have. Giving us actual ideas for how to teach a lesson [from the Units of Study].

Additionally, in contrast to the other two schools, teachers at Taylor were consistently adopting TCRWP's content. 70 percent of workshops were aligned with the program's instructional materials, and it was clear that most teachers at this site were studying and following TCRWP's teacher guides. Teachers used the instructional materials as guidance for how to introduce reading strategies and skills in mini-lessons. For instance, during multiple lessons, Meredith and Eli, two third grade teachers, held and referred to the TCRWP Units of Study teacher guide while delivering mini-lessons on understanding characters, summarizing, and features of non-fiction text.

However, at Taylor, guided reading was not uprooted or replaced by conferencing as a pillar of TCRWP. In fact, this school's teachers only conferenced with students in 20 percent of workshops. Rather, most of the first and third grade teachers elected to use other methods of differentiation, such as guided reading. This shows that Taylor's teachers did not respond positively to all of the pedagogical elements of TCRWP. Strikingly, Lauren, the coach at Taylor, supported teachers in continuing the instructional practice of guided reading. While employing the socially skilled tactic of It's a Project, Lauren encouraged teachers to only incorporate the pedagogical routines that 'worked for them.' She gave teachers permission to reject conferencing

in favor of guided reading. For instance, Meredith, a novice third grade teacher, was looking forward to receiving additional coaching from Lauren on how implement guided reading in the spring of 2011. This demonstrates that guided reading remained as the accepted, well-established form of differentiation at Taylor.

To encourage teachers' adoption of TCRWP's content, Lauren advanced reading policy frames containing ideas about the new instructional materials. In comparison to the other coaches, Lauren was also much more likely to issue frames on TCRWP's instructional materials. Her frames about the instructional materials emphasized how to follow and adapt the lessons in each Unit and reminded teachers to use the instructional materials on a daily basis. But she did not solely talk to teachers about how to follow the materials. Instead, as explained in the previous chapter, she used the socially skilled tactic of Lucy Says, in which she invoked the ideas from Calkins' instructional materials. While interacting with teachers, this coach wielded the TCRWP instructional materials, particularly the *Units of Study*, as artifacts and referred teachers to specific parts of lessons. Thus, teachers were exposed to the coaches' ideas plus the materials themselves.

It is evident that Taylor's teachers had many opportunities to learn about TCRWP instructional materials from their coach. In contrast to the other schools, a much larger proportion of workshops were aligned with the TCRWP instructional materials. It is possible that the coach's framing work on the new materials encouraged teachers to adopt TCRWP's materials. At the same time, it's clear that many other factors, including each teacher's training and how teachers collaborate within and across grade levels, also influenced the patterns of reading instruction at Taylor. For example, Robin, a veteran first grade teacher, diligently taught mini-lessons aligned with the program's instructional materials, created posters reflecting the district's new approach to reading instruction, and conferenced with students. Yet, due to Robin's graduate studies at Teachers College, the district's adoption of TCRWP did not necessitate dramatic changes in her practice.

Lauren's framing centered on promoting teachers' adoption of the methods and materials of TCRWP. Her framing incorporated the Just Read logic and rarely advanced Accountability First. In contrast to the two other focal coaches, Lauren's framing did not encourage the layering TCRWP with standards based instruction. Thus, Lauren buffered teachers from the principles and practices Accountability First. In response, Taylor's teachers refrained from supplementing the new program with test preparation activities or materials to prepare students for high stakes testing. In fact, none of the observed workshops at this school included explicitly standards based instruction or test preparation activities.

## Conclusions

Teachers in Lincoln Unified varied in the way that they implemented the structures, methods, and content of TCRWP from school to school and from classroom to classroom. And, yes, a few teachers were resistant to the district's new reading program, which relied on four pillars. The architecture of reading workshop asked teachers to use brief, targeted mini-lessons and conferences, rather than extended direct instruction on literacy objectives, to expose students to reading strategies and skills. Additionally, the workshop model included a block of time for

students to conduct independent reading. Teachers needed to entrust responsibility to students to engage with books during this time. Finally, the district's reading plan specified that teachers should follow the TCRWP instructional materials. These instructional materials leaned upon Just Read and were, in certain ways, less specified than conventional core reading program.

Coaches' framing affected how teachers in each school implemented the pillars. In each school, coach's framing linked teachers with portions of the environment, thereby influencing instructional reform by promoting facets of TCRWP's pedagogy and content. Each coach's frames emphasized some aspects of the district's reading policy, while downplaying other aspects of the new approach to reading instruction, shaping teachers' exposure to reading policy and to the pillars of reading workshop. For instance, among the four pillars, coaches' framing was most likely to address independent reading. Coaches interacted with teachers in formal and informal settings to advance ideas about how teachers should set up systems (e.g., reading logs and leveled classroom libraries) and routines for independent reading to ensure that students had extended time with eyes on print. In contrast, coaches rarely framed policy messages about conferencing. Two coaches, Bess and Lauren, even issued frames about how teachers should maintain the practice of guided reading. Thus, coaches dedicated much less effort towards persuading teachers to alter their methods of differentiating instruction. In turn, teachers were much less likely to take on the method of conferencing.

