DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 528 SP 032 152

AUTHOR Stroble, Elizabeth J; Lenz, Deborah
TITLE If Magic Johnson Coached Michael Jordan: Staff Development Strategies for Pre-Service Teachers.
PUB DATE Feb 90
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (Las Vegas, NV, February 5-8, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Collegiality; *Cooperative Learning; Higher Education; *Peer Teaching; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Role Models; Secondary Education; Staff Development; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Teacher education programs for preservice teachers have traditionally focused on study of the theoretical base of instructional strategies and on observation of relatively expert demonstrations. Until recently, practice, feedback, and coaching functions were reserved for student teaching experiences or delayed until induction and inservice development experiences. Of these functions, only coaching still remains for preservice teacher educators' adoption. This paper describes the strategies used in a general secondary methods course to build a collegial learning environment among preservice teachers, an environment that prepares them for a coaching model to be used in later staff development and assists in their learning of alternative instructional strategies. Discussion focuses on the strategies used by course instructors to coach students as peer demonstrators and coaches in a variety of teaching models. Perspectives of both instructors and students concerning the advantages and disadvantages of peer modeling and coaching are reported. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications and limitations of the coaching model. (Author/JD)

If Magic Johnson Coached Michael Jordan: Staff Development Strategies for Pre-Service Teachers

a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators

Las Vegas, Nevada February 5-8, 1990

by Elizabeth J. Stroble, Ph. D. Northern Arizona University

Deborah Lenz, A.B.D. Northern Arizona University

If Magic Johnson Coached Michael Jordan: Staff Development Strategies for Pre-Service Teachers

a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators
Las Vegas, Nevada February 5-8, 1990

by Elizabeth J. Stroble, Ph. D. Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ
Deborah Lenz, A.B.D. Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

RATIONALE

Staff development programs that increase inservice teachers' uses of alternative instructional strategies have included these components: study of the theoretical base of the strategy, observation of relatively expert demonstrations, practice and feedback in relatively protected conditions, and coaching in use of the new strategy (Joyce & Weil, 1986). Teacher education programs for pre-service teachers have traditionally focused on the first two components. Teacher educators have assigned readings and performed expert demonstrations for their students. Until recently, practice, feedback, and coaching functions were reserved for student teaching experiences or delayed until induction and inservice staff development experiences. As additional practice and feedback opportunities are incorporated in the form of early field experiences, microteaching episodes, and simulations, one component of successful staff development and transfer of skills--coaching--remains for pre-service teacher educators' adoption.

