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## High School Literacy Coaches In Florida: A Study Of Background, Time, And Other Factors Related To Reading Achievement

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*University of Central Florida*



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HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY COACHES IN FLORIDA:  
A STUDY OF BACKGROUND, TIME,  
AND OTHER FACTORS RELATED TO READING ACHIEVEMENT

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Educational Research, Technology and Leadership  
in the College of Education  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term  
2006

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## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this research was to understand the work lives of literacy coaches in central Florida by studying who they were, what they did, and what they believed influenced student achievement. In addition, it was important to understand the perceptions of literacy coaches as to what factors influenced positive changes in student achievement. Of 27 central Florida literacy coaches, this study examined the academic and professional background of each coach, explored the time spent on ten key literacy coaching activities, and analyzed work factors related to student achievement in reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

Although the literacy coaching role was one that was expanding in the United States through state funding initiatives, much about the role and its effectiveness were not known through the literature. A web-based survey system and purposive interviews were used to gather important data relevant to providing understandings about literacy coaches. Exploratory regression analyses using coaching activities and school performance measures were run to determine the existence of relationships. Qualitative analysis was employed to develop literacy coaching themes from survey responses, and all data were triangulated and used to develop case studies. Case studies provided narrative descriptions of all data in the context of individual schools and their coaches all embedded within case types as identified by prior year school letter grade.

The results of the study showed an overwhelming amount of time was spent on other activities not related to literacy coaching. Assisting with test preparation was one

reason for other activity assignment. Modeling of literacy strategies was reported as one of the more useful and influential activities, but few of the coaches in the study organized their time for this. Case studies provided rich context into the work lives of literacy coaches. Suggested uses for the study included the development of stronger professional development programs for school administrators in working with high school literacy coaches. Although literacy coaches were a well-trained group, more specific training is needed in the re-allocation of time so that more influential activities are pursued.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Paul and June Boulware.

They taught me to go beyond the impossible.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, my advisor for this project, has coached me toward success with her inspiring example, and she has pushed me to reach higher levels of personal and professional success. I would also like to thank Dr. George Pawlas for his wonderful classes and useful editing, and Dr. David Boote for his insight about writing quality literature reviews and incorporating effective case study methodology. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Lange for his wisdom in numbers and about the realities of standardized testing and Dr. Barbara Murray for her editing assistance.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS**

FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
IRA	International Reading Association
FCRR	Florida Center for Reading Research
PMRN	Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Study

The concept of a reading or literacy person working in the school who does not teach full-time was one in evolution. Chesler, Romeo, Shaw, and Smith (2004) observed that the role of the K-12 reading specialist has evolved into that of a literacy coach, a role that required a much closer relationship to teachers and their classroom activities. This role change was prompted by strong national political influences stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The International Reading Association (2004) noted that, “the rapid proliferation of reading coaches is one of the responses to increased attention to reading and the achievement gap” (p. 7). As an example, *The Just Read, Florida!* Grant provided for the employment of 900 reading coaches to work in Florida schools in the fall of 2004 (Press Release, Office of the Governor of Florida). Governor Bush signed Executive Order 01-260 on September 7, 2001 and established *Just Read, Florida!* This order provided the executive policy basis for literacy coach grants in Florida.

To place a specialized reading person in the high school was hardly a novel twenty-first century idea. Thomas (1967) described the story of one high school that chose to add a reading coach of sorts: “A new approach, it seemed, was called for. A remedial teacher could have been added to work with a limited number of students, but the decision was made to add a consultant in the hope of involving all teachers in a school-wide effort” (p. 45). The challenge for educators was to continue to define the nature of the job role and to determine the kinds of activities and (how much time to

spend on them) that would likely influence reading achievement changes in the whole high school.

The purpose of the study was to contribute to inquiry in secondary reading research, and in particular focus on high school literacy coaches. “Right now, little research exists on the use of reading coaches in schools. This will change as more educators and researchers begin to understand their potentially critical role in the professional development of teachers” (Dole, 2004, p. 468). Because of the enormous investment in the literacy coach position, this policy implementation was worthy of evaluation. In this study, the position was referred to as literacy coach.

The literacy coach was viewed as a rather informal leader of teachers, a literacy wise guide toward understanding the power of reading throughout a school environment, one whose mission was to foster the development of literacy in a school through its faculty. To do this, the literacy coach worked to influence reading practices and develop strategic partnerships with teachers. Walpole and McKenna (2004) addressed the role of leadership in the role of literacy coach:

There is a secret to developing a leadership position among teachers. It acknowledges and accommodates the many different personal styles and skills that literacy coaches bring to their work, and it allows them to have a common mission. The secret is not strength, wit, or knowledge of research. It is not administrative skill, research skill, teaching experience, or graduate training. The secret is service. Literacy coaches who see their mission as service to teachers, to make it easier for the teachers to provide service to children, are good leaders (p. 225).

This mission of service to facilitate growth among teachers outlined the leadership role inherent to the job of literacy coach. How the literacy coach leadership role and its processes were defined was the subject of this study; hence, the primary focus of this

study centered on use of time and whether or not specific coaching activities and working factors had an effect on overall school-wide reading achievement.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical bases serving as the foundation for the literacy coach role were found in two key staff development tenets. First, the traditional workshop without an adult learning application component had less value than professional development infused within teaching practices. Literacy coaching was an infusion model that relied on application of practices. Second, coaching added value to the improvement of instructional practices related to reading. These ideas were supported in a review of the foundations for instructional coaching in this section.

### *Coaching Model of Professional Development*

Hirsh and Sparks (1997) described a change in perspective among educators on the subject of staff development, from an off-site model to one in which teacher training was now more “job-embedded” (p. 83). Poglinco and Bach (2004) outlined two types of coaching, small group and in-classroom, and they identified strengths and weaknesses of coaching as a viable staff development option. They noted that teachers appreciated coaches who worked in their classrooms. The implication for school leadership was made clear: “with some advance planning and a more nuanced understanding of how coaching can work, administrators can make informed decisions about how to incorporate the use of coaches into their school improvement plans for optimum results” (p. 400).

Servatius and Young (1985, April) analyzed the subject of coaching and its staff

development processes, and they noted that:

Several factors interact to produce the successful implementation of training skills through coaching. First, there is accountability. A teacher who is expecting an advisor to visit the classroom will sincerely attempt to implement the skill. Second, there is support and companionship that develop between the advisor and advisee. Third, the process provides for specific feedback to teachers, so they truly learn whether or not they are implementing the skill correctly. And if they aren't, 're-teaching' can take place in their own classrooms (p. 53).

The advisor visit, in the previous example, itself created useful tension that was supported while the skill was being developed, and opportunity for improvement by the teacher may occur again. The interaction effect of these processes demonstrated the "job-embedding" nature of the coaching model for professional development. Joyce and Showers (1981) defined the essential nature of coaching as a unique staff development model:

As a training device, coaching differs from training for skill acquisition on several dimensions. Practice remains important, as unused skills tend to atrophy. Feedback, however, rather than emphasizing fidelity to a skill or model, stresses the appropriateness of specific strategies to certain goals. Together, the teacher and 'coach' examine appropriate places in the curriculum for the use of specific strategies, evaluate the effectiveness of observed lessons, and plan for future trials. This phase of training represents a continuing problem-solving endeavor between the teacher and coach. The purpose of this instruction is to ensure vertical transfer—to increase the probability that application will not take place as if lateral transfer were, in itself, sufficient. We believe that a major problem in teacher training designs has been the assumption that a skill, once learned, can be 'popped into place' in the classroom (transferred laterally). The situation is, rather, that transfer of teaching skill involves much new learning—when to use skills, how to modulate them to the students, etc—learning which has to take place in the process of transfer. Clearly, coaching is a labor-intensive approach to training (p. 170).

The literacy coach assisted this transfer of learning through a wide variety of active literacy coaching processes.

Barth (1990) observed the need to provide internal staff development more tailored to teacher needs. He made the following argument: “Most attempts at staff development are attempts at group growth...If teachers differ in their ability to examine practice and have others examine it, then perhaps our attempts to help them grow professionally should be correspondingly different” (p. 54). Suggested here was a more individual approach to adult learning. Race, Ho, and Bower (2002) found that levels of instructional performance rose when a professional development system involving coaching and feedback was employed with elementary teachers for the subjects of math and science.

Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller (2005) studied the effect of a managerial style of coaching versus a coaching style of management using surveys with warehouse workers. They found that there was a relationship between “supervisory coaching behavior and warehouse worker job satisfaction” (p. 629). This pointed to a need for more coaching and developing behaviors among managers. The authors went on to say, “For meaningful coaching to occur, supervisors must want to develop their subordinates and must be willing to provide authentic support that is perceived as such by their charges” (p. 631). In this study, coaching centered on human development in the workplace.

Thornby and Pettrey (2005) observed parallels to coaching in the field of nursing. As an example, “Coaching is not about telling people what to do. Sometimes, the only way to learn is through our own thinking and experiences. Speak and listen with the intent for others to discover themselves. Coaches often pursue questions to help others discover

new perspectives or possibilities” (p. 29). Coaching was defined above as a development tool.

Knight (2006) recognized the increasing shift in professional development toward coaching. He highlighted eight factors that made instructional coaching more effective: (a) sufficient time to work with teachers, (b) proven research-based interventions, (c) professional development for instructional coaches, (d) protecting the coaching relationship, (e) ensuring principals and coaches work together, (f) hiring the right instructional coaches.

As a method for professional development, coaching was intended to foster growth in process. Coaching involved growth and development relationships among coach and teacher; as an applied staff development model, the aim was to create understanding among professional colleagues.

### *The Literacy Coach and Instructional Leadership*

Blase and Blase (1999) studied staff development as a tool for instructional leadership and development. Although their study focused on principals, the bearing on literacy coaches was applicable. Using over 800 teachers as the sample, they found that “promoting coaching” enhanced and fostered modeling and collegial observation. The authors concluded, “Our findings about staff development programs in action confirm the importance of reflective professional growth for teachers. Broadly speaking, the fundamental challenge for instructional leaders, as we now see it, is one of building a culture of lifelong learning through inquiry and collaboration” (p. 15). An atmosphere

where teachers learn through working with peers and other education professionals was desirable.

Kemp (2005) observed the various roles in which the literacy coach plays in order to develop instructional improvement. The literacy coach provided information such as achievement data. The coach took on other roles, such as “facilitator” or “presenter” or “adviser” or “mentor,” as the author noted. The focus was the teacher: “Literacy coaches work primary with teachers rather than with individual students to develop innovative methods to actively engage teachers in strengthening their literacy strategies” (p. 24). The teacher focus highlighted a key tenet of literacy coaching work: literacy coaches provided instructional support for students through teachers.

In a meta-analysis of the literature and studies on literacy leadership, Murphy (2004) discovered some key elements of literacy leadership. One example, “Classrooms and schools that are especially successful in nurturing literacy skills maintain an uncommon focus on reading” (p. 75). Murphy explained that the amount of time productively spent on reading was greater in schools found to be more successful in reading. Reaffirming the time on task research, Murphy reiterated the power of time and its connection to student literacy learning: “Effective programs create communities of teachers working collaboratively in the service of enhanced literacy achievement. In the process, they make the practice of teaching much more public than is the norm in the profession” (p. 90). Indeed, Fisher and Frey (2006) reported the story of Hoover High School in San Diego, California. The school improved its literacy focus and achievement results by thorough planning, using key instructional strategies, creating time to read,

implementing peer coaching, providing strong administrative support, and democratic processes for initiating this change. Hoover High School was a model for literacy development across the whole school culture. Fisher, Frey, and Williams (2002) outlined “Seven Defensible Strategies” (p. 71) that helped to make Hoover High School a success story: (a) Read Alouds, (b) K-W-L Charts, (c) Graphic Organizers, (d) Vocabulary Instruction, (e) Writing to Learn, (f) Structured Notetaking, and (g) Reciprocal Teaching (pp. 71-73). These strategies were used across all types of subject area classrooms.

Overall school literacy leadership models provided a framework for the work categories and coaching activities with which the literacy coach engaged. In *Literacy Leadership for Grades 5-12*, Taylor & Collins (2003) outlined an overall school literacy leadership model that incorporates (a) advancing literacy through school-wide engagement, (b) analyzing and interpreting multiple forms of data, (c) organizing curriculum and instruction toward literacy, (d) building literacy-rich classrooms, (e) providing continual professional development on literacy, and (f) adopting an ongoing continuous improvement model for literacy development.

Tabor (1998) described the District Thinking Project in 1986-87 in Irvine, California, which incorporated peer coaching and enhanced student engagement and thinking skills through a comprehensive effort to ask more challenging questions and respond to foster deep thinking. In the end, the teachers “reported that students took time to expand and justify their answers, willingly listened to the ideas of others, asked more questions, and raised issues of their own” (p. 49). Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2003) in a review of the research on the subject of increasing literacy at the

elementary levels, found that the more students were challenged by their teachers to think and read at higher levels, the more learning took place. The researchers observed, “One consistent finding is that higher-level questioning matters. The more a teacher asked higher-level questions, the more growth the nine target students in her class experienced on a variety of measures” (p. 22). They found “that elements of a framework of reading instruction that maximize(d) students’ cognitive engagement are important to consider when attempting to improve reading instruction. In addition to the reading curriculum, or what teachers teach, how teachers teach reading is of paramount importance” (p. 24). This last statement was aligned with the role of literacy coach. The literacy coach focused on the “how” through teacher development and coaching.

### *Leading Literacy and the Organizational Context*

Literacy coaches worked within school contexts, those complex organizations laden with social and political forces in a realm of scarce resources and skeptical teachers. Because of these challenges, the literacy coach was faced with enormous pressures to overcome hindrances to success. Some knowledge of organizations and how to work within and across them was important to the success of an instructional support role like that of the literacy coach. The literacy coach had to foster learning through the school’s organizational network and develop its teachers.

McGregor (1960) discussed the fusion of organizational goals and the needs of the worker. The assumption underlying this belief, unlike McGregor’s Theory X which described a negative view of employees as those who need to be managed, is that those

working want to improve their individual performance. In *The Human Side of*

*Enterprise*, McGregor stated:

There is substantial evidence for the statement that the potentialities of the average human being are far above those which we typically realize in industry today. If our assumptions are like those of Theory X, we will not even recognize the existence of these potentialities and there will be no reason to devote time, effort, or money to discovering how to realize them. If, however, we accept assumptions like those of Theory Y, we will be challenged to innovate, to discover new ways of organizing and directing human effort, even though we recognize that the perfect organization, like the perfect vacuum, is practically out of reach (p. 54).

The literacy coach role was tied to Theory Y, a McGregor concept in opposition to Theory X, as its focus was human potential within the organization to improve literacy among all students at a school.

Senge (1990) described the role of a leader as “designer,” “steward,” and “teacher”—all roles which, in turn, stimulated what he called, “creative tension.” After all, “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs” (p. 139). The literacy coach facilitated organizational learning through developing the potential of teachers to become more valuable in teaching reading in the content areas. The coach fostered meta-thinking about teaching reading among teachers working from various contexts and subject areas. Grant, Young, and Montbriand (2001) observed that coaching and mentoring, as a method of providing professional development to reading teachers, emerged “from a reflective practice theoretical foundation” (p. 23). Also citing Senge, authors Intrator and Kunzman (2006) advocated a reflective model of professional development. In addition, Slack (2003) reported that the use of reading skill

development in the Reading Success Network (RSN) helped to provide teachers with the tools they needed to foster reading achievement. In fact, she cited changes in both teacher practices and gains in student reading performance.

### Summary

Literacy coaching involved the work of a person in the schools with few assignments related to the teaching of students directly; this was not a brand new notion. It, however, was a concept that had emerged on the national and state levels as a major policy initiative intended to change how teachers handled reading at their schools. This study attempted to develop research tools and report both quantitative and qualitative data about the work that literacy coaches pursue and describe the contexts in which they work.

The literacy coach must lead and influence teachers in order to facilitate growth among faculty toward developing the critical reading skills each child needs. The idea of the literacy coach as a staff developer was based on a much different staff development model than the workshop model. For example, it was one in which an application model was encouraged. Teachers learned while teaching, learned by doing their daily work, with the assistance of the resident expert on reading and thinking skills: the literacy coach. Literacy coaching was a method of instructional leadership that brought together school goals with teacher practices and student needs. The literacy coach used influence processes to meet a school's goal of improving reading in all content areas, not just in reading classes. What the coach did to lead faculty contributed to the development of literacy leadership models that may or may not have had success in schools. The

coaching concept was based on the idea that humans can improve performance, and the literacy coach worked to improve the performance of teachers in all content areas.

### Statement of the Problem

In the 2004-05 academic years, The State of Florida offered 7 million dollars for school districts to apply for a competitive grant to fund high school literacy coach positions (High School Reading Coach Grant, RFP for Competitive Grants, 2004-05). This was a significant policy and economic investment for a job role without day-to-day teaching responsibilities for a set group of students. The literacy coach role was not administrative in nature, although some administrative tasks were required. It was a teacher leadership role intended by design to influence teachers to incorporate literacy strategies and focus on reading in various content-area classrooms across a school environment and in reading intervention classes. The literacy coach was an instructional leader who spent his or her time advancing the development of literacy at a particular school or schools.