Coaches' framing of Accountability First and Just Read influenced how teachers responded to the pedagogy and content of TCRWP. While Tanya and Bess promoted Accountability First and coached teachers towards planning and teaching standards based instruction, Lauren buffered teachers from that model's rules and ideas. Instead, Lauren concentrated her coaching on TCRWP's methods and materials by coupling teachers with the Just Read logic of reading instruction. Furthermore, it was not just WHAT coaches emphasized, but how. Coaches employed different socially skilled tactics, which shaped their interactions with teachers and shaped how teachers encountered ideas about reading instruction. Bess framed ideas about standards based instruction and independent reading during meetings so that she could work to build consensus among Linden's teachers. She attempted to set up venues so for teachers to engage with and develop understandings of specific ideas from the district reading plan. In contrast, Lauren's framing was more likely to occur with individual teachers, and she invoked Calkins to catalyze changes in classroom practice. There was less evidence of Tanya's use of socially skilled tactics, and instruction at Davis tended to weakly reflect the pillars of TCRWP. This finding on Tanya's framing and lower degree of social skill hints at coaches' role in motivating teachers to change their practice. My study addressed formal reading policy, as well as informal ideas regarding how to teach reading, and, together, they directed teachers' attention, effecting patterns of practice in three urban schools. By tracing the path from the district's reading plan and coaches' frames to instruction, I show how coaches operated as intermediaries in implementation. I reveal that coaches played a political role in persuading teachers to alter the content and pedagogy of their reading instruction.



## Chapter 7 Implications

This dissertation bridges the gap between the macro and micro levels by explaining how the institutional environment influences actors' practices during instructional reform. I used the case of coaching to understand how people and ideas affect implementation. I showed how reading coaches reached out to the broader environment to engage with logics of reading instruction. I revealed that coaches, situated between the district and school levels, serve as intermediaries in the education system. In particular, I explicate coaches' political role in persuading teachers to change their practice. These findings extend our understanding of coaching as a policy lever, suggesting that coaches do not just implement policy; by participating in district level activities, they act as policy makers as well.

I found that two logics of reading instruction, Accountability First and Just Read, pervaded Lincoln Unified. These logics had conflicting principles and practices about appropriate and effective ways to teach reading. These logics reached coaches via policy documents and teacher credential programs. At the same time, coaches transformed and combined these logics, building them into structures and practices at the district and school-levels while generating rules, instructional materials, and trainings. This means that coach-developed reading policies were infused with the principles and practices of both Accountability First and Just Read. Coaches then actively drew upon logics from the environment to frame reading policy for teachers during implementation. As they did so, they took care to differentiate their framing to meet the perceived needs of their school and teachers and used socially skilled tactics to motivate change. Importantly, coaches' framing of the two logics of reading instruction helped influence teachers' adoption of the new reading program by persuading teachers to respond positively to particular specific pedagogical elements of the program. These findings have implications for institutional theory, research on coaching, and the preparation of educational leaders more broadly.

### *Institutional Theory, Logics, and Policy*

These findings contribute to institutional theory in three ways. First, they show how people and their work contribute to institutional change. To date, institutional theorists have mainly attended to the logics, actors, and governance structures within an organizational field (Scott, 2001; Scott, Ruef, Mendel, & Caronna, 2000). They do so by mapping the organizational field to understand the factors affecting institutional stability and change (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003; Scott, et al., 2000; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Some of these field-level studies use corporations or non-profits as cases, and they identify the relevant organizations and actors in those particular fields (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Rao, et al., 2003; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). The structures and routines of corporations and non-profits may not match those of the United States' education system, which bound by governmental regulations and public policy. Yet this macro-level approach can obscure the role of actors and their work (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Barley & Tolbert, 1997). In contrast, my study investigates the lived nature of institutions, paying particular attention to people and their practices, how they are influenced by and influence the institutional environment (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Hallett, 2006). More specifically, I build on an emerging literature on the relationship between macro and micro levels (Barley, 1986; Colyvas & Powell, 2006; Kellogg, 2009) to illuminate how actors use their field's

logics as resources to create and enact policy. I draw on framing theory to show that people, in this case coaches, interpreted and packaged logics to motivate organizational change. These findings suggest that institutional entrepreneurs like coaches can bridge the divide between the environment and actors. By outlining the range of specific tactics that coaches use to frame logics to teachers and the consequences of this framing for teacher change, this study extends our understanding of the ways in which leaders, or institutional entrepreneurs, act strategically. I emphasize that coaches made decisions about when and how to frame various ideas about reading instruction. This means that coaches were selecting which logics to pull down from the environment, and then they aimed to present those ideas in a manner that would resonate for teachers. Ultimately, the goal of coaches' framing was to persuade teachers to change the nature and quality of their reading instruction.