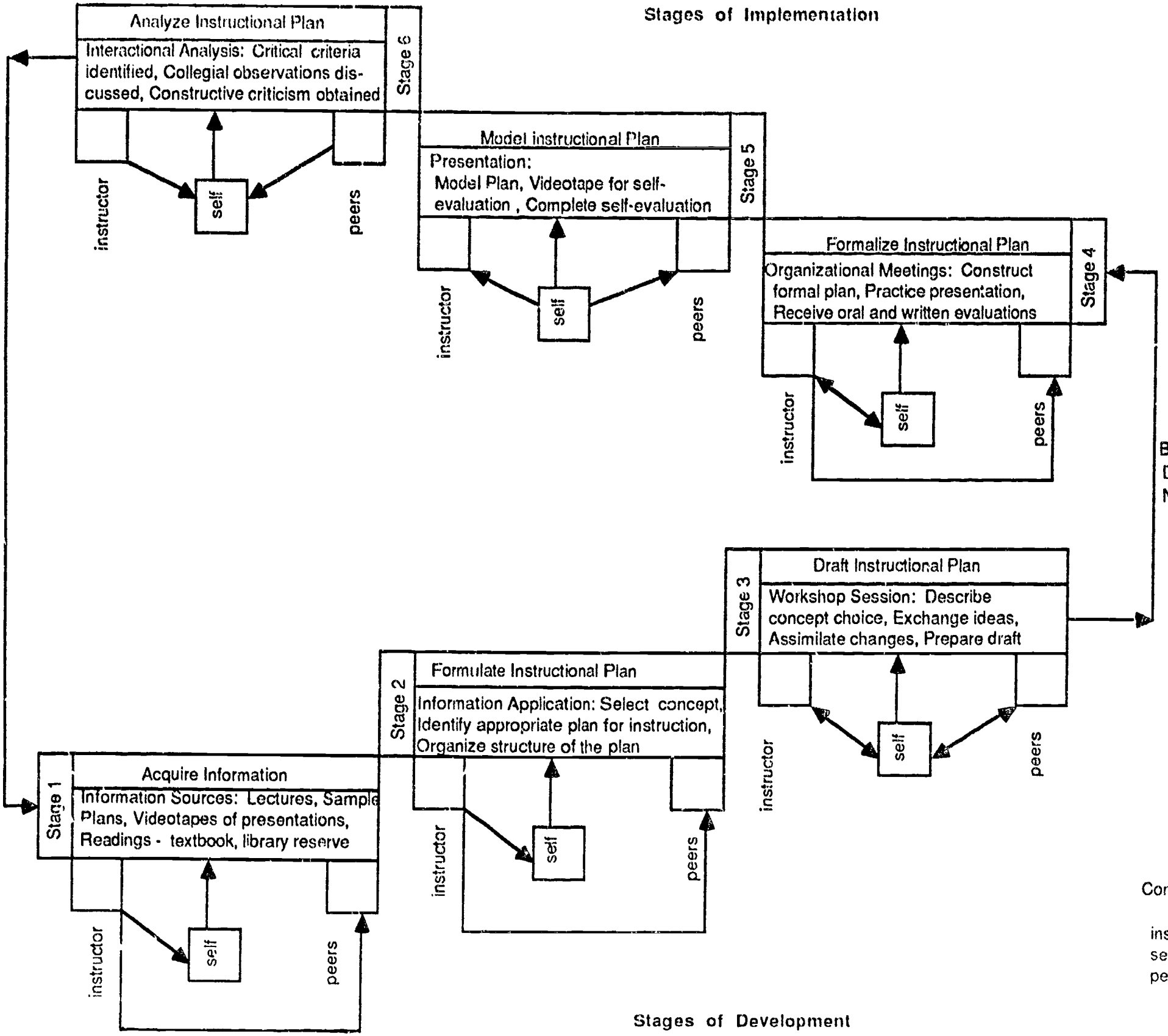
Joyce (Brandt, 1987) indicates that inservice teachers need the skill acquired from study of a rationale of a teaching method, demonstration, practice, and feedback to learn a new strategy. But teachers only add the strategy to their repertoires if they also consolidate and adapt the strategy--a stage of learning that coincides with "companionship, especially companionship with peers" (p. 12). Among the circumstances necessary to support the companionship of peers is active support by the instructional leader. Joyce and Garmiston (1987) argue that the leader must break down the insular organization of the schools, make time for peer teaming and coaching, abandon a mechanical approach to evaluation, nurture the peer relationships, and establish a problem-solving orientation. For school administrators and teachers this change in roles may prove difficult. This is not the usual structure of schools. For teacher educators and pre-service teachers a comparable role change must occur for coaching and modeling among peers to succeed in education courses.

The teacher-directed classroom dominates the college students' experience, if not in education courses, certainly in their major courses and general education requirements. How else can teacher educators explain students' resistance to non-lecture models of teaching? For this reason, the learning of alternative models--concept and cooperative learning methods--represents a distinct departure from the model most intimately known by pre-service teachers. Yet, dedicated and competent teacher educators have responded to this instructional challenge by presenting students with a research base to support an expanded repertoire of models. They have prepared expert demonstrations of these models in a variety of content areas to show by example the models' worth. They have chosen for themselves the role of expert theoretician, researcher, practitioner. To relinquish the role of expert and instead foster students as experts in their classrooms may require as much change for teacher educators and their

students as for principals and their teachers. This paper describes an attempt to redefine the role of expert in a general methods classroom by implementing a coaching model.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COACHING MODEL

At Northern Arizona University all secondary education students--undergraduates and post-degree students--enroll in a general methods course just prior to student teaching. A primary objective of the course is for students to plan and deliver lessons using a variety of instructional models as described by Joyce and Weil (1986): direct instruction, presentation, concept attainment or formation, and cooperative learning. Course instructors use a coaching model to build a colleagial learning environment among the pre-service teachers-- an environment that prepares them for a coaching model in later staff development and that assists their learning of alternative instructional strategies. The coaching model encourages students to manage their own learning: students determine the extent of their interactions with peers and instructors as they learn a given model of teaching. Students are coached by instructors and student volunteers who agree to study the rationale of a model, prepare an expert demonstration, and conduct an instructional planning workshop. The coaching model used to prepare the volunteers and their peers involves six stages--three stages of development and three stages of implementation.