The high school literacy coach was a newer position and warranted evaluation. Was this position working? Who were the coaches in the high schools in four central Florida school districts during 05-06? How were the coaches spending their time at work? What helped them become successful, or hinder progress? What were some working factors that promoted or slowed their success? What did they believe made them successful in influencing reading achievement gains? These were the questions that lacked clear answers.

To define the problem for a research framework, this study was organized into three related constructs. First, there was a need to understand some key framing factors about literacy coaches, including individual demographic information, professional experience, and academic background. Second, few tools existed to understand the role and work of the literacy coach. Third, relationships among the coaches' demographic information, professional experience, academic background, and time spent on particular coaching activities may help predict successful practices and shape the future training and development of literacy coaches.

The role of the literacy coach was yet to be completely defined through empirical research. What was found in the research was advice and theoretical descriptions of what the role should entail. However, The State of Florida outlined 10 activity domains that it has decided to measure through the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PRMN):

- 1) Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional development sessions such as seminars, action research, study groups designed to increase educators' knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)
- 2) Planning: Planning, developing, and/or preparing professional development
- 3) Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating model lessons in classrooms for teachers
- 4) Coaching: Coaching (planning conversations, observations & reflecting conversation, offering feedback) teachers in classrooms
- 5) Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, etc.

- 6) Student Assessment: Administering or coordinating student assessments
- 7) Data Analysis: Analyzing, using, and reporting student data
- 8) Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues
- 9) Knowledge-Building: Building my personal knowledge of SBRR and assessment through study or professional development
- 10) Other: Time spent on other duties assigned

How the coach spent his or her time was quite valuable information. This information was not known to researchers or practitioners, and the Progress Reporting and Monitoring Network (PRMN) research group had not reported it as public information as of November, 2006. This study attempted to gather activity data related to PRMN to help answer the question of who the coaches were, what they did, and what influenced their successes and failures.

Because numerous, and certainly not copious, empirical studies were rare on this topic, an additional problem arose: lack of tools to measure the time and activities of literacy coaches. The Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context survey instrument was developed to test a data-gathering tool to collect supporting data as well as self-reported time assessments. The survey instrument was based on the ten activity domains of the PRMN Reading Coach Log and included many open-ended questions to develop textual data sets through which to analyze discourse, develop themes, and build case studies.

### Definition of Terms

The following definitions are included to clarify terms used in the study:

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT): The battery of assessment tests associated with the State of Florida A Plus accountability plan, which includes a reading component.

Literacy Coach or Reading Coach: A school or district assigned person responsible for teaching or leading other faculty members through professional development in reading, literacy, and related improvements in instruction.

Reading Coach Activity Log: A log required by the State of Florida for all of its literacy coaches. Hours spent on ten different literacy coach activities are recorded in the log for the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN).

### Research Questions

The following qualitative and quantitative research questions guided this research:

1. What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes high school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2006?
2. What relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations?
3. What is the perception of high school literacy coaches related to working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement?

## Methods

The methodology used in this study relied on three primary frameworks for analysis. First, descriptive data were used to explain the demographic and background data related to the coaches as a group in central Florida. These data were also used to build case studies, in which literacy coaches from selected schools were examined in the context of other data, and in the context of multi-level case studies. Second, simple descriptive statistics and regression analyses and diagnostics were used to measure the effect of time spent on ten literacy coaching activities and school performance on the FCAT reading achievement test. Third, the coding of survey, interview, and school performance data was necessary to develop and build both thematic studies and case studies for qualitative analysis.

## *Data Sources*

Table 1 outlined the research framework for analyzing data to determine the predictability of hours engaged with particular coaching activities on changes in school-wide reading achievement. Data sources along with associated analyses tools and reporting methods are shown. Each research question is matched to content focus, data source, method of analysis, and reporting method. This methodological grid created a framework for pursuing this research with the tools and the reporting outcomes from the planning, implementation, analysis, and writing of the study. Included were references to quantitative and qualitative software tools.

Table 1: Research Questions Matched to Data Sources and Tools of Analysis

Research Question	Question Content	Data Source	Method of Analysis	Reporting
1	Literacy Coach Background	Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey questions 3-11	Descriptive Statistics	Tables Graphs Narrative
2	Coaching Activities & Time	Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey questions 12-30	Descriptive Statistics  SPSS: Inferential Statistics Correlation/Regression Analysis	Tables  Graphs Narrative
3	Literacy Coach Perceptions	Interviews and Case Study Research	Qualitative Information Verbal Representation  Nvivo 7 Qualitative Analysis Software	Initial Coded Data  Theme Analysis  Group Case Studies

### *Population*

The intended surveyed population included 36 high school literacy coaches from four Florida school districts, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola, all in central Florida. Data from this geographic cluster were collected using an online-survey system, hosted by [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com). Eleven interviews from the population of literacy coaches in these school districts were conducted by phone throughout April and May of 2006. Selection of reading coaches to be interviewed was based on case study groupings. Schools in the case study groupings were organized by 2005-06 state assessment letter grade and type of school, including urban, suburban, and rural. The eleven coaches interviewed included a sample from each case study group.

### *Instrumentation*

The survey used in this study was analyzed for content validity by a panel of graduate students, and the group's feedback was applied to the development of the survey. The panel confirmed the overall ease of survey to read and follow. The panel assisted in the clarification of key questions and raised concerns about anonymity. Data from this survey were not used to generalize for the entire State of Florida. This was a study of literacy coaches and high schools within four Florida school districts. Data from the use of the survey, and from each high school literacy coach, will be used to build future studies on the subject of reading coaches and contribute to future practices among

literacy coaches. Feldman and Tung (2002) employed the usage of coaching logs for their study on the effect of coaches on whole school reform. A modified version of The Florida Reading Coach Grant Activity Report (or Reading Coach Log) was used to survey literacy coaches in the central Florida high schools from the target districts. [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) hosted the survey instrument on the website, and all results were encrypted to ensure confidentiality of data.

### *Survey Implementation*

After receiving the external study approval from the four school districts, the Dillman (2000) Tailored Design Method (TDM) as explained in the book's first chapter was employed to gain a more complete sample (chapter 1). As he defined it, "Tailored Design is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce high quality information and high response rates" (p. 29). The primary tool for acquiring data about time spent on particular coaching activities was the web-based survey. Dillman pointed out some key advantages of using web technology for surveying, "Web surveys, in contrast, not only have a more refined appearance to which color may be added, but also provide survey capabilities far beyond those available for any other type of self-administered questionnaire" (p. 354). Dillman's principles for using web surveys were applied in the development of this study's online survey.

Surveys were sent through electronic means, using [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) services, in March 2006 and continued through May 2006 with the aim to acquire a high response rate by May 30. The point of initial contact for survey completion occurred when the

principal received an e-mail request from the researcher. He or she then chose to forward the survey to the literacy coach. This way, the principal gave tacit permission or not for his or her reading coach to respond via web-based survey. After the initial contact from the researcher to the principal, a follow-up e-mail was sent if survey results were not received from that school. No compensation was granted in this survey process.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

School-level achievement data came from the Florida Department of Education assessment databases (<http://fcats.fldoe.org/>). Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading data from 2005 and 2006 test administrations were analyzed for mean differences in the two years' scores among percentages of students. The primary data focal point for analysis was the percentage of students scoring a level 3, level 4, or level 5, a 3-level range considered higher level achievement by the Florida Department of Education. Other supporting data from the FCAT databases were incorporated into the global data analyses and case studies for each school.

The independent data variables were based on the total percentage of time spent by each coach during the 2005-06 school years. The data matrix and analysis followed these guiding principles:

1. Once the survey data were returned to the [Surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) web site, the percentage of time per coaching activity was analyzed by total responses reported per activity, individual percentages by activity, and overall coaches' percentages by activity.

2. Each coaching activity was analyzed through simple regression analysis using SPSS to predict time spent on particular coaching activities related to change in levels 3 and above from FCAT reading 2005 to 2006.
3. The regression equation was built around this predictive model: For every increase in the number of hours spent on particular coaching activities, an increase in reading gains among students becomes evident.

Data were analyzed using *Statistical Package for Social Sciences*, Version 14.0 (SPSS) software. The statistical tests and analyses included multiple-regression, along with the appropriate verifications for regression testing. Case study organization presented data and reported interview information.

### *Interview Questions and Strategies*

To enrich understanding of the data and build context around the results, 11 literacy coaches were interviewed based on a group of schools representing suburban, urban, and rural areas about their background and perceived barriers to effectiveness. These interviews took place by phone. Listed below are the specific interview questions that were asked of each of the literacy coaches:

- 1) Why did you decide to become a literacy coach?
- 2) What do you do that you believe influenced student achievement the most?
- 3) What contributed or has contributed to your success as a literacy coach?
- 4) What has impeded your success as a literacy coach?
- 5) Describe your relationship with school administration.

Qualitative data from the answers to these questions were transcribed, paraphrased, and analyzed for similarities and differences.

### *Case Study Construction*

Case studies of schools within groups were developed to explain the context in which the literacy coach conducted his or her work. No specific district or school names were used. The case study was developed using school and coach profile data, regression analysis, survey data, and interviews. The case study method was useful for building information about the literacy coaches and their activities and perceived effectiveness:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 1998, p. 19).

The case studies provided valuable context to describe and understand the work lives of high school literacy coaches. Qualitative analysis software entitled NVivo 7, from QSR International, was used to develop linked themes and build context for multiple case studies. Grounded theory, as a qualitative research framework, shaped the inductive data analysis as themes emerged and were embedded in the case studies.

### Assumptions

The specific assumptions of this study were:

- 1) It was assumed that literacy coaches had a strong understanding of the time spent on various activities, as they had to report the number of hours spent on ten activities every two weeks to the Florida Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network.
- 2) It was assumed that literacy coach academic and professional background may influence understandings of how literacy coaches spend their time.
- 3) It was assumed that the data reported by the literacy coaches was self-reported and reliability was based on the veracity and accuracy of each coach's answers.

### Limitations

- 1) This study was limited to a geographic cluster, including the Florida school districts of Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola.
- 2) This study was limited to the high school literacy coaches in the above region.
- 3) This study was limited to self-reported survey data and interview information.

### Significance of the Study

Toll (2005) outlined many current and relevant studies pointing to the success of literacy coaching, and observed that:

Literacy coaching serves many purposes. It supports significant instructional change and increased teacher reflection, which contributes to the reshaping of school cultures. It supports teacher professional development in a manner that honors the manner in which adults learn best. Above all, literacy coaching contributes to increased student achievement in literacy. Given all the reasons for literacy coaching, the need for literacy coaches is increasing rapidly (p. 7-8).

This study was developed to explore the use of research tools for measuring the effectiveness of the high school literacy coach using the quantitative measures of time and student achievement. “The success of coaching encourages teachers to want to spend more time with coaches, and more teachers to seek out their help” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. 22). This study sought answers to the effective use of time spent on coaching activities and whether or not these activities influenced school wide student achievement.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter One provided context for the literacy coach study, introduced the problem, and outlined the research questions, definitions, assumptions, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two synthesizes the existing literature relevant to the problem under study. Chapter Three describes the methodological framework including information on the population, instrumentation, and data collection and analyses. Chapter Four presents the results of the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The field of literacy coaching was a field with little empirical research to support policy initiatives and evaluation studies of the position. What were found in the literature review were theories of coaching, prescriptive guides, a few dissertation studies, and related coaching studies, all of which provided support for the practice of literacy coaching as an instructional support position. The issue of time and its relationship to successful literacy coaching was included and analyzed as well as the key survey findings in which the International Reading Association studied coaching activities and time through a survey of its own members. What coaches were supposed to do was explored as many handbooks on the subject had recently been published. The few empirical studies on literacy coaching found were incorporated into the following review of literature. Despite a dearth of existing literature on the subject, a thorough analysis was conducted of existing information directly and indirectly related to the subject of literacy coaching and student reading achievement. Sometimes as Hart (1998) argued, “We therefore need to seek clarity in the information we have, rather than acquire more” (p. 141). Boote and Beile (2005) observed a decline in the quality of literature reviews among education dissertations; the principles they outlined were used to organize an analytical, focused literature review. The authors adapted a rubric from Hart (1998) and constructed the *Literature Review Scoring Rubric* (p. 6), which organized the scope of the literature review into 5 categories: coverage, synthesis, methodology, significance, and

rhetoric. This literature review on the subject of literacy coaches observed the work of (Boote & Beile, 2005; Hart, 1998) as a heuristic or organizational frame. Organization of the literature review was defined by these sections, Theory and the Meaning of Literacy, Coaching Theory: Content and Practice, Literacy Coach Academic and Professional Background, Time for Literacy Coaching, Professional Activities of Literacy Coaches, Studies in Literacy Coaching, Practicing the Profession of Literacy Coaching, School-Wide Contexts for Improving Literacy and Achievement, and Summary of Literature Review.

### *Theory and the Meanings of Literacy*

For high school students, textbooks were a key barrier to literacy as recognized by Irvin, Buehl, and Klemp (2007). Described in *The Demands of Text* (Chapter 5), “The expository text of content textbooks is factual rather than fictional and is organized around a hierarchical pattern of main ideas and background details” (p. 78). The imperative for teaching of content area reading strategies was observed by these authors:

High school teachers might assume that the responsibility for teaching reading should fall on English teachers. But English teachers focus their instruction primarily on fiction and narrative literature—novels, short stories, biographies, and poetry. Therefore, although high school students are expected to read extensively from expository texts, no one, it seems, teaches them how to read and understand these texts (p. 79).

The authors went on to say, “Most teachers do not devote much time to helping students become aware of textual features. Awareness of text structure is an important metacognitive skill that should be made a part of learning to read and write” (p. 80).

Moore and Readence (2001) attempted to place secondary school literacy research in the context of literacy studies by reviewing past research, documentation, handbooks on research, and they concluded that:

Thinking of secondary school literacy research as a social construction casts it as inventions and creations rather than discoveries. It positions researchers as producing and conveying impressions of the world rather than uncovering and displaying the realities of the one real world. It helps explain the dynamic fluidity and overlap evident in researchers' efforts—and in observers' efforts to situate such research. We find that using this root metaphor of social construction when viewing the secondary school literacy research landscape clarifies its ever-shifting terrain (p. 25).

Many factors, including social background and context, influence levels of literacy, and this was an important theoretical frame.

For students in Florida, taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), literacy assessment for them may fall under technocratic rationality. O'Brien, Moje, and Stewart (2001) cited many researchers on the topic of technocratic rationality, and defined this term:

The primacy of content coverage assigns literacy to the level of a technician's tool that can be used to accomplish prescribed institutional ends. Students are assigned reading in board-certified textbooks, and secondary literacy specialists serve as technicians who show content area teachers how to use strategies that help teachers teach and students learn the content in those textbooks (p. 29).

This formalization of curriculum content and the processes to deliver instruction prescribed a more technical model of what literacy coaching entails, especially in an era of accountability and frequent standardized testing. Schmoker (2001), however, described school and district vignettes in which data from standardized tests were useful when combined with formative ongoing assessments. These formal and formative processes were aligned with Deming's work on Total Quality Management, a

management system designed to promote continuous improvement in organizations, among other things.

### *Coaching Theory: Content and Practice*

In a discussion of individual coaching between coach and client, Lenhardt (2004), described the content of coaching using a four stage model, which included a progressive development of the person being coached toward a modeling strategy. The process began with listing, including the sub-set of skills to be applied: silence, questions, clarification, reformulations, and confronting emotions. According to Lenhardt, the coach then made the following contributions: diagnoses, theory, areas of intervention, and provides alternatives. The coach then intervened, and then, finally, modeled the appropriate skill or behavior (Chap. 21). Described by Lenhardt was a simple coaching model with literacy coaching implications that may be expanded and interpreted as such: coach sought problem, called-up literacy interventions or strategies, and sought creative solutions with teacher.

Of course, some roots of experiential learning were found in Dewey (1938) as he developed a theory of educational experience. He observed:

Failure to take into account adaption to the needs and capabilities of individuals was the source of the idea that certain subjects and certain methods are intrinsically cultural or intrinsically good for mental discipline. There is no such thing as educational value in the abstract...the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process (p. 46-47).

Dewey provided reality in learning theory; the practical enriched the abstract. The coaching process was a future improvement model; it defined improvement for the future through practical application with respect to the individual needs of each teacher.

In a study of training transfer and distance coaching, Wang and Wentling (2001) found significant relationships among the following categories: resources, ( $r=0.50$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); building relationships—overall transfer, ( $r=0.45$ ,  $p <0.05$ ); problem-solving, ( $r=0.50$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In another research area, “Relationship between Perceived Coaching Success and Transfer of Training,” those being coached were able to provide valuable feedback: preparation for coaching, ( $r=0.68$ ,  $p<0.05$ ); interaction with coach, ( $r=0.50$ ,  $p<0.05$ ); relationships with coach, ( $r=0.66$ ,  $p<0.05$ ); encouragement from coach, ( $r=0.55$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and monitoring progress (pp. 24-25). Of course, this study followed past studies that showed relationships to worker attention and changed performance, such as the Western Electric Studies: “This study added support to the existing body of knowledge that providing social support and task support to trainees can improve transfer of training” (p. 25).