Second, this study contributes to framing theory by elucidating the tactics that framers use to motivate change. Fligstein (1997 & 2001) proposes that some actors, who he refers to as socially skilled, are better framers than others. He posits that socially skilled actors' frames are more capable of motivating change. In a conceptual piece, Fligstein (1997) enumerates the types of socially skilled tactics that these actors may employ to catalyze change in their field. Yet, these ideas have not been tested empirically. By studying frame activities in detail, my study advances our understanding of the ways in which actors are strategic in the context of their work. My study lays out when and under what conditions actors use socially skilled tactics, with what consequences and the organizational conditions that enable and constrain these choices.

In so doing, I show that coaches, as framers, wield a set of socially skilled tactics while interacting with other actors in their work. Framers strategically select which of the environment's logics to frame and then make decisions about how to present their particular ideas in ways that take account the needs and organizational conditions of their setting. This finding is important because it explains how the day-to-day actors' interactions, including in meetings, trainings, and other coaching work, motivate institutional change. This reminds us that leaders play a political role when they present ideas, and that these actors' awareness of the organization and capacity to frame are crucial for institutional change. Future research should consider whether actors use different tactics when attempting to motivate different types of change. For instance, does a leader employ different tactics to motivate fundamental versus minor change? And does a leader turn to different tactics to gain support for popular or unpopular initiatives? Researchers could apply the concepts from the literature on organizational routines to analyze the repeated activities of socially skilled actors' framing. This would help us understand how organizational conditions and artifacts affect actors' framing.

This study also contributes to institutional theory by pioneering a new way to investigate institutional logics. Typically, institutional theorists rely on document analysis and historical methods to obtain data related to logics, and then they discuss the prominence of particular logics over time (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003; Russell, 2010; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). This approach tends to use a birds-eye view, depicting large-scale shifts in logics' prominence with broad brush strokes. The methods are not well-suited for gaining insights into how logics were used by specific actors within particular contexts. By conducting interviews and observations, rather than document analysis or historical methods, I was able to capture "lived" logics, tracking logics that were actively used at the micro-level. Specifically, the interview data provided information on actors' connections with logics, while the observation data offered information

on how actors employed logics in their work. My approach thus makes a methodological contribution by encouraging an analysis of the processes by which actors encountered, interpreted, and framed logics. This is important because it shines light on the relationship between logics and actors, enabling us to learn more about how people effect change in complex organizations.

### *Research on Coaching*

This study also has implications for research on coaching. More specifically, it contributes by illuminating coaches' role in interpreting, conveying, and creating policy. Conventional research on coaching tends to rely primarily on learning theory and theories of professional development to highlight coaches' educative role (Bean, 2004; Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & DiPrima Bickel, 2010). Few studies attend to coach's position or practices in the education system. Similarly, few studies have attended to how the policy context impacts coaching (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). For this reason, we lack an understanding of how coaches' position and power shape their role during implementation. However, this study reveals that coaches, as instructional leaders, served as intermediaries during reform efforts. Coaches were positioned to define problems, propose solutions, and set goals that could motivate instructional reform. By applying institutional theory to the study of coaching, I portray coaches' role as strategic, political actors linking policy and practice. This finding reminds us that actors at multiple levels of the education system or the organizational hierarchy can take on a political role to manipulate institutional structures and practices. Future research should look at different types of coaching models in order to determine whether coaches function as intermediaries in other types of models. In addition, researchers should compare how coaches and other intermediaries, such as educational consultants and coaches for external support providers, bridge policy and practice in their instructional improvement work with teachers and principals.

This study also identifies a new role that coaches play: policymakers. In this study, coaches were not just implementers. They made policy as well, designing instructional guidance systems that governed work on reading instruction in schools. This finding is important because it means that middle managers, and not just senior leaders, craft policy within districts. It will be necessary to conduct research on how coaches balance work activities related to making policy and supporting teachers. This suggests that actors outside of the district central office conduct district-level policymaking. It is necessary to attend to the ways in which the policymaking work of coaches contrasts with the policymaking work of other state and district level administrators. Are coaches, as intermediaries with connections to teachers within schools, able to design more specified or relevant policies that meet the needs of their local context?