Structure of the Coaching Model

Beth Stroble, Ph.D. and
Deborah L. Lenz, A.B.D.,
Northern Arizona
University,1990

Components of Interaction:

instructor
self
peers

Stage 1: Acquire Information

Students acquire information about the teaching model under discussion from these sources: the text (Arends' Learning to Teach), lecture, copies of sample lesson plans, and reserve readings (Joyce and Weil's Models of Teaching and Eggen and Kauchak's Strategies for Teachers) Information focuses on the theoretical base of the strategy and the syntax of the model--step by step procedures and the expected results associated with the model. Students discuss their understanding of the readings with instructors and select content appropriate to the plan they will prepare. At the same time, the student expert for each model acquires the information necessary to prepare the expert demonstration for the model under study.

Stage 2: Formulate Instructional Plan

For a concept model, students apply the acquired information by selecting a concept from their content areas, identifying the appropriate plan of instruction--concept formation or concept attainment--and organizing the structure of the plan. Meanwhile, student experts meet with instructors who examine their plans and provide feedback to guide the next revision.

Stage 3: Draft Instructional Plan

Workshop sessions are held during class time: students work in small groups to describe their concept choices, exchange ideas, incorporate suggestions in plans, and confer with student experts and instructors when help is needed. Students begin to prepare drafts for the instructors' written feedback. At this point student experts have demonstrated to the instructors their grasp of the theoretical base and the syntax of the model

through discussion and submission of a formalized instructional plan. When student experts complete the formalized plan, they meet with instructors for assistance in preparing materials to support the plan--handouts, overhead transparencies, charts and posters. Each student expert then practices the delivery of the plan, using the instructors' oral feedback to make the final preparations necessary for the classroom demonstration. Depending upon the particular model of teaching, steps in this stage and steps in the next stage may be switched. For example, the workshop may occur before the demonstration for the presentation and direct instruction models. For the concept models, the demonstrations occur before the workshop because of the relatively new content to be learned.

Stage 4: Formalize Instructional Plan

After the workshop session, students watch a demonstration of the model by the student expert. Class members use instrumentation specific to the model to guide their oral feedback. A focus on constructive comments encourages colleagial conversation: the student expert responds to questions and explains instructional choices while class members suggest refinements and seek advice for their own planning. Students then prepare a formalized instructional plan for the instructors' oral and written feedback. Suggestions typically concern the choice of content for the model type and the choice of particular procedures within the plan. Discussions with students clarify options and provide a supplement to the feedback already provided by the student expert and peers. When revisions are made, the lesson plan is ready for delivery.

Stage 5: Model Instructional Plan

After receiving student expert, peer, and instructor feedback on the formulation, drafting, and formalizing of the lesson plan, students present

their lesson to a small group of peers. For this first peer teaching episode, students select the direct instruction or presentation model plans they have prepared. Students in the room use an instrument specific to the model to provide oral feedback at the time of the teaching and videotaping. Each student then uses instrumentation to complete a self-evaluation as he/she reviews the tape. Instructors read the self-evaluations and provide responses to concerns raised. Instructors also monitor students' ability to balance their ob rvation of instructional problems with proposed solutions. Student experts also complete this self-evaluation of demonstrations for the class.

Stage 6: Analyze Instructional Plan

Later in the semester, when students study the concept models, they prepare a written plan for one of the two models--formation or attainment--and deliver that lesson to a group of peers. Again, oral feedback is guided by a model-specific instrument that identifies the critical criteria for evaluating a concept plan. Students submit their tapes to the instructors who also complete the instrument and meet with students in individual sessions to assess jointly the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson.

In this way, the structure of the coaching model allows each student to interact with instructors, peers, and student experts in each of the stages of developing a lesson plan and implementing the plan. Acquisition of information is followed by several opportunities for practice and feedback. Modeling and coaching are provided primarily by student experts, although students also have access to the assistance of peers and instructors. For student experts this coaching model is expanded by additional discussions and practice sessions as they prepare for the demonstrations and workshop sessions.

PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE COACHING MODEL

The Instructors' Perspective

Most salient is the wide variety of student demonstrations made available to students learning alternative models of teaching. No longer are the demonstrations limited to subject areas previously mastered or gamely attempted by the instructors. No longer are the demonstrations limited by the instructors' styles. Instead students in the general methods class see demonstrations in art, math, social studies--any subject area represented by a student volunteer. Instead students see use of overhead transparencies, flip charts, graphic organizers, and even costumes. The varied expert demonstrations prevent a mimicry of the instructors' styles as the standard for presentation of a lesson. Because students must choose among alternative styles of presenting concepts or demonstrating skills, they are more likely to wrestle with the critical attributes of the model of teaching under study. Additionally, the student experts provide models for future methods students. As a videotape library of their demonstrations builds, even more examplars of the teaching models will be available for review.

The most notable disadvantage is the labor intensive nature of a coaching model. To prepare the student experts to lead the instructional workshops and to present expert demonstrations requires multiple one-on-one meetings. And this effort must be repeated each semester with each new group of student experts. Even with careful selection of volunteers and repeated meetings and practice sessions, instructors worry that demonstrations will be less than "relatively expert." Shifting the locus of control for demonstrating and learning models from the instructor to the students is not without anxiety. The instructor must be ready with a contingency plan if student experts are not ready or not present on workshop or demonstration days. But the time and worry involved is offset by the personal interactions with student experts; time spent talking about

professional concerns is rewarding for the instructor and hopefully for the students who receive individual attention unusual in college classes.

The Students' Perspective:

When asked to evaluate the peer modeling and coaching aspect of the general methods course, students responded in these ways:

*It's a change of pace from the instructor's lectures--a new face.

*We can see the work put into it rather than an instructor who has the presentations already mastered.

* We could identify the weaknesses with a student whereas a professor would have a "flawless" presentation.

*I feel more comfortable critiquing a student and approaching them for a hint, informally.

*The effort and time is obvious when a student presents.

Students generally commented that they enjoyed working closely with the instructor, found the student experts an additional source of information, enjoyed the variety of content areas represented in the demonstrations, and felt the sequence of events worked well. They suggested that instructors begin to build a videotape library of expert demonstrations. Finally, they saw the time commitment on the part of the instructor and student as the major drawback to the coaching model.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE COACHING MODEL FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

While the coaching model described above successfully shifts the burden of expert demonstrator from instructor to student and successfully involves class members in colleagial interactions while learning a model of teaching, the coaching model has limitations. In contrast to staff development settings, an education class that involves the teaching of peers--even secondary education students representing many subject majors--cannot prepare students for the realities of teaching the model to adolescents. As Guskey points out in an alternative model of staff development, "significant change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are evidenced" (1986, p. 7). His research indicates that "evidence of improvement (positive change) in the learning outcomes of students generally precedes and may be a prerequisite to significant change in the beliefs and attitudes of most teachers" (p. 7). As a result, he believes that continued support after initial training is needed to help teachers implement new teaching approaches. Coaching--a form of support--then is narrowly interpreted as "personal, hands-on, in-classroom assistance" (p. 10). If evidence of student outcomes is significant in bringing about acceptance of alternative methodologies and if coaching must happen in a classroom context, then the limitations for coaching in peer-taught episodes are clear. What happens in the methods classroom must receive further attention from cooperating teachers and supervisors during student teaching experiences and during induction year programs.

Indeed, Joyce & Showers (1988) assert: "Staff development and preservice teacher preparation bear a reciprocal relationship to one another. Each borrows strength from the other. If preservice teacher education is strong, continuing education has more to build on. If continuing education is strong, preservice education can be designed with

confidence that life-long learning can take place" (p. 159). They recommend that teacher education "should introduce its students to the knowledge base that can undergird and sustain practice. It should employ the best knowledge that is known about training, modeling the use of research on education, and enabling its students to become powerful learners" (p. 166). Placing pre-service teachers in the roles of experts and coaches for each other as they learn new skills is one attempt to increase the power of their learning--their ability to function as thinking professionals in public school classrooms.

Works Cited

Brandt, R. S. (1987). On teachers coaching teachers: A conversation with bruce joyce. Educational Leadership,44 12-17.

Garmiston, R. J. (1987). How administrators support pee. coaching. Educational Leadership,44 18-26.

Guskey, T. R. (1986,). Staff development and the process of teacher change. Educational Researcher,15 (5), 5-12.

Joyce, R.B. & Showers, B. (1988). Student achievement through staff development. New York: Longman.

Joyce, R. B. & Weil, M. (1986). Models of teaching. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.