A differentiated model of coaching was outlined by Kise (2006), who advocated for the use of learning styles for teacher coaching. The theoretical framework for Kise’s work on differentiated coaching was the MBTI, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Tool, a personality assessment used in organizations. The following four types emerge from the assessment in different rank orderings, Sensing, Feeling, Perceiving, and Extraversion or Introversion. According to Kise, “Coaching is the art of identifying and developing a

person's strengths" (p. 139). Further tying in to experiential and relationship-oriented theories of learning, she stated:

Although the administration may wish to dictate how the teacher will change, it is often more effective for teachers and the coach to reach goals through mutual agreement, beginning with the problems the teacher is most interested in solving...A coach might help 'resistant' teachers discover which part of the change effort is most helpful for them. This can increase buy-in (p. 141).

The literacy coach worked within a systemic, yet sometimes amorphous context, a world in which students' lives were changing faster and faster with each year as the result of technological innovation and societal norm upheavals, and in the era of a deluge of federal and state educational mandates, the work of education was often the work of controlling chaos. In an attempt to develop a chaotic learning theory connecting the related concepts of human, network, and machine, Hite (1999) made a salient point for considering the work of literacy coaches, "This means that supplemental work must be done in the organizational environment to reinforce and support application of the learning, and to ensure some degree of useful retention" (p. 259). He went on to say, "The design of the learning support, then, must take into account the sensitive nature of the encompassing system and include ways to assist agents in implementing learned changes and behaviors into the dynamics of the system" (p. 260). To make the concepts espoused by Hite simple and applicable to literacy coaching, they were analyzed; indeed, literacy coaches worked within a chaotic environment in which the learning of content area reading strategies by teachers was their mission. Teachers needed support in this work context and needed support that would lead to the implementation and continued usage of learned content area reading strategies.

The “One Minute Management” (p. 414) coaching process was outlined by Hersey and Blanchard (1993), in which managers set goals, praised employees, and reprimanded, or apologized, in only a period of one minute for each of the four activities when needed. The authors aligned one minute management with situational leadership, and both theories related to coaching in this way; both focused on developing human resources and the growth of employees in the process of their tasks and job roles.

All of these processes took place within a system, which may be called the school, in which dynamic forces interacted to provide degrees of vitality, or lack of functioning, for the organization. These ideas aligned with the work of Senge (1990) in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, a foundational text in the areas of systems thinking about organizations and the individuals who lead them within these complex systems. Bolman and Deal (1997) also described four frames, structural, human resource, political, and symbolic, that support an organization and made its innards complex and rich with challenges. Senge as well as Bolman and Deal contributed to organizational theory by demonstrating interrelated factors that, indeed, bore upon the work of literacy coaches who attempted to access and influence parts of these systems or frames.

An understanding of these organizational realities and their complex relationships was something literacy coaches have not been trained to handle. In fact, training was more geared toward literacy strategies, not so much strategies of influence and leadership more common to school administrators than instructional support positions. Yet, the literacy coach had to change the work of high school teachers. In a study of Reading

First Initiatives, Denton (2003) noted the need for coaches to work directly with teachers toward improving teaching:

If professional development only takes place in the abstract environment of a classroom full of other teachers, it can be very difficult for teachers to go back and translate it into actual classroom practice. Opportunities to apply abstract information to the real problems of real students, combined with regular and systematic observation and feedback by those providing the professional development, helps teachers learn by doing and see results firsthand. This is why most successful reading initiatives rely at least in part on reading specialists or literacy coach to serve one school or a small group of schools (depending on size of the schools) can be the most effective single strategy for improving teaching and, ultimately, student performance. (p. 6).

What this researcher indicated was a central tenet to the professional development philosophy of literacy coaching and the hoped linkage to student results.

#### Literacy Coach Academic and Professional Background

Standards (2006) were established for the literacy coach by the International Reading Association (IRA), all of them based on providing instructional support for teachers as they teach their content areas. The IRA outlined four key standards for literacy coaching:

##### Leadership Standards

###### Standard 1: Skillful Collaborators

Content area literacy coaches are skilled collaborators who function effectively in middle school and/or high school settings.

###### Standard 2: Skillful and Embedded Coaches

Content area literacy coaches are skilled instructional coaches for secondary teachers in the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

###### Standard 3: Skillful Evaluators of Literacy Needs

Content area literacy coaches are skilled evaluators of literacy needs within various subject areas and are able to collaborate with secondary school leadership teams and teachers to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction.

###### Content Area Standard

#### Standard 4: Skillful Instructional Strategists

Content area literacy coaches are accomplished middle and high school teachers who are skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in the specific content area (p. 5).

Clearly, these standards focus on collaboration, embedding, evaluation of need, and strategy, all complex skills to master.

Roller (2005), the Director of Research and Policy for the IRA, reported and interpreted findings associated with The International Reading Association (IRA) Reading Coach Survey administered in 2005; the reported data showed that few academic requirements existed for coaches, except for the necessity of a bachelor's degree and teaching certificate. In the area of qualifications, 62 percent reported the need for verbal and written communication skills as well as strong presentation skills. Most of the coaches felt prepared for the job. Of the coaches surveyed, 71 percent reported required participation in district professional development, and 47 percent reported a required participation in statewide professional development. Few coaches reported having to have a master's degree in this field or another relevant area, 21 and 25 percent respectively. Most coaches needed at least 1-3 years of experience to take on the role.

In *Center X Literacy Coaches: Evolving Role and Responsibilities (Occasional Report #25)*, Gerardi (2005) illustrated the literacy coach role in the context of urban schools in Los Angeles. The researchers involved in this study discovered “two sequential stages” that literacy coaches pass through: “1) building rapport stage, and 2) building content literacy stage” (p. 9). As reported in the study, “Most believe their job is to support and help teachers improve their teaching practices, but realize that they must first lay the groundwork of trust and communication before addressing the literacy

component” (p. 11). Three themes emerged from this study and may be interpreted as (a) literacy coaches must develop relationships with teachers, (b) literacy coaches must develop understandings with teachers about strategies for student access of subject area knowledge, and (c) literacy coaches must support teachers.

### *Time for Literacy Coaching*

A related study using time as a construct was found in the work of Coggins, Stoddard, and Cutler (2003) who described the use of reform coaches to foster instructional skills and abilities in the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC). These coaches spent 18 percent of their time with teachers, 18 percent with faculty, 25 percent with reform leadership, 21 percent with district administrators, and 18 percent with staff from other schools (p. 7). The reform coaches maintained heavy focus on instructional improvements. The study pointed out that the reform coaches did not spend as much time on direct instructional support as they would have preferred. The researchers found:

The amount of time coaches spend building capacity varies by whether the coach holds another position in the school and what the position is. Not surprisingly, coaches who have no other role and coaches who are also teachers report spending significantly more time on instructional support than coaches who are also administrators (p. 29).

This research provided one indication that a single school focus unfettered by extraneous administrative duties allowed the coaches to concentrate on “instructional support.”

The issue of direct instructional support could be a source of criticism for any position funded through state or federal grants. The fact that coaches in the (BASRC)

study spent 18 percent of their time with teachers indicated some focus on this direct support, yet the question of how much time spent with teachers and to what degree this influenced teachers offered an interesting opportunity for review.

O'Connor and Ertmer (2003) studied literacy coaches in a mid-west urban school district; the researchers reported that the coaches in the study needed structures for success, including reasonable work expectations, support from school and district administrators, networks for dialogue, and ongoing learning for themselves. The variable of time was mentioned by three coaches. "One coach specified needing to spend more time with teachers instead of spending it in weekly training sessions. Another of these three coaches discussed the need to focus more time working with administrative personnel in support of the initiative" (p. 14). The study did observe the need for stronger support among school leadership. The indication that more time should be spent with teachers was a perceived need among at least one coach.

Moxley and Taylor (2005) in a survey of 35 coaches in a Florida school district found that literacy coaches spent much of their "time on assessments and data management" (p. 88). What this meant was that coaches were conducting assessments, or assisting with assessments, and analyzing data, two possible and logical parts of the whole literacy coach job, but not working with teachers most of their time on the job as literacy coaches.

The International Reading Association (IRA) surveyed 140 literacy coaches in November 2005 and found that seven percent worked at the high school level. Of the

total number of literacy coaches who responded, from all levels of PreK-12, 67 percent reported working directly with teachers. The study reported:

In terms of time allocations, coaches reported spending the most time in student assessment and instructional planning activities. They also spent substantial time in actual coaching activities. They included observing, demonstration teaching, and discussing lessons taught. They spent less time in actually planning lessons with teachers. Two things that coaches did not spend a lot of time on were evaluating teachers and record-keeping (pp. 2-3).

The author went on to report that “many coaches reported spending between two to four hours a week in observing, demonstrating teaching, and discussing lessons” (p. 3). The question of time and lack of it arose from the survey findings. In this study, coaches did report that significant numbers of coaches (67 percent) were working directly with teachers. Roller (2005), in her report on the study, confirmed this finding; she went on to report that 25 percent worked with both teachers and students; six percent of respondents reported a focus on managing a reading program; less than two percent reported only working with students. The findings illustrated percentages of time spent on assessment and instructional planning activities (approximately 5 hours); planning and conducting professional development sessions (2-4 hours). Coaches reported spending 2-4 hours observing, modeling, and in dialogue about lessons with teachers. This information was organized into a table with three categories: activities with less than two hours weekly; activities requiring two-four hours; activities requiring five or more hours. These were measures of time spent on particular activities by coaches during the workweek. The category reporting the most time spent on particular activities (5 hours or more) included the following: assessment and instructional planning, evaluating children, reporting student assessment data and reading achievement scores, planning/conduction

professional development sessions, session focused on students work and assessment, observing the lesson, teaching lesson as demonstration, and demonstration teaching. In contrast, coaches reported these activities as those in which they spent less than two hours weekly: evaluating teachers, teaching whole classes with instructor of record, providing instruction for individual children in classroom, professional development sessions with administrators and other school personnel, reporting professional development, such as teacher study groups, and teaching small groups outside the classroom.

Lapp, Fisher, Flood, and Frey (2003) outlined dual roles for reading specialists in an elementary, middle, and high school in San Diego. The reading specialists spent time as both tutors and as peer teacher coaches. In the coaching role, conversations with teachers occurred 20 percent of the time; 10 percent of the time was spent conducting demonstration lessons; 20 percent of time was spent on advance work for staff development groups. Other time was spent in leading or organizing a book club centered on the subject of literacy growth. The researchers concluded that most urban educators view the reading specialist as a necessary team member, and they see the specialists' role as including instruction, assessment, collaboration, consultancy, leadership, and student advocacy. They noted, "That expanded role adds to a positive school climate, building capacity and creating a community of learners among students, colleagues, and lay tutors" (p. 36). In this study, at least 50 percent of the time reading specialists were working to advance the professional growth of others.

Neufeld and Roper (2003) observed that teachers' schedules, school schedules, and professional development make time scarce. "Coaches need guidance from their principals and from the district about how to set coaching priorities so that there is a rational approach to the allocation of the coaches' resources" (p. 22).

In The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, *SEDL Letter*, Wren and Reed (2005) outlined some clear recommendations for the literacy coach role and his or her time allocation:

(a) literacy coaches are resources for the teachers, always trying to provide support in a non-judgmental way, (b) most of the literacy coach's time should be spent working with teachers, but the coach's own professional development should also be a priority, (c) the literacy coach should not work with students unless it is to demonstrate lessons to teachers, (d) the literacy coach should clearly focus on five areas of instructional support for teachers: theory underlying instruction, demonstration of activities, observation of teachers practicing new lessons, feedback, and reflection about instruction, and supporting collaboration among teachers, and (e) the coach should facilitate frequent staff meetings devoted to examining samples of student work and assessment data, helping teachers interpret assessment information and use that information to provide more focused instruction based on student needs (pp. 9-10).

In this report, it was prescribed by the researchers and thinkers developing the *SEDL Letter* that much of the literacy coach's time must be spent working with teachers, and time should not be used for teaching students unless modeling.

### *Professional Activities of Literacy Coaches*

In a review of survey research on the subject of what reading specialists do, Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, and Wallis (2002) discovered that the specialists spent most of their days and time involved in direct instruction of students. Assessment and administrative activities took up large amounts of time in the day. According to Bean et

al., the specialist was more directly involved in day-to-day instruction. The survey that this data came from was given to a random sample of reading teachers by the International Reading Association; these reading teachers were also included in the membership ranks of the (IRA). In the end, 1,517 surveys were used in the data analysis. Of the specialists returning surveys, a 38 percent return rate from the intended population, 97 percent were female, 70 percent were certified in elementary education, 90 percent were certified as reading specialists, and 76 percent had over 5 years of experience in the educational field. The analysis did find that many of the reading specialists were involved in tasks beyond teaching students in a direct manner:

However, the ways in which reading specialists perform that role has changed. Most reading specialists in today's schools no longer focus on identifying and delivering reading instruction to students based on a diagnostic prescriptive model; rather, they tend to collaborate with classroom teachers, special education faculty, and other professionals to develop and implement programs that (a) assist students with classroom success, and (b) develop literacy skills and strategies needed by individual students. Such a role requires reading specialists to work collaboratively with other educators and serve as a resource in the school and community (p. 742).

Identified in the summary of this research was an obvious weakness related to sampling; only members of the International Reading Association were surveyed. Readers may infer that the data and feedback from those reading specialists not in the organization, if included, could have offered a more generalized conclusion about all reading specialists.

Jaeger (1996) pointed out the need for collaboration among coaches and suggested a shift in the reading specialist role toward less instruction and more work with adults, as in teachers. In a personal narrative of her experience as a high school reading specialist, Henwood (1999) illustrated the success of collaboration when used as a tool

for building the school culture toward literacy. Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2001) reviewed the research on reading specialists and noted the need for specialists to collaborate with other teachers. Bean, Knaub, and Swan (2003) urged for a move beyond the traditional role of reading specialist as instruction-giver to instructional supporter for the entire school. Indeed, the reading or literacy coach was responsible for coaching other teachers. This change in role from reading specialist to literacy coach was evident in the literature.

To reiterate, The *SEDL Letter* cited previously suggested that literacy coaches do just the opposite of working directly with students. Dole and Donaldson (2003) made a distinction between specialists and coaches: “Reading coaches are different from specialists in that coaches spend their entire time with teachers, not students” (§ 5). Dole and Donaldson noted the dearth of research on the subject, but do suggest three concepts for quality time usage among literacy coaches. The first concept involved “focus.” The authors illustrated three negative possibilities, the coach who is overloaded with administrative tasks, or the coach who must attend excessive meetings, or the coach with nothing to do. The role must be centered on “teachers, reading instruction, and student learning” (§ 10-12). Another concept involved time in the classroom. Dole and Donaldson suggested that this process is really about “collaborating with teachers to help them achieve their goal of increased student learning” (§ 14). These authors pointed out the need for the coach to build a relationship with teachers, so that the teachers in the school know they will receive help with teaching reading when they ask for it.

Symonds (2003) described the employment of literacy coaches as an effective method of district-wide literacy staff development across three school districts. Her research found that in Walnut Creek Schools, coaches worked with groups of teachers, observed classrooms, demonstrated lessons, linked instruction with assessment and teachers to research and teachers to peers, and, finally, provided professional development with the whole staff. Symonds also observed that in the Campbell School District, coaches demonstrated lessons, observed classes, provided one-on-one coaching, conducted full staff workshops, and coached groups of teachers while also creating many linkages among curriculum, instruction, and faculty and students. In the East Side Union High School, similar activities occurred among coaches as found in the other districts (Symonds). This model was wholly different from the traditional reading specialist role.

Defining the reading specialist role was complex, yet Vogt and Shearer (2003) explored the role by describing the coaching role of clinical supervision, including the pre, during, and post phases of working with teachers. The authors also highlighted the role of peer coaching, and provided specific research findings in the area of cognitive coaching, which as they suggested, was related to clinical supervision. It was suggested to reading specialists by Vogt and Shearer that:

Rather than evaluating or criticizing a teacher's lesson, your task is to hold up a thoughtful mirror through which a teacher might see a reflection of his or her teaching, relationships with students, lesson organization, and nonverbal modes of communication (such as facial expressions, position of hands, and stance)...during cognitive coaching, anything that is mutually agreed on can be the focus of observation, reflection, and discussion (p. 215).

The goal was to avoid the negative and encourage development. Cognitive coaching stimulated reflection through thinking about teaching processes.

Bean (2004) outlined key literacy coaching activities: (a) demonstrating or modeling, (b) planning, (c) observing, (c) analyzing/reflecting, (d) conferring, and (e) giving feedback (chap. 6). Sturtevant (2005) listed the following as literacy coach activities (a) lead literacy teams, (b) facilitate use of various instructional strategies, (c) draw linkages among teachers and administrators, and (d) gain respect as a knowledgeable coach among the faculty.

Blachowicz, Fogelberg, and Obrochta (2005) found that employing a variety of coaching strategies created a stronger implementation of the literacy coach model of professional development in the urban school district of Evanston/Skokie in the Chicago area. Toll (2005) described what literacy coaches do and should not do in their work lives, and she noted that they must listen, ask questions, mirror teacher words and actions, collect data, and provide resources. According to Toll, literacy coaches do not supervise, judge, observe teachers, serve as expert, or provide pull-out services. On the other hand, Walpole and McKenna (2004) lauded observation as an effective strategy for coaching (in chap. 9). Moxley and Taylor (2006) advocated “walkthroughs.” This strategy takes no more than 5 to 10 minutes, and may create an opportunity for professional growth. Tatum (2004) pointed out the need for coaches to engage in reflection as another key coaching activity (p. 37).