### *Implications for Leadership*

My findings on coaches' strategic work underscores that coaches are front-line actors who create and enact policies (Coburn, 2006; Spillane, 2005). As instructional leaders operating within the United States' multilayered education system, coaches need rigorous training. First, coaches need training on how to effectively and efficiently serve as intermediaries. Coaches must

understand the structures and systems controlling districts and schools in order to participate in both policy making and effective and persuasive framing. This suggests that professional development for coaches should spend some time discussing the policy system and the nature of education policy. It's also necessary for coaches to have a deep understanding of the multiple elements of instructional policy. In the case of TCRWP, coaches needed to understand the interplay of the four elements of the new reading program. When coaches had extensive policy knowledge, they had the capacity to motivate pedagogical changes. It would be beneficial to study how different educational leadership programs address the policy context and leaders' role in implementation. This research would reveal strengths and weaknesses in how educational leaders are being prepared for their complex work in districts and schools, which are inundated with policy.

Second, coaches should have opportunities to learn about how policies become translated into practice. In my study, some coaches were more aware of the challenges of policy implementation. This finding suggests that leadership programs should train future coaches on how policies are interpreted and mutated during implementation. In particular, these programs should prepare coaches to communicate ideas in a variety of settings to meet the needs of their teachers and administrators. In effect, this type of training would aim to develop coaches' social skill so that coaches can motivate reform.

By investigating coaches' work, this dissertation advances our understanding of the ways in which actors and logics influence change processes. This dissertation explained how the institutional environment affects actors' practices during a period of instructional reform. I characterized the logics of reading instruction in the field and then showed how reading coaches reached out to the broader environment to engage with those logics. To elucidate coaches' political role in persuading teachers to change their practice, I described coaches' framing of reading policy plus teachers' adoption of a new reading program. The findings from this study extend institutional theory and have implications for research on coaching and the preparation of educational leaders.

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**Appendix A**  
Timeline of Dissertation Work

<b>Date</b>	<b>Research Activities</b>
<i>May 2010</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> CPHS submitted and approved  <input type="checkbox"/> District approval to conduct research
<i>May-August 2010</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary data collection on coaches, district conditions, and schools  <input type="checkbox"/> Observations of professional development sessions
<i>September 2010-December 2010</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal meeting and defense  <input type="checkbox"/> First round of observations and interviews of coaches and teachers (rotate through coaches and schools)  <input type="checkbox"/> Transcribe interviews  <input type="checkbox"/> Collect state, district, and school ELA policy documents
<i>January-May 2011</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Second round of observations and interviews of coaches and teachers  <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews with principals and district level actors  <input type="checkbox"/> Third round of observations and interviews of coaches and teachers

	<input type="checkbox"/> Transcribe interviews
	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect state, district, and school ELA policy documents
	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial coding
<i>June 2011-October 2011</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Coding and data analysis
	<input type="checkbox"/> Write findings chapters
<i>October 2011-April 2012</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation writing
<i>May 2012</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit final draft of dissertation

## **Appendix B**

### Codes Based in Framing Theory

#### Frame

I have coded frames from observational data; the frames are packages of meaning that work to make sense of experiences and situation to help motivate action (Coburn, 2006, p. 346). Benford and Snow (2000), as social movement theorists, propose that actors transmute the field's broader logics into narrower parcels of meaning that are carried by frames, and these frames can mobilize other individuals. Frames "organize experiences and guide action" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614) by defining problems, proposing solutions, and offering a motivating language or vision. Additionally, Benford & Snow (2000) emphasize that framing is an "active phenomenon" (p. 614).

#### Type of frame

To answer the research questions and understand the nature of the framing conducted by the reading coach, I classified each frame as diagnostic or prognostic.

- Diagnostic
  - Frames that define a problem or attribute blame. These frames can focus attention on particular aspects of a problem and identifies actors who are responsible for the problem and for changing (Coburn, Framing, 2006) (ie- Test scores are low in reading comprehension in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade because teachers don't teach or monitor students' fluency and students struggle to read the comprehension passages independently)
  
- Prognostic
  - Frames that articulate a proposed solution for a problem, and proposes goals and suggest ways to reach the goals (Coburn, Framing, 2006). Prognostic frames could provide a plan of attack or tell how to conduct a plan (Benford & Snow, 2000) (ie- To raise writing test scores, teachers should spend more time teaching the revision process in an authentic manner)

#### Codes related to social skill

- Appealing to the identity and interests of group members to induce their cooperation (APP)
  - Strategizing with others in a way that links with and appeals to the beliefs, practices, and interests of group members to get their cooperation
  
- Networking-reaching out to outliers (NETW)
  
- Know what's possible in the organization (POSS)
  - When an actor indicates their knowledge of what is likely to occur in the future in the organization

- Understanding of the organization (UND)
  - When an actor demonstrates their knowledge of how the organization operates
- Agenda-setting- setting the terms of the discussion (AGST)
- Hiding preferences- being neutral (HIPR)
- Brokering- Present themselves as neutral and just trying to mediate and carry information (BROK)