The Florida Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PRMN) required that coaches report the amount of time spent engaged in all of the following literacy coaching activities:

- 1) Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional development sessions such as seminars, action research, study groups designed to increase educators' knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)
- 2) Planning: Planning, developing, and/or preparing professional development
- 3) Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating model lessons in classrooms for teachers
- 4) Coaching: Coaching (planning conversations, observations & reflecting conversation, offering feedback) teachers in classrooms
- 5) Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, etc.
- 6) Student Assessment: Administering or coordinating student assessments
- 7) Data Analysis: Analyzing, using, and reporting student data
- 8) Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues
- 9) Knowledge-Building: Building my personal knowledge of SBRR and assessment through study or professional development.
- 10) Other: Time spent on other duties assigned

These activities were used as the basis for the survey questions for this study.

In a revised version of a (2003) edition, Vogt and Shearer (2003, 2007) updated their work to emphasize literacy coaching by outlining six models of coaching that aligned with the role, including Model 1) Informal Coaching, Model 2) Mixed Model—Elements of Informal and Formal Literacy Coaching, Model 3) Formal Literacy Coaching, Model 4) Peer Coaching and mentoring, Model 5) Cognitive Coaching, and Model 6) clinical supervision.

For literacy coaches, time was a major factor, and Allen (2006) described the need to focus:

I go into classrooms as a response to teacher needs. Timing is everything. When a teacher asks for help, I try to accommodate him or her as soon as possible. Because I am always busy, working in classrooms requires me to constantly reprioritize needs. If teachers who have never asked me into their rooms finally come forward with an invitation, I jump on the opportunity and rearrange my schedule to meet their needs immediately. Their desire or willingness to have me in their room would slip away if I told them I wasn't available for another two months (p. 94).

Allen said:

Support doesn't always come in the form of working in a teacher's classroom. Sometimes supporting classroom instruction comes in the format of offering my time behind the scenes of the classroom. I work to make myself available to teachers before and after school. I am at school at least an hour before students. Often teachers drop by in the morning or after school to talk through their thinking of a new idea, or because they need help finding resources to support a lesson (p. 111).

An awareness of time was one factor related to the success of literacy coaching.

### *Studies in Literacy Coaching*

Steckel (2003) studied urban literacy coaches working at four elementary school sites. The coaches who were found to be more successful were viewed as excellent teachers, and they won over teachers through showing how students can be more successful in their classrooms. The more successful coaches stimulated reflective thinking among teachers. An important finding that emerged from this study was that literacy coaches could not change teacher behavior from the top down; this process had to come from the teachers. To study literacy coaching and its relationship to student achievement was one recommendation for future research.

Rasmussen (2005) studied literacy coach work with teachers and the effect on reading achievement. The results of the study did not show a statistically significant relationship between literacy coaching and student achievement using ( $p < 0.05$ ). Identified in this study was a key problem for research in this field. The researcher espoused the theory that there may not have been enough time to study the effects of a literacy coach's work with teachers. These changes may require longitudinal analyses. One odd finding was that teachers of students scoring in the bottom 50 percent spent more time with literacy coaches; the researcher suggested that this may be related to the teachers knowing that they needed more help in working with these students, and sought it with the literacy coach. The study could not be generalized to other contexts.

As part of the document *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006), Snow, Ippolito, and Schwartz (2006) synthesized research on the subject of literacy coaches and offered perspective on the role's difficulties: "For the secondary

coach as an example, literacy coaches working in sixth grade and beyond are often dealing with larger numbers of teachers housed in several content area departments...coaches at the secondary level may experience isolation from their colleagues, not feeling part of any one department and holding neither teacher nor administrative status” (pp. 41-42). The concept of literacy coaches “as vehicles for professional development” (p. 43) corresponded to the purpose of the role. “A literacy coach working at any grade level is more concerned with teachers’ learning and growth than with students’ learning and growth” (p. 43), which defined the role as one of instructional support, not instructional delivery.

Finding that coaching can facilitate teacher learning, Kinnucan-Welsh, Rosemary, and Grogan (2006) studied the Literacy Specialist Project (LSP) in Ohio schools. Six literacy specialists and 11 teachers worked together to analyze recorded and then transcribed teaching sessions. Among the reported findings, a vignette was presented with the text of a conversation between literacy specialist and teacher, and the researchers offered this example to show how teaching may be reviewed throughout such a coaching process. The researchers advocated the use of design principles in the literacy project, which included: (a) “High-quality professional development directly connects to student learning goals that are clear and accepted by all.” (b) “Professional development involves active learning for teachers.” (c) “Professional development is embedded in the context of work in schools and classrooms.” (d) “Professional development is continuous and ongoing.” (e) “Professional development is based on an ongoing and focused inquiry

related to teacher learning, student learning, and what we know about good instruction.”

(f) “Coherence is evident in all aspects of the professional development system.” (¶3).

Lefave (2005) conducted a study of the relationship between literacy coach and school principal and found that the relationship influenced the quality of work in which the coach may engage. Two factors slowing change were identified: “The first category include issues of resistance to change, conflicts in cultural norms, and the development of factions within the school that hindered the maintenance and growth of the learning community. The second category included self-efficacy issues and time constraints” (p. 111).

Gibson (2002) studied the relationship between elementary teachers and literacy coaches and found the following: “It is probable that the coaches’ perceived need to demonstrate that they were not evaluating the teachers they worked with interfered at times with the goal of improved instruction” (pp. 195-96). Gibson went on to define the roots of the literacy coaching process, “The work of literacy coaches, then should be grounded in high levels of coaching expertise and implemented through coaching conversations where teachers are encouraged to take an active and analytical role” (p. 198). This study was an important contribution to the literature of the subject of literacy coaches as it used qualitative methods of inquiry with four coaches and illustrated the actual coaching process as levels of coach and teacher engagement were observed and analyzed.

### *Practicing the Profession of Literacy Coaching*

In *Literacy Coaching: A Handbook for School Leaders* (2006), Moxley and Taylor demarcated clear differences between the challenges elementary literacy coaches face and those challenges faced by secondary coaches; secondary coaches work with fewer reading teachers; in elementary, teachers are teaching reading on a continuous basis. Secondary teachers have little training in reading. Secondary coaches feel less welcome in teachers' classrooms. The authors suggested that secondary coaches be knowledgeable in closing gaps in learning for students who have had years to fall behind from elementary to high school for example (pp. 8-9).

Moxley and Taylor described the different forms of coaching: (a) large-group professional development, (b) small-group professional development, (formal/informal approaches to both), modeling (considered formal), and one-on-one (could be either formal or informal) (pp. 14-16). They also described a collaborative process of developing the literacy coach roles for a district literacy plan in Lake County, Florida (pp. 16-17). The authors illustrated the importance of a defined workspace for the literacy coach, including such items as bookcases, display equipment, supplies, and items to record the processes of literacy (pp. 30-31). A professional library was suggested as well as a student library with additional texts to enrich classroom learning. A budget should be developed to fund coaching materials and needs (pp. 32-36).

Moxley and Taylor studied time and found the following trends among coaches: Of the seven high school literacy coaches, Assessment or Data Management (19.0) took the most time, Other (17.3) was second, Providing Workshops (17.0) was third, Coaching

Intensive Intervention Teachers (14.0) was fourth, Attending Workshops or Meetings (13.0) was fifth, Class Modeling (8.0) was sixth, and Meeting with Administration (7.2) ranked seventh among mean percentage of time spent per week on various coaching activities. In aggregate, with coaches from elementary, middle, and high school, Assessment and Data Management (29.8) ranked highest among time spent with Other activities in second (15.5); Attending Workshops or Meetings ranked third (14.6) among literacy coaching activities (p. 89).

Throughout the book, practical advice was offered on building a literacy team, working with achievement data, managing intervention programs, and types of professional development were highlighted and briefly explained. In the end, the authors explored possible, if not expected, challenges for literacy coaches, such as lack of time, faculty buy-in to the role, and the need to stimulate feedback. Other books by Taylor related to literacy leadership and reading in the content areas were found R.T. Taylor (2007) and R.T. Taylor and G.A. Gunter (2006).

In *Literacy Coaching: the Essentials*, Casey (2006) divided the content of her message into the activities of coaches and building frameworks for the professional development coaches will deliver. Another handbook on literacy coaching, *The Literacy Coach's Survival Guide*, Toll (2005) provided descriptions of coaching activities and included two sections on change and dealing with challenges. In fact, much of the book was devoted to teacher resistance to change and how the literacy coach can work through such entanglements.

In a more empirically-based text, *The Literacy Coach's Handbook: A Guide to Research-Based Practice*, Walpole and McKenna (2004) focused heavily on each literacy coaching activity in fine detail, and much like the other books, emphasized the role of support as a key element of literacy coaching.

#### *School-Wide Contexts for Improving Literacy and Achievement*

Perks (2006) described his role as literacy coach/coordinator in changing the literacy context at Noble High School in N. Berwick, Maine. It all started with a literacy audit, which led to the hiring of Perks as the literacy coach. Not long after he began, Noble High School started to focus on data analysis for instruction using instruments such as the (SRI) Scholastic Reading Inventory, (DAR) Diagnostic Assessment of Reading, and teacher and student surveys. The school instituted an (SSR) Sustained Silent Reading program. As the result of over one hundred observations, Perks reported that 90 percent of students and teachers read consistently during this time. From the whole school to the classroom, Perks keyed in one of the teachers: "One essential support has been the direct coaching that I provide to individual teachers who are developing lessons and units of instruction. I also work with teams and departments to create literacy plans that develop strategies and practices relevant to their discipline" (18-19). He participated in a number of other activities designed to promote literacy, such as a literacy newsletter, conducting training, and assisting administrative team with decision-making. There were some focused interventions in progress at Noble High School. A literacy center was created with instructors available to students for one-on-one or small

group instruction. Gains in reading achievement as measured by the (SRI) Scholastic Reading Inventory were significant, with a 20 percent jump in one year in regard to number of students reading at grade level or above. Students receiving targeted intervention services had even higher gains. The school realized it must provide targeted intervention throughout the school year.

Alfassi (2004) studied strategic models for reading instruction and found significance in combining the reciprocal and direct explanation methods to increase student achievement in reading. The study highlighted an important finding, “The results, therefore, indicate that combining reciprocal teaching with direct explanation yields significant improvements in reading comprehension even in the challenging context of a heterogeneous high school language arts class” (p. 180). Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock (2001) explained, in detail, the research and theory, classroom implications, research and theory related to practice for various instructional strategies. Marzano (2003) reviewed research on effective practices in schools, and analyzed school-level, teacher-level, and student-level factors that influence student achievement. One suggestion that emerged from the research was that professional development be linked to the actual practice of applying what is learned by the teacher in the professional development experience. The other point about developing teachers was that the process should occur within the context of the content area. Marzano also listed instructional strategies with influence effect sizes on student achievement: 1) Identifying similarities and differences (effect size, 1.61; percentile gain, 45), 2) summarizing and note-taking (effect size, 1.00; percentile gain, 34), 3) reinforcing effort and providing recognition

(effect size, .80; percentile gain, 29), 4) homework and practice (effect size, .77; percentile gain, 28), 5) nonlinguistic representations (effect size, .75 ; percentile gain, 27), 6) cooperative learning (effect size, .73; percentile gain, 27), 7) setting objectives and providing feedback (effect size, .61; percentile gain, 23, 8) generating and testing hypotheses (effect size, .61; percentile gain, 23), and 9) questions, cues, and advance organizers (effect size, .59; percentile gain 22) (p. 80). Marzano, Walters, and McNulty (2005) made clear that context is special for each school, and reform within the school is dependent on this factor. In a meta-analysis of effective school leadership, Taylor and Collins (2003) provided a case for review, one very relevant to understanding school context in light of school-wide literacy reform and development:

Recently, the principal of a high-achieving public high school in Orange County, Florida (a school that routinely puts up the highest SAT and ACT scores in the district) took a closer look at student test data and became concerned. Although the students' mean reading and writing scores were in the top quartile, that data showed that lost of students were struggling. When the principal observed classes, he saw many teachers using direct instruction—primarily lecturing—with follow-up reading and writing assignments. He wondered how the struggling students could manage to follow the lectures, read the text, and complete the writing assignments. The principals' subsequent discussions with the teachers confirmed what he had expected: The school was failing some of its most needy students, even though it was a model for high achievement! (pp. 89-90).

In a six state study of schools in the southern United States, Turchi, Johnson, Owens, and Montgomery (2002) noted some significant changes as a result of the accountability in the states involved in this study. Data analysis received more focus in these schools, and key strategies included involving the whole school in the instructional improvement of tested domains within state accountability systems and building teacher capacity to assist

lower-performing students. A positive change was evident when the researchers noted the following:

There were indications that the nature of classroom instruction was, indeed, changing in schools where teachers had learned a variety of approaches to instruction. There were reports of increased use of small-group instruction—particularly in the area of language arts, and occasionally in mathematics, as well. Teachers reported incorporating hands-on strategies designed to address a greater variety of learning styles as a result of new strategies learned through professional development activities (p. 20).

The change to using a greater variety of instructional strategies was evident, and the researchers noted both teacher perception and actual test scores reflected changes in achievement. The significance of this study was found in the connections among four factors: accountability system, school-wide change, teacher change through professional development, and student change through changed teachers.

In the end, literacy coaches were expected to change teachers and, in so doing, influenced teachers to adopt strategies that assist students with access to texts that students will then interpret and critically explore. What Fisher and Frey (2004) suggested was a variety of tools teachers can use to facilitate this process of text interpretation and exploration. They discussed strategies to get the attention of students, build content-area vocabulary, question frameworks, graphic organizers, and writing as part of learning as well as teaching among student peers. These authors have researched content-area reading, and point out that, in fact, English teachers can not do all the teaching of reading and describe how texts are different among the various disciplines.

### Summary of Literature Review

From the role of reading specialist to that of literacy coach, instructional support for teachers working in reading programs and, most especially, in all content areas was noted as increasing with the national and statewide policy-making on reading achievement. Teachers who once specialized in reading support for schools through direct teaching of reading to students and providing reading diagnostics had found their profession taking on a more supportive, coaching role. The literacy coach role emerged as an important position designed to influence reading achievement across the entire learning environment of a school. Often, reading specialists were found in elementary schools to be sure, sometimes in middle schools, but hardly in high schools. Now, many high schools across the nation, and especially in Florida, had a literacy coach on its faculty. Because this position was being so quickly and widely implemented, little research existed on the effectiveness of literacy coaches as they influenced reading achievement in their schools.

The literacy coach role was one of leadership and influence. The role was not designed to increase student achievement through direct coach to student means; instead, it was a role meant to serve as a conduit from knowledge about what works for student achievement in developing literacy to teachers who may not be experts in reading although they were experts in another subject, such as science or social studies. Literacy coaching was a process of working with teachers in trying new strategies, modeling these strategies, and shaping a more literacy-aware teaching force.

The process of coaching involved a process of learning the teaching situation, analyzing for improvements and evident successes, and stimulating the teacher to reflect upon concepts of literacy development within the context of his or her instruction and content areas. These tasks were a more process-related form of professional development, internal to the school and focusing on teaching skills relevant to the teacher's daily work. As a concept for improving employee performance, coaching was not new to other working fields, and examples in business and nursing were cited previously in this literature review.

Literacy coaches functioned in several roles in their schools, sometimes directly coaching, sometimes taking on administrative tasks. The literature supported an important imperative for the role: that is, working directly with teachers, building relationships, providing support, and influencing changes in the work of teachers toward reading achievement in all content areas. The literacy coach worked within an organizational context, and systems theory and frame theory were presented as networks in which literacy coaches must navigate through and make accomplishments.

Content area textbooks provided challenges for students as teachers in various content areas did not show students how to access these texts. This was one challenge for coaches, supporting teachers as they teach students to access various texts, including the textbook. Standardized testing provided another challenge for literacy coaches as the focused curriculum and assessment of learning fostered a special, focused type of literacy, preparing for state assessments. The literacy coach also worked to overcome social factors involved in the lack of literacy development among students.

The International Reading Association established standards of practice for coaches, yet few academic requirements existed for coaches. Literacy coaches were a well-trained professional group, and most felt prepared for the role as long as they had at least three years of experience.

It was clear from the literature that literacy coaches needed structure for their days and adequate support from administrators in order to fulfill their roles. Studies produced mixed results on the question of how literacy coaches spent their time, but most suggested they spent their time working directly with teachers. However, the study of literacy coaches is in its infancy, and a longitudinal study was suggested by one researcher. Because the position is new, the effect of the role will need to be studied over time to determine effectiveness as it relates to teacher changes that promote student achievement.

Researchers found the need for collaboration was high with coaches. This may be inferred as this role may be akin to the school principal's role; these positions had few parallel other roles within the school as often there would only be one principal, just like one literacy coach. The isolation of position warranted peer dialogue and support for literacy coaches.

The primary work of the literacy coach centered on the development of literacy strategies and fostering various approaches to texts among content area teachers, which included modeling, formal and informal coaching processes, and influencing school-wide changes in student literacy development. Models of coaching and literacy coaching were explored in the review. Now available to many in the profession, literacy coaching

handbooks were available in the popular educational press and a few were summarized and explored as part of this literature review.

The review of literature on the subject of literacy coaching and related concepts proved useful in developing questions for this study's survey instrument and purposive interviews. Although the literature on the subject was not as expansive in scope or depth as other subjects in education, it may be a reasonable conclusion to draw that this state of affairs will change as more researchers attempt to understand the state of secondary literacy, especially in the high school, as it was influenced by literacy coaches who provide direct instructional support to teachers.

Chapter Two synthesized the existing literature relevant to the problem under study. Chapter Three describes the methodological framework including information on the population, instrumentation, and data collection and analyses. Chapter Four presents the results of the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the procedures used for data collection with literacy coaches working in four school districts in central Florida. To gather data, The Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey was hosted on a web-designed format; data were collected in the areas of demographic, time-related, and working factor information to understand literacy coach background, specific coaching activities, and work context.

SurveyMonkey.com hosted the survey on its web platform through the development, implementation, and data review stages. This web-based system allowed for more fluid data collection. For example, the survey link was sent to literacy coaches via their principals; once they were forwarded the invitation e-mail, it was easy for the coaches to simply link to the survey using a three-digit code. The coaches did not have to return paper surveys, and this made collection much easier than sending out paper surveys with return postage.

Eleven literacy coaches were interviewed by phone using a structured interview process. The coaches selected for interviews were found among high schools in five comparison groups, which were organized by state-given letter grades based on overall school-wide FCAT performance: four A-rated schools, two B-rated schools, two C-rated schools, three D-rated schools, and two F-rated schools. One reading coach in the “A” group did not agree to be interviewed; one from the F-rated group could not be reached

by phone. In the end, 11 of the 13 coaches from the comparison groups participated in interviews that lasted between 20-25 minutes each. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to describe data and build comparison group case studies.

### Problem Statement

Development of the study originated to describe literacy coach background and activities among coaches in the state of Florida. The survey and research tools were developed and tested to understand the effect of literacy coach activities and use of time on high school reading achievement. The case study comparison groups were designed to create models, or lens, through which researchers would examine the school-level data using qualitative data about literacy coaches.

### Population

The intended population of this study consisted of 36 high school literacy coaches from high schools in Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola Counties. No special centers, technology academies, or single purpose magnet schools were included in the population of coaches to study. In the end, 25 usable surveys from 25 coaches were incorporated into the study.

The population for the interviews to be used in the case studies was selected using a purposive system. For the interviews and case study analysis, four coaches were chosen from the only four “A” rated schools in the four school districts chosen for the study; these schools are located in suburban areas. The coaches from two urban “B”

schools were chosen to provide understanding of higher performing schools in urban areas. Two coaches from “C” schools located in rapidly developing areas were included, and three coaches working in schools that have received “D’s” in the last three years were chosen from well-populated, yet quasi rural/remote locations. The two coaches from “F” schools were chosen from urban, or “inner city” locations. One literacy coach in the “A” group did not agree to be interviewed; the other from the F-rated group could not be reached. In the end, 11 of the 13 coaches from the comparison groups participated in interviews that lasted between 20-25 minutes for each literacy coach.

Listed below are the specific interview questions that were asked of each of the literacy coaches:

- 1) Why did you decide to become a literacy coach?
- 2) What do you do that you believe influenced student achievement the most?
- 3) What contributed or has contributed to your success as a literacy coach?
- 4) What has impeded your success as a literacy coach?
- 5) Describe your relationship with school administration?

### Data Collection

Requests to participate in the literacy coach research were sent to high school principals in all four school districts, beginning March 27, 2006. Second and third requests were sent which increased the response rate to 27 surveys from 36 intended literacy coaches, bringing the general response rate to 75 percent. Of the 36 potential responses from coaches, one principal filled out the survey instead of the literacy coach

and invalidated the data for that high school. Another principal reported that she had to send her literacy coach back into the classroom because of a faculty shortage; another principal reported that he was in the process of searching for a literacy coach. Six possible coaches did not respond; of these six, one did not complete enough of the survey to create a valid data set. A review of the survey data revealed that two coaches did not complete all of the questions. In sum, 25 usable surveys were incorporated into the study, which brought the usable return rate to 69 percent.

### Instrumentation

The Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey deployed when data collection begun was organized into the following sections: literacy coach demographics, literacy coach professional background, literacy coach academic background, as well as time and activities measures, and questions related to work context. Open-ended questions were incorporated throughout the survey to provide qualitative data for singular variable interpretation and case study construction. The Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey was developed as a pilot to gather data about literacy coaches in Florida. The content, format, and style were reviewed by a panel of graduate students from various backgrounds, elementary, middle, and high school. Most of the panel found the survey to be easy to read and follow. One panel member suggested that teachers also complete a similar survey. Most of the panel thought the self-reported data would be reasonably accurate if the respondents knew for sure the information would be kept anonymous. In fact, only the researcher and dissertation committee chair knew identities,

and all information was kept confidential. At the suggestion of one panel member “vendor training” was added to question number 10: What training have you had for the role of the literacy coach? This process of content validity analysis proved useful in building the instrument as a pilot for this and future studies.

After receiving the external study approval from the four school districts, the Dillman (2000) Tailored Design Method (TDM) was employed to gain a more complete sample (chapter 1). As he defined it, “Tailored Design is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce high quality information and high response rates” (p. 29). The strategy for acquiring data about time spent on particular coaching activities was the web-based survey. Dillman pointed out some key advantages of using web technology for surveying, “Web surveys, in contrast, not only have a more refined appearance to which color may be added, but also provide survey capabilities far beyond those available for any other type of self-administered questionnaire” (p. 354). Dillman’s principles for using web surveys were applied in the development of this study’s online survey.

Surveys were sent through electronic means, using [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) services, in March 2006 and continued through May 2006 with the aim to acquire a high response rate by May 30. The point of initial contact for survey completion occurred when the principal received an e-mail request from the researcher. He or she then chose to forward the survey to the reading coach. This way, the principal gave tacit permission or not for his or her reading coach to respond via web-based survey. After the initial contact from

the researcher to the principal, a follow-up e-mail was sent if survey results were not received from that school. No compensation was granted in this survey process.

### Research Questions

Based on the literature review, the following research questions were developed to understand the work of high school literacy coaches:

1. What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes high school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts?
2. What relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on various literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations?
3. What is the perception of high school literacy coaches about working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement?

### Data Analysis

High school literacy coaches returned surveys throughout the months of April and May of 2006. Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading achievement data for each high school in the study was organized into tables using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets after retrieving these data sets from [fldoe.org](http://fldoe.org) in late May, 2006.

### *Data Analysis for Research Question 1*

Research Question 1 called for a description of the demographic, academic, and professional background of each literacy coach. All of these data were incorporated into tables to illustrate the background characteristics of the high school literacy coaches in this study. Narrative descriptive statements were included to facilitate understanding of these descriptive level data elements.

### *Data Analysis for Research Question 2*

Research Question 2 addressed the question of relationships among data sets, factors or predictors that may influence change in school wide performance. To analyze these data, SPSS 14.0 statistical software was used to apply simple and multiple regression models to the data. The percentage of time reported in each literacy coach category was placed into a regression equation with the percentage of students moving from levels 1 and 2 to level 3 and above (%AL3±) from the 2005 FCAT Reading administration to the 2006 FCAT Reading administration, with change in (%AL3±), serving as the dependent variable.

Reported time data from each of the 25 usable surveys was entered into SPSS columns for each of the ten (PRMN) literacy coach activity domains. Each coach was given an identifying number; this number was aligned with the reported percentage of time for each of the ten categories. The change in percentage of students moving from year 2005 FCAT Reading administration to year 2006 FCAT Reading administration was calculated by hand and then entered into a final column on the SPSS spreadsheet. This

change was matched to each coach's reported time spent on literacy coaching activities. Once columns were checked and matched, the statistical analyses were run.

Scatter plots were run and examined for apparent and observable patterns. Some plots showed visible but not verifiable correlations; others showed the opposite. Then the scatter plots were run again, this time adding the regression fit line. The least-squared estimator was calculated, the regression line was added, along with a horizontal line at  $Y=0$ . The residual plots were run and graphs drawn. The residual standard deviation was calculated, and the percentage of points outside of the  $\pm 2$  Standard Deviation bands was analyzed. The Coefficient of Determination was also calculated.

### *Data Analysis for Research Question 3*

Research Question 3 focused on factors the literacy coach perceived to have an effect on reading achievement in his or her school. These data were gathered from the Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context survey, purposive interviews, relevant school and district profile data, and Florida school-wide reading achievement results for high schools as reported on [fldoe.org](http://fldoe.org). These data were analyzed for dominant themes and then examined as elements for case studies.

An important task involved in this research study was coding the data retrieved from the survey and interview questions. Implicit in the use of coding was the task of analyzing these coded texts. Coding involved a process of marking discourse, collecting these marked texts, and organizing them into patterns for analysis. This process created definable themes and useful qualitative data sets. Merriam (1998) said:

in one sense, all qualitative data analysis is content analysis in that it is the *content* of interviews, field notes, and documents that it is analyzed. Although this content can be analyzed qualitatively for themes and recurring patterns of meaning, content analysis historically has been very quantitative in nature” (p. 160).

One of the first steps in the analysis of the survey data was counting the number of readily apparent themes that emerged from each question’s answers from each of the literacy coaches and then describing these in narrative form. An important purpose for coding was identified by Stake (1995), “Coded data are obtained primarily from categories dividing a variable” (p. 29). In fact, Stake went on to discuss coding in more detail, including two techniques incorporated into this study. He described a tally system (p. 30) and provided rationale for using a coding system for all documents in the study: “Coding is also used to classify whole episodes, interviews, or documents, making them more appropriately retrievable at a later time” (p. 32). Coding was a primary analytical tool for developing understanding of the texts in this literacy coach study:

The typical way qualitative data are broken down is through the process of coding or classifying. A **category** is a classification of ideas or concepts. When concepts in the data are examined and compared to one another and connections are made, categories are formed. Categories are used to organize similar concepts into distinct groups (Gay & Airasian, p. 232).

For research question 3, the first qualitative analysis involved coding for development of themes within question categories. The data source for this first step of qualitative analysis was the survey questions in which literacy coaches could complete answers to open-ended questions. Emergent themes were counted in relation to the content asked for in each of the survey questions related to literacy coach work context.

Discourse analysis was used to examine the themes and texts of all available data related to this study. Parts of text were used to write narrative descriptions and build case studies.

A more sophisticated tool was needed to examine the text across the content of survey and interview answers. NVivo 7 software, from QSR International, was used as a coding tool to mark and analyze the text from survey questions 17 (support), 18 (hindrances), 25 (influence of coaching activities), 26 (other duties), 27 (successes), 28 (issues/concerns), 29 (school events), and 30 (school restructuring). The following queries were run across all of the text in all of the 8 questions above to search for significant themes: support mechanism, modeling, time, FCAT, content area, coaching, faculty, evaluation, role, teacher, paperwork, AIP (Academic Improvement Plan), professional development, mentoring, training, position, concern, assessment, and other (in reference to other activities). These queries were established as tree nodes for further analyses. A Node Summary Report was run to investigate words coded, paragraphs coded, coding references, sources coded, and cases coded for each of the thematic nodes.

Again using NVivo 7 software, cases were developed and labeled using the following titles: Case Study Group A, B, C, D and F to correspond to each of the letter grade groupings. Textual data from each of the interviews was entered into the software template under the “documents” section within “Sources.” The same queries listed above were re-run, along with a few more, to enrich the dataset with the interview data. The process began to develop a conceptual triangulation of data from the Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context survey and the interview notes. Later, quantitative data

from school-wide achievement results was included to complete the final tip of the triangle.

To align with a theoretical methodology, the NVivo 7 software was employed to investigate common themes within the text of what each coach reported. In fact, “The design of NVivo 7 was strongly influenced by grounded theory and therefore the program gives good support for the method” (Gibbs, 2002, p. 165). The search functions and node function allowed for deep exploration of text, and Gibbs explained grounded theory in this way: “Its central focus is on inductively generating novel theoretical ideas or hypotheses from the data as opposed to testing theories specified beforehand. In so far as these new theories arise out of data and are supported by the data they are said to be grounded—hence the title of the method” (p. 165). In order to build models for understanding the large amounts of textual data in this study, several books were consulted (Bazeley & Richards, 2000; Gibbs, 2002).

Data from each literacy coach’s reported time spent in each of the literacy coaching activities was added to a spreadsheet and brought into the qualitative analysis, and the following school-wide performance measures were included on another spreadsheet and brought into the NVivo 7 work area: change in percent of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring 3 or higher ( $AL \pm 3$ ), percent passing, overall reading gains, lower quartile improvements, overall higher level reading gains, writing scores, school SES status, and school minority percentages.

The complete triangulation of data occurred during the case study development process in which survey, interview, and school performance data were combined into

descriptive, multi-case analyses of literacy coaches within school-grade groupings. The case studies provided a complete, holistic view of the working factors and context in which the literacy coaches were engaged. Using the State of Florida A+ Accountability school grading system, five case study comparison groupings were developed from the total intended population to address this question. The case study groups included: (a) A Schools, (b) B Schools, (c) C Schools, (d) D Schools, and (e) F Schools. One literacy coach in the “A” group did not agree to be interviewed; the other from the F group could not be reached. In the end, 11 of the 13 coaches from the comparison groups participated in interviews that lasted between 20-25 minutes.

Case study methods as outlined by Yin (2003b) were used to assemble the literacy coach cases: “The first word of advice is that although all designs can lead to successful case studies, when you have the choice (and resources), multiple-case designs may be preferred over single-case designs...the analytical benefits from having two (or more) cases may be substantial” (p. 53). This study on high school literacy coaches in central Florida employed a multiple-case study design, with literacy coach quantitative and qualitative data from selected coaches embedded in groups of schools within grade designations, i.e., B-level schools. Yin also lauded the interview as a useful tool in case study research (p. 89). He also described his “Three Principles of Data Collection,” and these are the principles: (1) “Use Multiple Sources of Evidence,” (2) “Create a Case Study Database,” and (3) “Maintain a Chain of Evidence” (p. 97-106). In this study of literacy coaches, demographic data, survey answers, interviews, and school performance data fulfilled principle one. A case study database was created using NVivo 7 in which

all of the data listed previously were organized together, and this work was supported by principle two. Finally, all data and evidence were kept securely without loss and organized in a chain-like manner, so that other researchers could easily follow methodology and replicate this research. Yin (2003b) provided extensive examples of case study research; these samples were reviewed in preparation for this study.

In the end, this methodology focused on an implicit and explicit evaluation of literacy coaches working in central Florida high schools. “If the point of evaluation is to improve the program—which we think is nearly always the point—then discrepancies provide a place to seek to effect improvements” (Posavac & Carey, p. 29). It was in the discrepancies that were found room for improvements.

### Summary

This chapter described the methodology used in the collection and organization of data gathered in the study. The following chapters will present findings, summarize findings, and conclude the study. Interview answer data were coded into thematic categories related to the research question of working factors that may influence positive changes in student achievement, and then these data were combined with the emerged theme categories that developed after analyzing the open-ended survey answers. These combined data sets of interview answer themes and survey answer themes were then triangulated with school FCAT achievement comparison data and combined to create composite comparative school group case studies using the five levels, of A, B, C, D, and F rated schools. Stake defined triangulation: “For *data source triangulation*, we look

to see if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently” (p. 112). Literacy coaches across schools and districts were compared to describe what type of coaching activities engaged them and what kind of work context defined their daily work.

Chapter Three described the methodological framework including information on the population, instrumentation, and data collection and analyses. Chapter Four presents the results of the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Introduction

Demographic data describing the literacy coaches were presented in both table and textual formats. This demographic data helped to provide understanding about the background of the coaches working in four school districts in central Florida. These data answered the question, who are the literacy coaches?

Statistical data were organized for the purpose of determining whether or not relationships existed among the independent variables (10 literacy coach activities) and the dependent variables (change in student performance) as measured by mean change in student making learning gains, using the percentage of students scoring in the 3 and above range. Other school performance data were used to explore data on the subject of literacy coaching activities and school performance on reading achievement. Districts were also compared with respect to four key literacy coaching activities.

Comparison groupings were used to describe coaching perspectives from a case study mode of inquiry. The first comparison grouping was established to describe A-rated high schools. The second comparison grouping was established to describe B-rated schools. The third comparison grouping was established to describe two high schools with very high minority populations in developing areas of one school district. The fourth comparison grouping was established to describe high schools in fairly rural areas with large student populations. The fifth comparison grouping was established to

describe high schools that have been rated “F” schools in the State of Florida’s A plus accountability system.

## Data Analysis

### *Data Analysis for Research Question 1*

What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes high school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts? The demographic information for the literacy coaches showed some definable characteristics. The majority of the literacy coaches in this sample were white women. Of the 27 respondents, 25 (92.6 percent) were women; 2 (7.4 percent) were men. Of the 27 respondents, 25 (92.6 percent) were White or Caucasian and 2 (7.4 percent) were Black or African American.

Among the coaches, most reported that their former teaching assignment was reading or intensive reading (n=12), and former language arts teachers (n=7) came in second. Two former science teachers and two former social studies teachers were included in the group of surveyed literacy coaches. One former elementary teacher, one media specialist, and one technical preparation teacher rounded out the total number of coaches surveyed. The majority of the literacy coaches in the sample have had at least 11-15 years of experience in the field of education; the second most number of years reported was the 21-30 years of experience group; the third most frequently reported was the 6-10 years of experience group. Two coaches had 5 or fewer years of experience.

Table 2: Literacy Coach Years of Experience

Years Teaching	Response Percent	Response Total
0-3	3.7	1
4-5	3.7	1
6-10	18.5	5
11-15	29.6	8
16-20	14.8	4
21-30	22.2	6
More than 30 Years	7.4	2

Length of time at the school varied with two coaches reporting 7-9 months of experience at his or her school. Most of the coaches reported more than 3 years at his or her school.

Table 3: Length of Time at Present School

Time at School	Response Percent	Response Total
7-9 months	7.4	2
12 months	22.2	6
3 Years	7.4	1
More than 3 years	51.9	14
Other (please specify)	14.8	4

Table 3 shows that very few of the coaches had fewer than 3 years of experience at their school. In fact, 51.9 percent had over 3 years, 22.2 percent reported 12 years.

Academic background varied among the coaches. English/language arts education (n=10) and elementary education (n=9) ranked highest in frequency reported. Two of the coaches had studied business, another 2 studied social studies, and the following other subjects were reported: special education, health care management, history, science, psychology, reading, and speech/theater.

Of the 27 respondents, 85.2 percent had district training; 59.3 percent reported reading endorsement, 29.6 percent held a master's degree in reading, 44.4 percent had taken college coursework in reading, 8.5 percent had taken graduate coursework as part of a non-reading degree, 48.1 percent had taken independent studies, 55.6 percent reported online training, 51.9 percent school site training, 25.9 percent vendor training, and 33.3 percent other. Respondents identified more than one method of preparation so the percents exceeded 100.

Of the coaches surveyed, 22 responded in the affirmative to the question about graduate study and 12 held a graduate degree. Five were in progress of earning the master's degree.

#### *Summary of Findings for Research Question 1*

A summary of demographic and background characteristics of the literacy coaches from the central Florida school districts in this study was outlined. In sum, the sample demographics showed that white women with a teaching background in reading and/or language arts was most common. These women had taught 11-15 years, and many

21-30 years, all with significant and varied training, including 22 of the 25 having participated in graduate study, and 12 that held graduate degrees. Overall, the data were predictable in the area of language arts/reading: a teaching background in the language arts and/or reading might be a reasonable inference based on the nature of the literacy coaching profession. These literacy coaches were an experienced group in the field of education, and all had rich training experiences. One could infer that these two elements, experience and training, emerged as strong indicators of preparation for the complex role of literacy coaching in this dataset of central Florida coaches

### *Data Analysis for Research Question 2*

What relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on various literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations? Other duties constituted the highest ranked activity from the reading coaches in this population. Other duties referred to work activities not related to literacy coaching, such as bus duty or administrative tasks, and in testing preparation. After “Other” duties, and in rank order of highest to lowest percentage, use of time fell into these slots: second, student assessment; third, knowledge-building; fourth, planning; fifth, professional development; sixth, coach-teacher conferences; seventh, meetings; eighth, data analysis; ninth, modeling lessons; tenth, coaching. The theory of the literacy coaching role and the practice of it were out of alignment as shown by these data. Table 4 shows the aggregate responses for literacy coaching activities with all valid responses before data cleaning.

Table 4: Literacy Coaching Activities, School Year 2005-06

Specific Activity	Mean Percentage of Time Spent in Literacy Coaching Activities
Other	14.75
Student Assessment	14.36
Knowledge-Building	11.29
Planning	11
Professional Development	10.8
Coach-teacher Conferences	10.65
Meetings	10.64
Data Analysis	9.32
Modeling Lessons	7.4
Coaching	6.77

The initial data analyses, using the mean figures above, indicated that literacy coaches in this study engaged in other activities a significant amount of their time, activities not central to role of high school literacy coach. Student assessment ranked second, and this activity, although related to the role, was not considered in the realm of productive and direct coaching factors. In fact, another important activity, modeling lessons, was ranked ninth. The analysis of descriptive data illustrated, at the very least, pointed to an issue with usage of human resources. Why were the literacy coaches spending so much time engaged in other activities? Other activities were defined as non-coaching or not role-related to literacy coaching.

Table 5: Coaching Activities and Percentages of Time Reported by Literacy Coaches

(N=25)

Literacy Coach #	Professional Development	Planning	Modeling	Coaching	Conferring	Student Assessment	Data	Meetings	Knowledge-Building	Other	Totals
1	5	10	1	10	4	2	3	5	10	50	100
2	5	10	15	5	15	2	3	20	20	5	100
3		10		10	10	25	15	15		15	100
4	5	10	5	10	10	5	25	10	10	10	100
5	4	9	1	4	11	5	9	14	24	19	100
6	5	8	4	4	7	10	8	14	4	36	100
7	7	5	2	4	6	35	5	10	15	11	100
8	20	20	40	10	10						100
9	30	10	10	5	8	10	5	10	7	5	100
10	7	8	5	15	15	25	5	5	10	5	100
11											NR
12	3	8	4	3	9	10	7	8	34	14	100
13	10	20	10	10	15	30	2	2	1		100
14	10	8	5	7	17	11	8	11	12	11	100
15	10	5	5	10	15	15	20	5	5	10	100
16	3	13	10	6	14	15	9	9	9	12	100
17	2	6	7	14	12	7	23	11	9	9	100
18	15	10	5	5	5	30	15	5	5	5	100
19	5	10	25	5	15	20	10	5	5		100
20	5	13	6	7	10	15	9	9	9	17	100
21	4	11	1	1	9	13	13	8	11	29	100
22	5	5	5	0	20	30	5	5	5	20	100
23	24	21	7	13	5	8	9	9	4		100
24	15	15	5	3	1	5	5	30	20	1	100
25											NR
26											NR
27	25	15	0	0	15	10	10	15	10		100
28	18	18	2	8	2	10	2	20	20		100

Each of the coaches was asked to report percentages of time in each of the ten literacy coaching activities. The survey system was set at maximum 100 percent to avoid errors in mathematical computation. Table 5 was organized by literacy coaching coded number with the associated percentages of time in each of the literacy coaching categories. Data rows for coaches who did not respond to this inquiry were left blank.

Table 6: Initial Data Set Compared with SPSS Mean Analysis

Specific Activity	Percentage of Time Spent in Literacy Coaching Activities (Prior to Data Cleaning)	Specific Activity	Percentage of Time Spent in Literacy Coaching Activities (After Data Cleaning)
Other	14.75	Other	14.9474
Student Assessment	14.36	Student Assessment	14.5
Knowledge-Building	11.29	Knowledge-Building	11.2609
Planning	11	Planning	11.12
Professional Development	10.8	Meetings	10.625
Coach-teacher Conferences	10.65	Coach-teacher Conferences	10.4
Meetings	10.64	Professional Development	10.0833
Data Analysis	9.32	Data Analysis	9.375
Modeling	7.4	Modeling Lessons	7.5
Lessons	6.77	Coaching	6.76
Coaching	6.77		

### Coaching Factors Regression Analysis

Individual regressions tests were run for each of the ten literacy coaching activities using SPSS statistical software. Research Question 2 addressed the question of correlation. What relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on various literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations? To analyze these data, SPSS 14.0 statistical software was used to apply simple and multiple regression models to the data. The percentage of time reported in each literacy coach activity was placed into a regression equation with the percentage of students moving from levels 1 and 2 to level 3 and above (%AL3±) from the 2005 FCAT Reading administration to the 2006 FCAT Reading administration, with change in (%AL3±), serving as the dependent variable.

Reported time data from each of the 25 fully usable surveys was entered into SPSS columns for each of the ten (PRMN) literacy coach activity domains. Each coach was given an identifying number or code and his or her reported percentage of time for each of the ten categories was aligned and used in the analysis. The percentage change from year 2005 FCAT Reading administration to year 2006 FCAT Reading administration was calculated by hand and then entered into a final column on the SPSS spreadsheet. This change was matched to each coach's reported times.

Scatter plots were run and examined for apparent and observable patterns. Some plots showed visible but not verified correlations; others showed the opposite. Then the scatter plots were run again, this time adding the regression fit line. The least-squared

estimator was calculated, the regression line was added, along with a horizontal line at  $Y=0$ .

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Literacy Coaching Activities as Predictors on Five School Performance Factors

	Five Performance Factors				
Coaching Activities	Change in percentage of students Scoring 3, 4, or 5	Change in Percent Passing	Change in Overall Reading Gains	Change in Lower Quartile	Change in Higher Level Reading Gains
Professional Development	0.012	0.001	0.056	0.009	0.008
Planning	0.018	0.007	0.179	0.123	0.019
Modeling	0.011	0.011	0.026	0.009	0.022
Coaching	0.039	0.021	0.025	0.086	0.056
Coch Teacher Conferences	0.027	0.052	0.044	0.014	0.009
Student Assessment	0.007	0.054	0.003	0.009	0.002
Data Analysis Meetings	0.005	0.02	0.039	0.006	0.035
Knowledge-Building	0	0	0.005	0.068	0.018
Other	0.002	0.028	0.018	0.082	0.016

Table 7 illustrated the Coefficient of Determinants or R square values for literacy coaching activities in five dependent variable categories, change in percentage of students moving to 3 and above (Percent change of students moving from levels 1 and 2 to 3, 4, and 5), percent passing, overall reading gain change, lower quartile change, and higher level reading gains. The regression test results showed mostly weak correlations across all categories. The matrix did indicate some strengths and noteworthy observations.

Coaching appeared to have the strongest correlations as shown on row four of the analyses, with .039, .021, .025, .086, and .056 respective to five dependent variables. Coach Teacher Conferences appeared stronger in the first three dependent variables, percent of student moving to 3, 4, and 5 (.027), Percent passing (.052), and overall reading gain change (.044). Modeling did not appear to bear a strong correlation to performance through regression analysis. Using the singular regression tests to conduct simple analyses, it was clear that too much of the variance had to be explained, more than 90 percent in all cases across the matrix. However, multiple regression analyses were run using productive and direct coaching activities and the results improved.

Table 8: Multivariate Analysis of Combined Literacy Coaching Activities and Five School Performance Factors

	Five Performance Factors				
Literacy Coaching Activities	Change in percentage of students Scoring 3, 4, or 5	Change in Percent Passing	Change in Overall Reading Gains	Change in Lower Quartile	Change in Higher Level Reading Gains
Multivariate Combined: 4 Productive Factors	.076	.104	.127	.107	.112
Singular Factor Regression					
Professional Development	0.012	0.001	0.056	0.009	0.008
Modeling	0.011	0.011	0.026	0.009	0.022
Coaching	0.039	0.021	0.025	0.086	0.056
Coach Teacher Conferences	0.027	0.052	0.044	0.014	0.009

Seen in Table 8 are the multivariate R square calculations as compared to the individual test below. Although much of the variance still needs explanation, the improvements are

clear, change in percentage of students scoring 3, 4, and 5 (.076), Percent passing (.104), change in overall reading gains (.127), change in lower quartile (.107), and change in higher level reading (.112). These items have been reported in a descriptive manner with no intention to infer about the larger population of literacy coaches in Florida.

A district comparison of school-wide performance in the change in percentage of students showed that district one had higher overall gains with a mean of (1.50), while district two had a loss of (-.50), as did district 3 (-.5556), and district 4 (-.50), with the aggregate mean all district group gain of (.2800). However, district one had the largest standard deviation of 4.17, so the performance varied more widely than schools in the other three districts.

A district modeling comparison was drawn using modeling, coaching, conferences, and other literacy coaching activities as independent variables as predictors for change in percentage of students moving to levels 3 and above on the FCAT at each school within districts. As in the previous regression analyses, coaching demonstrated the strongest relationship, R square (.039), but was still a weak explanation for variance. Coach-Teacher Conferences demonstrated an R square of (.027), again very weak but interesting. Other activities showed little relationship with and R square of (.002).

### Data from Supporting Questions: Subject of Time and Coaching

Question 13: How often do you conduct literacy walkthroughs to provide teachers with feedback? Of the 23 coaches who responded, 34.8 percent reported “Rarely.” None reported “Daily.” Seven respondents (30.4 percent) reported “Weekly”; 21.7 percent reported “Monthly” while 17.4 percent reported “Quarterly.”

Question 14: How often do you spend time conferring with subject-area teachers about reading? To this question, 9 respondents (36 percent) reported that they confer with subject area teachers on a weekly basis; 8 (32 percent) reported daily; another 8 (32 percent) reported monthly; 1 (4 percent) reported never.

Question 15: How useful is the log you keep to track literacy coach activities? To this question, 42 percent of the 25 respondents said the log was mildly useful; 23 percent, useful; 19 percent, not useful; 15 percent, waste of time.

Question 16: When do you spend time coaching teachers on reading strategies? Of the 24 respondents, 8 (33.3 percent) reported that they work with teachers in a coaching capacity at least once a week; 7 (29.2 percent) reported that they work with teachers in a coaching capacity many times during the month; 6 (25 percent) reported that they worked with teachers in a coaching capacity when they could make time; 3 (12.5 percent) reported that they struggled with making time to work with teachers in a coaching capacity; 1 (4.2 percent) reported that much of the day was spent coaching teachers on reading strategies.

### *Summary of Data Analysis for Research Question 2*

The data analyses from the regression calculations did not demonstrate a clear and definable relationship among literacy coaching factors and school-wide performance. Research question 2, what relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on various literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations, was best answered using slightly observable descriptive patterns that hinted at relationships, especially when multiple regression tests were applied. There were enough slight indications that with larger data sets stronger relationships might have appeared.

### Data Analysis for Research Question 3

What is the perception of high school reading coaches about working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement? Data from survey questions 17 through 30 provided the following information about working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement. Interview data from 11 coaches was included in the analyses along with school-related achievement and profile data.

The analysis began with initial coding of common responses using a question by question process, then thematic constructions were developed using coded data from NVivo 7 search queries, and then case studies were developed using all data sets. These research strategies provided understandings of what coaches said about their work and how their schools performed on various reading achievement measures.

Emergent References, Exploring and Quantifying the Survey Responses: A Global Analysis

Question 17: What support have you received from others in providing literacy coaching service?

Table 9: Types of Support: Coding Matrix for Question 17

Peer Coaches	District Assistance	Administrative	Teachers
11	9	6	4
Personal	Outside Consultants	Other Forms of Support	Full-Time Assistant
3	2	1	1

The coding table showed the strength in peer (n=11 coded responses) support as well as district (n=9 coded responses) support. The coaches in this survey mentioned peer and district support as key factors in their levels of success.

Administrative support ranked third, and Coach 12 reported, “My administration is highly supportive and the county regularly provides meetings and in-services.” Coach 14 reported, “Administration allows me the freedom I need to work with teachers and kids.” In one case, administrative support was direct and pervasive among teachers: Coach 15 reported that “Principal is number one advocate who requires teachers to attend mandatory reading training. County reading specialist is very supportive and a great resource. School-based reading leadership team helps to access more teachers across all content areas.” One coach included full-time assistant as a source of support. Support was found to be very important in the successes of the coaches in this study.

Question 18: What hindrances have you encountered in providing literacy coaching service?

Table 10: Type of Hindrance: Coding Matrix for Question 18

Lack of Time	Overwhelming Responsibilities & Duties	Teacher Apathy/Resistance	Paperwork	Faculty Unclear of Role	Leadership Skills/Experience
8	6	6	5	3	2

Lack of time ranked highest (n=8) among the coaches surveyed as a key hindrance, with duties and teacher resistance not far behind with (n=6 coded) for each. Lack of leadership skill or experience was reported (n=2) as well as the clear theme of excessive paperwork (n=5). The coaches also reported that their faculties were often unclear of their roles (n=3). The number of meetings concerned Coach 26, “Too many off-site meetings, too many demands (though related to the job) that take away from actual coaching of teachers.” Coach 26 lost the clerical person she had in the last quarter of 2005-2006 school year, and she said, “I now do a lot of the clerical duties.”

Question Number 19: Do you have an office? Two coaches reported no; 26 (96.3 percent) reported yes. The data showed that most of the literacy coaches in this study reported having an office of their own in which to work.

Question Number 20: Do you have a dedicated professional development room? 14 (51.9 percent) reported yes; 13 (48.1 percent) reported no. This response was more mixed and indicated less alignment with practices mentioned in literature review.

Question Number 21: Do you have a classroom library to use for demonstrations and teacher check-out? Fifteen (57.7 percent) reported yes; 12 (46.2 percent) reported

no. Mixed responses indicated here, and this pointed to less alignment with recommended literacy coaching practices, as outlined in literature review.

Question Number 22: What is your approximate budget for purchasing books, attending conferences, and professional development? Six (33.3 percent) reported \$0-100; 1 (5.6 percent) reported \$501-1000; 1 (5.6 percent) reported \$1,001-2,000; 8 (44.4 percent) reported \$2,001-5,000, and 3 (16.7 percent) reported a budget of more than \$5,001. The budget data show that at least 61.1 percent of the coaches who responded to the survey worked with an annual budget of \$2,000 to more than \$5,001.

Question Number 23. How many professional conferences have you attended in the last 12 months? National? State? Of those reporting, 4 (14.8 percent) reported none; 10 (37 percent) reported attending (one) conference; 4 (14.8 percent) reported attending (two) conferences; 5 (18.5 percent) reported attending (three) conferences, and 4 (14.8 percent) reported attending (More than four conferences).

Question Number 24: Please list the conferences you have attended: The types of conferences varied. A condensed list included:

- 1) International Reading Association's meeting in April/May in Chicago.
- 2) FRA (Florida Reading Association) Conference in Orlando
- 3) Model Schools
- 5) 2005 Just Read, Florida! K-12 Coaching Academy
- 6) Ruby Payne Frameworks for Poverty
- 7) ASCD Conference in Orlando
- 8) High School Reform Symposium

Question Number 25. If you had to pick, which coaching activities seem to have the most effect on student reading achievement in your school? This was a key question that attempted to access perception among coaches about which of their work activities might have a bearing on student achievement.

Table 11: Type of Literacy Coaching Activity & Perceived Influence of Student Achievement

Activity	Modeling	Coaching Teachers	Professional Development	Curriculum Development	Supporting Teachers	Workshops	Giving Teachers Strategies	Observing Teachers Use Strategies
Frequency	12	8	5	2	1	1	1	1

Modeling (n=12) ranked highest among coaches as the activity that might influence student achievement, with Coaching Teachers (n=8) second. The aggregate data displayed in table 12 showed 7.5 percent of reading coach time was spent on Modeling. Further analyzed later in Chapter 4 of this study, the survey data indicated that modeling was one of the activities literacy coaches engaged in that they perceived to have the most effect on student reading achievement. A contradiction was found as the perception about modeling was compared with what coaches actually reported they spent time doing. Modeling ranked ninth in time spent by the literacy coaches in the study. Table 13 shows the ranking of modeling along with the other nine coaching activities. Reported is the mean percentage of time spent on modeling among coaches in the survey.

Table 12: Ranking of Time Spent on Literacy Coaching Activities

Specific Activity	Mean	Rank
Coaching	6.76	10
Modeling Lessons	7.5	9
Data Analysis	9.375	8
Professional Development	10.0833	7
Coach-teacher Conferences	10.4	6
Meetings	10.625	5
Planning	11.12	4
Knowledge-Building	11.2609	3
Student Assessment	14.5	2
Other	14.9474	1

Coaching teachers was mentioned at least eight times, yet this category ranked tenth or last in reported time spent and another coaching-related category, Coach-teacher conferences, ranked fifth. Of the two activities coaches highlighted, modeling and coaching, incongruence was apparent as the reported time spent on these activities was analyzed.

Question Number 26. The question asked coaches for a listing of other duties as assigned. Many of the coaches have other duties beyond the scope of the reading coach role, and these are often not directly related to working with teachers in a coaching role. Coaches reported that other activities took up most of their time, and 14.75 percent of

their time spent on literacy coach activities was the highest percentage of all ten literacy coaching categories. The shows a significant amount of time spent on non-coaching activities. See Table 13 below for types of other activities mentioned.

Table 13: Type of "Other" Activity: Coding Matrix for Question 26

Testing Preparation & Student Assessments (5 references)	Substitute for an Absent Teacher	Mentoring a group of 9 <sup>th</sup> graders	A.C.T. Supervisor	Time Spent Screenings on Entries and Withdrawals
Department Chair (4 references)	Also: Learning Resource Teacher (1/2 duties)	Student Government Advisor	Academy Coordinator	Textbooks (“minimal”)
Student Supervision (3 references)	Freshman Class Sponsor	Sending AIP (Academic Improvement Plan) Letters	Head of Literacy Council	Administrative Meetings

Those with few other assignments were rare in the findings. Coach 13 reported, “I have no extra assignments that do not in some way relate to coaching” and Coach 24 reported no other duties assigned.

The coaches in the survey addressed question 27 in a variety of ways. Some coaches mentioned a project, such as “a reading mentoring program,” or “Late Start professional development.” Two coaches mentioned modeling. At least 14 times the reading coaches in the survey highlighted an interaction with teachers that focused on change in teacher practice.

Question 28 addressed the question of issues and concerns. Because so many concerns were described, they were incorporated into the thematic analyses and case

studies later in the document. Also see Appendix L for detailed descriptions by the individual coaches. Many of these concerns capture a story and for the literacy coaches and extensive paragraphs were written in some cases to clarify an issue or concern.

Question 29: Did anything happen at your school this year that may weigh in on overall reading results? The responses to these questions were organized below and coded as positive or negative contributions toward influencing reading achievement.

Table 14: Positive/Negative Attribution of School Happenings that May Influence Achievement

Happening	Positive	Negative
1) Reading Consultants	X	
2) All Level 1 and 2 students in a reading class	X	
3) Progress Monitor Tool	X	
4) Increase in the size of reading department	X	
5) School-wide emphasis in reading in the content areas	X	
6) Over-testing		X
7) Teacher Buy-In		X
8) Too Many Substitutes		X
9) Hurricanes		X
10) Excessive Entry/Withdrawal		X
11) Lack of Correct Placement by Guidance		X

Question 30: Is your school undergoing any major restructuring or school-wide reforms this year that may weigh in on overall reading achievement results?

*Identification of Major Reform or Restructuring efforts for Question 30*

The literacy coaches in this study did cite numerous school factors related to major reform or restructuring that they believed may influence their results, while three respondents reported no reforms or restructuring, the others reported specific reforms.

The list included:

- 1) Smaller Learning Communities
- 2) Reading Program Adoption
- 3) Added Six Sections of READ 180
- 4) Focusing on District Purchases
- 5) Teacher Use of Literacy Strategies
- 6) School-wide Writing Plan
- 7) Block-Scheduling
- 8) Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships
- 9) 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Center, Curriculum Assessment and Alignment
- 10) Reading Apprenticeship Practices
- 11) All level 1 and 2 students in reading classes
- 12) Ruby Payne Frameworks
- 13) Reading Research project with State of Florida
- 14) Corrective Reading, Reading in the Content Areas

Much was going on with high schools to indicate school-wide approaches to changing student performance.

### Thematic Strands among Literacy Coach Working Factors: A Global Analysis

Using the principles of grounded theory and the framework established as a result of closely reading each survey answer, search terms were queried within the NVivo 7 file, “Literacy Coach Work Context,” and then these textual elements were studied and incorporated into the descriptions below to highlight thematic strands across survey answers to all questions and literacy coach responses. Thematic overview here...

#### *Support*

Support was observed as an emergent theme in the texts. The primary source for the data on this theme was question 17, which asked about the subject directly, but references to “support” appeared across the responses to multiple questions in the survey. Literacy Coach 20 observed that being in classrooms was providing support for teachers and paperwork took her away from this important task. Coach 1 provided support for teachers through curriculum development. Coach 10 observed that to influence student achievement, the role included, “Supporting the teacher in any capacity that is needed such as getting them the necessary training.” Coach 17 found strength in peer relationships and wanted more time for their development, “I wish that reading coaches had more time to collaborate with each other about what we are doing on a day to day basis.” Coach 20 described a massive paperwork load, and further observed: “As the

reading coach, I am providing the support as much and as often as possible I can...Along with making necessary changes I am still trying to stress and provide support of the importance of understanding and using the data” we have collected on our students. For Coach 24, “Teachers are resistant to implementing specific reading strategies. Administrative support is hugely lacking in getting coach into classrooms and holding teachers accountable for reading instruction.”

### *Modeling*

Modeling emerged as a dominant theme in the survey texts. Literacy Coach 28 offered to model strategies for teachers, but many in the school “are not sure about the role of the reading coach.” Coach 1 believed modeling with teachers influenced student achievement. Coach 6 observed success with modeling:

I believe the modeling I do in the classrooms is quite effective - when you have a cooperative teacher. I also find it very fulfilling to meet with teachers and give them strategies to help their students.

Coach 6 also observed that the teacher has to be cooperative, which implied an influence process. Coaches 8, 9, and 15 believed modeling had a positive influence on students through their teachers. Coach 16 observed:

Modeling lessons/observing teachers using strategies. Reinforcing reading strategies in Science and Social Studies to the point where the kids get the connection - and begin to apply the strategies to their own reading. Also, being aware of what individual teachers are covering in their curriculum and providing a variety of literacy materials to broaden their coverage. Having the students know that I'm a reading coach (I even have a tiny gold whistle that works), gives me credibility when I'm presenting in a classroom or just seen in the halls. Enthusiasm for all things reading helps, too.

What Coach 16 described was a discovery process of learning the teacher and the curriculum. Coach 20 noted the difficulty with making time to conduct modeling:

Modeling effective reading strategies in a real classroom situation is very effective for both the student and the teacher. However, I have had a difficult time getting in to the teachers rooms this year. I hope to improve on this in the future. Holding Professional Development Workshops has been beneficial for the teachers at our school. I have a series of them I am currently holding. They are strictly voluntary and even though there are only a hand full of teachers taking advantage of it this year I hope to continue it and see them grow in the future.

In order to model, Coach 20 acknowledged the difficulty of making the literacy coach-teacher connection, a process which she plans to improve in her future development.

Coach 16 narrated a literacy connection with social studies:

I concentrated on modeling reading strategies in our social studies classes this year. As a result I've seen an increase in the use of graphic organizers, the SQ3R method, and grouping. A first year teacher invited me into his classroom and we did a 'tag team' demo of a chapter in the bestseller Freakonomics. This teacher is now infusing Before, During and After Reading techniques in his lessons with great success.

As noted previously, literacy coaches had little time to spend on modeling, yet believed in its direct effect on student achievement.

### *Time*

For the literacy coaches in this study, time was the primary major hindrance as reported through survey and interview data. Literacy Coach 3 described the reality and scope of the tasks involved in the role: “Time to do everything that really needs to be done.” To be sure, a need for time could be warranted for any profession, job, or task. However, in the case of the literacy coaches, the aggregate data from all coaches surveyed points to “Other” activities as being the activity they engaged in the most.

Coach 12 described this issue succinctly, “Too many responsibilities and not enough time to actually coach.” This would be a common theme, lack of time, for many of the coaches in the study. For example, Coach 21 reported little time to get all the tasks done despite the support of administration, and further:

My administrators are very supportive, but there is much to do and a limited amount of time. Teachers are resistant to having other adults in their classrooms, so we are working to break down those barriers. It takes a lot of time to build the trust needed to be effective. The reading program here was pretty unorganized, so we spent a lot of time getting it up and running and getting new teachers moving in the right direction. That took time from subject area teachers.

Coach 21 indicated factors requiring more time, such as building relationships and the reality of reading program development. Coach 1 reported:

Since I have only been in this position for just 3 months, I am feeling my way. This position can overwhelm you, and I am playing catch-up with tasks that should have been done one or two years ago. Our school has not had a reading coach full time until I was appointed in Jan. Sometimes I am pulled in different directions to 'help' with a wide variety of projects including FCAT testing. This takes time away from coaching, but these things must be done. By being a part of the 'team,' I grease the wheels of the machine so that I can be a part of the working operation here. I want to be able to call upon others for assistance in reading initiatives on campus. Doing these 'other' tasks will help in that, I hope.

This coach had much her time allocated to catching-up with what should have been done in the past. She also targeted a common theme: helping with testing. Coach 21 knew that all of her work contributed to the development of literacy, but her frustrations are made clear in her descriptions.

Coach 4 tried, “Finding the time to complete data analysis while also coaching teachers,” and Coach 13 addressed the major issue of paperwork:

The biggest hindrance is mandated 'paperwork.' Looking at next month (April) for example. We are required to fluency test our Level 1 and 2 students (600 students) each nine weeks and the fluency window for the last nine weeks starts next month. While many of these students are in reading classes, not all of them are. These students have to be located, tested, and then placed on a report. It is a time consuming process. Also, we have to give the SDRT test in April. We were given a small window of time to submit to our District office all the names of our current Level 1 and 2 9th graders for this test. I can pull up a report that will tell me the level that each student achieved on the 2005 FCAT test. I then, must go through this list and pull out the students who have moved and add the students who have since come in to the school. Also, an amazingly time consuming process. I will also have to allow four days to include giving the test, collecting it, sorting, boxing it up and getting it back to the District. I also have four days of mandated meetings in April and there is a long four day weekend that month as well. I am planning a workshop about reading for the staff the first of May so I need time to put that together as well. There are constant interruptions including the three requests I received this week from our district office because they needed information immediately from our school for their district reports. It is just very difficult to put together any amount of time to be away from the office and out into the classroom.

For one coach, a particular problem emerged with Academic Improvement Plans, “The overwhelming amount of paperwork required in updating and maintaining Reading AIP for every student who has not passed FCAT. The time it takes to test students, record scores and accurately place them in an intensive reading course could monopolize 90% of my time, if allowed” (Coach 15). Coach 18 also reported a time concern with Academic Improvement Plans, “I feel like too much of my time this year has been devoted to organizing, administering, and monitoring the reading AIP folders.”

Coach 21 decided to list all of the activities that may not count in the standard literacy coaching activity checklist or influence achievement. Concern about all the unrelated items on the to-do list, including testing and clerical duties that take-up time away from coaching:

Time....lack of...too many things to do that don't fit into the state's little boxes on the PMRN report. Things like ordering materials, testing new entries, talking to parents, unpacking and organizing materials, unjamming the copier, looking for materials for subject area teachers....daily stuff that takes time, but somehow 'doesn't count.'

At least one coach struggled with making time to conduct professional development during the day: “The hindrances are finding time to do inservice for teachers...there is so much testing and other activities going on that there is no good time for 'during the day' inservice. The same teachers do show up when I have workshops” (Coach 22). Coach 10 asked whether her role was appropriate: “I spent many hours in the preparation (the sorting and checking of names). Is this part of coaching?” Coach 20 reported that “FCAT prep has been the most time consuming.” Coach 21 noted that “FCAT did take several days.”

### *FCAT Preparation*

For many of the coaches, FCAT preparation was part of the job, as noted previously. Coach 13 developed workshops to assist in FCAT preparation: “I have given a series of mini-FCAT workshops isolating each FCAT skill individually and suggesting strategies and classroom activities for the teachers to use. I have had a lot of feedback letting me know that these workshops were very helpful.” On the other hand, Coach 14 found the school-wide FCAT prep session not as useful as a Drop Everything and Read Program (DEAR).

### *Content Area Teachers*

Coach 19 found some teachers to be “strictly content oriented and not open to helping students better understand content by using reading strategies.” Coach 21 recognized a key problem for literacy coaching: “For the most part, the subject area teachers are so consumed with their content, they don’t have extra time to worry about preparing reading materials.” Coach 19 valued modeling to assist with the process of improving literacy in the content areas: “Modeling in the classroom helps the teachers implement reading strategies to strengthen skills within content areas.” Coach 21 shared a narrative that illustrated a success story to influence content area teachers:

I try to be sure that the teachers in my workshops actually do every activity that I am recommending they do with their students. If they don't try them, they get too insecure to give it a go in the classroom. One particular activity we did was a small group carousel activity focusing on using a vocabulary concept map. The teachers had a great time, I hooked them up with free chart paper so they didn't have to worry about that, and gave them lots of 'hands-on' tips about how to make this work smoothly in the classroom. I got several very enthusiastic e-mails after that session and was invited into some classrooms to see the results. This activity could be applied in any content area, so everyone who attended went out of there with something they could use. It allowed the teachers to see how getting kids moving, talking, sharing, and THINKING can improve their understanding and retention. They also were shown how to use the same process for content understanding and test review... It was a big hit.

### *Coaching*

Coach 28 found it difficult to enter classrooms and be perceived as a coach, not an evaluator. She said, “This is the most frustrating part of my job, I really want to be doing this aspect of coaching, but no one will let me in. I am trying to find ways to change this for next year.” Coach 14 believed her coaching work influenced student achievement, “Teacher coaching/conferencing. The teachers always go back and try new ideas or

strategies. Not every student buys-in...but just the fact that their teacher is not doing the same old thing gets them motivated.” Coach 15: “Modeling for teachers in classes and then coaching the teacher through his/her lesson planning.” Coach 17: “Modeling lesson with coaching follow-up.”

### Literacy Coaching and the School Context: Case Studies

Case studies were constructed to develop understandings of literacy coaching in the school context of location, type of school, and past and current performance. Five multi-case studies were written in narrative form using texts from survey responses and interview answers. The following cases describe some aspects of literacy coaching in central Florida as they relate background, time, and working factors that relate to student achievement.

#### *Comparison Group One: A-Rated Schools*

Four high school literacy coaches from four high schools in three of the four studied districts were included in comparison group one. The main criterion for this comparison group was the earning of an “A” in the State of Florida Accountability System for test years, or academic calendar years, 2004-05.

#### Literacy Coach 5

Literacy Coach 5 did not agree to be interviewed, but did complete a survey as part of the study. A white female, Coach 5, whose background was in teaching intensive

reading, studied business education as an undergraduate and had been teaching 16-20 years, with more than 3 years at her current school. High School 5 had a 39 percent minority rate in 2005 with 23 percent of the study body in lower SES (Socio-Economic Status). This was a suburban school with significant diversity and almost one quarter of its population fell into the lower SES profile.

Coach 5 spent most of her time as a literacy coach on knowledge-building (24 percent), other activities (19 percent), and meetings (14 percent). Her primary focus was not on direct coaching activities, such as professional development, modeling, coaching, or coach-teacher conferences. On a monthly basis, she conferred with subject-area teachers about reading, and she reported that she spent time coaching teachers when she could make the time. She said that modeling lessons seemed to have the most effect on student achievement at her school, while she only spent 1 percent of her time engaged in this activity. She also included professional development conferences, of which she attended 2, as an activity that had the most effect on student achievement. She did, however, spend 24 percent of her time in the area of “knowledge-building.” As an “other” activity, she had to “Substitute in a teacher’s classroom in her absence.” A success for Literacy Coach 5 was a modeling activity, and it incorporated the “modeling of ‘reverse-mapping.’” No interview data was taken as this respondent did not wish to be contacted.

Reading achievement results for this school, reported in May and June of 2006, revealed significant gains in students moving students to level 3 and above (8 percent), percent passing (8 percent more passed than in 2005), overall reading gains (2 percent),

higher level reading (5 percent), and writing (3 percent). By every standard, except for lower quartile gains (-7 percent), this school increased the overall success of its students in FCAT reading achievement. Because she spent so little time on modeling (1 percent), coaching (4 percent), and coach-teacher conferences (11 percent), it is possible that more time in these areas could have been focused on teachers with lower quartile students as well as ESE teachers and reading programs. The lack of focus on those working with lower quartile students cost this school its longstanding school grade of A. This prominent high school, however, would not be the only “A” school to fall in 2006.

#### Literacy Coach 17

Literacy Coach 17 was also a white female with a background in intensive reading with 16-20 years of experience in education, who had served 3 years at her present school. The role of literacy coach was a “natural progression” as she served as a reading teacher in elementary school and worked closely with low SES students who struggled with reading. The job fit her lifestyle, as she loved to read and teach non-fiction and young adult literature. In terms of the success in her job role, now working as literacy coach for almost three years at the same school, she cited administrative support, more experience in job role, progress monitoring, and modeling of content area reading strategies. Impediments to success included teacher schedules, size of school, lack of time, and a massive paperwork load. Her relationship with administrative is “all positive” as they have built and supported an atmosphere and culture of reading, and she had a good rapport with and respect for her school and district supervisors. Coach 17

worked at a suburban high school with a reported 16 percent minority rate in 2005 and 11 percent of its population were classified as lower Socio-Economic Status.

She reported that most of her time was spent engaged in data analysis (23 percent), Coaching (14 percent), and Coach-Teacher Conferences (12 percent). She conducted weekly literacy walkthroughs and spent time on a weekly basis conferring with subject area teachers. In terms of support, she reported: “I have two other coaches that I collaborate with on a frequent basis.” A primary hindrance she noted was the busy schedules of teachers. She had an office, a professional development room, and a classroom library, with a budget between 501-1000 dollars. Like Literacy Coach 5, Literacy Coach 17 found “modeling with coaching follow-up” to have the most effect on student achievement. She also reported that she spent “minimal” amounts of time working on testing and textbooks. A big success for her was a professional development day the district had designated: “I have several teachers that are implementing strategies within their content area that they learned through staff development.” A concern for her centered on making time for peer sharing: “I wish that reading coaches had more time to collaborate with each other about what we are doing on a day to day basis.” For her school, she reported a systematic process that may have weighed in on overall results: “We used a progress monitoring tool that got teachers and students to focus on individual reading strengths and weaknesses.” The school itself added a 9<sup>th</sup> grade center for the 05-06 year and began to develop small learning communities along with aligned assessment, as Literacy Coach 17 described.

When the results were published in May (student-level data) and in June (school performance data), the news for this school was mostly positive, with gains of 3 percent in the number of 10<sup>th</sup> graders scoring 3 or above in reading, the school's already respectable passing percentage in reading increased by one percentage point, overall higher level reading increased by 2 percent, writing made no change in percentage, but the school lost 5 percentage points in its reading learning gains for lower quartile students. This loss in the reading lower quartile area resulted in the school dropping from an A in 2005 to a B in 2006. The coach did spend 35 percent of her time in direct coaching roles. She also believed modeling was effective but only spent 7 percent of her time engaged in this literacy coaching activity.

#### Literacy Coach 24

Literacy Coach 24, like the other two coaches in this comparison grouping, was a white female, with slightly less experience (11-15 years) than the others. She studied social studies as an undergraduate, and reported no graduate degree. The school administration created this position for her in a school where she had worked, at least at the time the survey was taken, 11 years. Reading was a passion for this coach, and she was starting to see reading emerging with more seriousness all around the school as she had toiled in this role to get the message out and across the school. Her high school, like Coach 17, had few students in the lower SES status: 10 percent. However, 22 percent of the students were reported as minority status.

This coach spent most of her time attending meetings (30 percent), knowledge-building (20 percent), and providing professional development and planning for professional development (15 percent for each; combined 30 percent). Very little of her time was devoted to actual, direct coaching activities, modeling (5 percent); coaching (3 percent); coach-teacher conferences (1 percent). Indeed, as mentioned previously, she did focus on large scale professional development (30 percent). Rarely could she make literacy walkthroughs, and only monthly confer with teacher on content area strategies. She did not, however, spend a large amount of time engaged in other activities, (1 percent).

Apparently, the 30 percent time reported for meetings, served this literacy coach in providing support for her role: “The reading coaches and district leadership has been tremendous. It’s a great learning and support group.” On the other hand, “teacher apathy and resistance” have created impediments to providing literacy coaching service. Like Literacy Coach 17, she had an office, a professional development room, and a classroom library, but worked with a greater budget of between 2,001 and 5,000. She believed that “working with classroom teachers” had the most effect on student achievement, and she reported her successes in terms of teacher experiments with strategies: “Several teachers have reported to me that they have tried various activities and students liked them. Some have bombed, but they may try again. Few have reported any measurable change in student learning.” A big issue for Literacy Coach 24 was tied to both teacher resistance and lack of leadership in assisting with this issue: “Teachers are resistant to implementing

specific reading strategies. Administrative support is hugely lacking in getting coach into classrooms and holding teachers accountable for reading instruction.”

This high school’s “A” ness was “always very close,” Literacy Coach 24 reported. She was trying to get the faculty to “think in terms of reading...the word reading is popping up...” There seemed to be a stronger consciousness about reading across the school. She was considered a resource at her school, a source for materials and strategies. She worked to established trust and made little suggestions to teachers for improving their work with reading. Literacy Coach 24 did not have enough time to accomplish all that she needed to fulfill role. She was still trying to get resistant teachers to view her, not as an evaluator, but as a literacy coach and source of support. Strong support from the district was evident to her, and she did have almost open access to resources to do her job. She did say that the school and district did view the literacy coaches in an elevated perspective, “Our role is important.” Literacy coaches must be seen as a “supporter” and “communicator” to whom teachers trust. Literacy Coach 24 stated that once teachers try and have success with approaches to literacy, then “they’ll do it again in” in their own classrooms.

Results for this school remained the same or declined in various measures, despite the school’s efforts. Change in number of students moving to level 3 and above dropped 3 percentage points; the lower quartile gains dropped 4 points; higher level reading dropped 2 points, and writing dropped 4 percentage points. The percentage of students passing and making overall reading gains remained the same. Literacy Coach 24 actually coached directly very little, modeling (5 percent), coaching (3 percent), and coach-

teacher conferences (1 percent). She reported serious concern with “teacher apathy and resistance,” yet believed her work with these teachers influenced student achievement. Her explicit concerns about administrative support and communication of her role may be an indicator of incongruence with school mission and literacy coach focus. Some of these may have been causal factors in the school’s decline in so many standardized measures of reading achievement.

#### Literacy Coach 26

Literacy Coach 26, a white female, came from a background of teaching English, with 21-30 years of experience. Armed with years of training and a masters in reading, she reported: “about 20 years ago, what is now known as a ‘reading coach’ was known as a ‘reading resource specialist,’ and during the three years I was in that position, I attended frequent trainings given by the Florida Reading Association” and her school district. Her principal asked her to take on this role, and she did. Her school reported a 32 percent minority rate in 2005, and 12 percent of the students at this high school fell into the lower SES category.

She had known the intricacies of working with the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as a teacher. Coach 26 did not report percentages of time spent on the ten literacy coaching activities. She did report that she had to make time to coach teachers. She found strong support in district 4 of the study including the school district specialist assigned to work with high school reading coaches. Hindrances for this coach were clear, “Too many off-site meetings, too many demands (though related to the job)

that take away from actual coaching of teachers. Also, losing my instructional assistant for the last 9 weeks of school has been devastating—I now do a lot of clerical duties.” Like the others in this comparison grouping, she had an office, a dedicated professional development room, and a classroom library.

In her perception, Literacy Coach 26 believed three areas had the most effect on student achievement: “Follow-up discussions with teachers after observing classes,” “On-site professional (including study groups), and “Being available to answer questions/make suggestions.” This coach was busy in addition to her off-site meetings: she was also serving as co-chair of English department in 2005-06. She defined her successes through a narrative about the coaching process with one teacher: “Spending a lot of time with a struggling teacher, offering suggestions, and following-up with more visits and discussion. The teacher was on the verge of losing his job, but is now doing markedly better and will be keeping his job and continuing to improve.”

This was a coach who knew her teachers and enjoyed the “personal contact with teachers.” The more she made her job role as literacy coach personal and positive, the more successful she believed she was. She relied on informal conversations and ideas backed with research in working with teachers. She knew that beginning coaches had problems with credibility, but her support for teachers had to be known through “word of mouth.” She had a strong principal who, along with a strong school leadership team, supported her and worked well to achieve similar goals. She re-iterated more than four times how important “personal contact” with teachers was to literacy coaching. She cited

classroom visits but had little time modeling. On the subject of modeling, she said: “not as often as I should.”

Her primary concern is the need for an assistant as she stated: “All reading coaches in large high schools need an instructional assistant. Without one, coaches spend an inordinate amount of time on ‘mundane’ activities. Also, since coaches must be off campus a lot, the assistant is needed to ‘hold down the fort’ and prepare materials for the coach and teachers.” She did highlight change in her school: “More than ever, there has been school-wide commitments to reading with accountability for teachers to use the strategies they have been taught.” Literacy Coach 26 spent many hours away from campus and in meetings, and she found this to be a hindrance to success. In fact, she said that at certain periods of time, she may be away two full days a week. She lost her assistant for the last 9 weeks of school. She found this instructional assistant role to be helpful as there were so many clerical tasks associated with the literacy coaching job. Like the other coaches, her time was limited and she often spent time engaged in so many other activities, all of which prevented real coaching.

Results for this school produced an A; in fact, Literacy Coach 26 worked at a school with the only A of the four high schools in Comparison Group One in 2006. For this school, 70 percent of its 10<sup>th</sup> graders passed FCAT Reading, the same percentage as in 2005. There was also no change in the percentage of students scoring three and above from 2005 to 2006, 49 percent. The school experienced a 4 percent gain in students meeting high standards in reading, a 2 percent gain in overall reading gains, a 3 percent gain in lowest 25 percent of students making gains. The school posted a small loss of 2

percentage points on one measure: percentage of students meeting high standards in writing.

In comparison group two: A rated schools, three coaches reported their perception of modeling as influential in student learning, yet did little of it. These schools tended to have higher SES populations and high-end academic programs, yet three schools dropped from their A status to a B because of lack of attention to the lower quartile of students. The school that did maintain an A had a literacy coach who had issues with time and being away from campus, yet focused heavily on personal contact and the school's informal networks.

#### *Comparison Group Two: B-Rated Schools*

Schools rated a “B” in the State of Florida Accountability System made up the two schools embedded and described in this case study group.

#### Literacy Coach 1

Literacy Coach 1 taught intensive reading and has worked in education in the same district for 34 years, 19 at this present high school. She taught language arts and journalism and has had extensive training for the role of literacy coach. She came to the role with a “series of fortunate events” and took on the role in January of 2006. Much work had to be done to fulfill role responsibilities in a short amount of time. In fact, she said, the school was “not in compliance with role last year” referring to 2005. She called herself, the “Pied Piper” of reading at her high school. Fostering the establishment of

word walls, setting reading goals, focusing on vocabulary, constructing a reading report were all activities she felt contributed to the school's success. She did say that most administrators don't understand the role of coach. She had hoped for a goal meeting with administration before she began. Her principal did not provide much feedback and she often found herself on her own but supported. She felt her work was that of culture changer in an urban, challenging educational environment. This school, in 2005, was a school with a 36 percent minority rate and a 25 percent SES reporting.

She spent most of her time in the 2005-06 academic years engaged in other activities (50 percent); second, knowledge-building; third, coach-teacher conferences and planning professional development both (10 percent) each. She spent the least of her time modeling lessons (1 percent). On a quarterly basis, she was able to conduct literacy walkthroughs yet confer weekly with teachers about reading but admits this is difficult to make time for this important activity.

A key hindrance for Literacy Coach 1 is the newness of the position, and this learning curve came late in the school year:

Since I have only been in this position for just 3 months, I am feeling my way. This position can overwhelm you, and I am playing catch-up with tasks that should have been done one or two years ago. Our school has not had a reading coach full time until I was appointed in Jan. Sometimes I am pulled in different directions to 'help' with a wide variety of projects including FCAT testing. This takes time away from coaching, but these things must be done. By being part of the 'team,' I grease the wheels of the machine so that I can be a part of the working operation here. I want to be able to call upon others for assistance in reading initiatives on campus. Doing these 'other' tasks will help in that, I hope.

She had an office, a dedicated professional development room, but no classroom library to use for demonstrations and teacher check-out. The budget she reported was quite small, 0-100 dollars.

As for the coaching activities Literacy Coach 1 believed had the most effect on student achievement: “I think the ones that have helped my teachers the most have been my ability to support them through curriculum development (including creating materials/units to be used in the classroom), scheduling of students, material acquisition, and modeling.” She also mentored a 9<sup>th</sup> grade group of at-risk students every Friday morning. Her reading endorsement classes have influenced her work with her own teachers. She holds the reading endorsement on her professional certificate.

For Literacy Coach 1, she is still learning on the job, and she reported that: “This position can overwhelm you, and I am playing catch-up with tasks that should have been done one or two years ago. Our school has not had a reading coach full time until I was appointed in Jan. We are working to ‘be all on the same page,’ but we are not all there yet.” She also described a scheduling issue as something that may weigh on overall results, “lack of correct placement of students by guidance,” and the following occurred: “Lack of notification of teachers about reading assignments until during preplanning.”

For Literacy Coach 1’s school, two percent more of her students passed, 4 percent more made higher level growth, 2 percent increased writing performance, and 3 percent fewer students moved from levels 1 and 2 to 3, 4, and 5 (3 and above) while lower quartile students fared less well, with 10 percent dropping to no gains. To make a gain,

students must climb 77 points on the Developmental Scale Score in each of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years.

#### Literacy Coach 4

Literacy Coach 4 worked at another urban school, but unlike many of the literacy coaches in this entire study, she is an African-American female. She was co-chair of the English department and had taught in the range of 11-15 years. An English major with an M.A. in English Education, Coach 4 was also reading endorsed. She fulfilled a role necessary to the success of her school when she accepted the position, and she worked closely with the Reading Writing Center Coordinator to facilitate success among students through teachers. Her school was located in an urban area with a 41 percent minority rate and a 26 percent SES reporting.

Of her total time, 25 percent of it was spent on data analysis, and all other activities were fairly distributed around 10 percent each. She conducted literacy walkthroughs on a quarterly basis and conferred with teachers on a monthly basis. She received wide support for her work, “I work very closely with our Curriculum Resource Teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal of Instruction, and our Reading Writing Center Coordinator.” Time for Literacy Coach 4 is a rare commodity, and she described: “Finding time to complete data analysis while also coaching teachers.” She had an office, professional development room, and a classroom library. Well over 5,001 dollars was her budget.

A coaching activity that this coach perceived as stimulating success included peer sharing: “Teachers working together to share best practices. The coach is there to facilitate and provide input when needed.” Another success was described, “When our teachers participated in a model unit presented by the reading coach and Reading Writing Center Coordinator. This helped teachers to see what can be done in reading classes.” Her principal was very focused on student achievement, she noted. Her successes were defined by many contributions, including modeling lessons, building teamwork for curriculum focus, and listening to teachers. This literacy coach used the word supportive frequently in her description of the job role.

For Literacy Coach 4, there is not enough time to complete all of her tasks and that is one of her strongest hindrances. There existed distributed leadership on her campus, and a clear message and direction had emerged from administration in support of reading goals. The importance of reading is “stated everywhere.”

As advice to new literacy coaches, Coach 4 offered when asked that there are a few realizations that go with the role: not everything will get done, teachers come first, not every teacher will be receptive, modeling or showing other teachers how to incorporate strategies, data analysis is time-consuming, and use a calendar for planning activities.

The news was not good for any reading measure at this school, as lower quartile students making gains dropped 13 percent, overall reading gains dropped 7 percent, those 10<sup>th</sup> graders moving to 3 and higher dropped 5 percent, percent passing dropped 4 percent as did writing. Higher level reading gains remained the same. The school houses an

Advanced Placement and burgeoning International Baccalaureate program for students choosing college coursework as part of the high school experience. These high-level programs may have helped to hold higher level reading gains steady.

In both cases for these urban yet striving schools, the results did not bear out to success in literacy across the board. In fact, both coaches reported favoring modeling as the activity that gets results for students, yet one of the coaches spent half of her time engaged in other activities while the second spent about 10 percent of her time on modeling.

#### *Comparison Group Three: C-Rated Schools*

For Comparison Group Three, two urban schools located in a rapidly developing area of a large metropolitan city were included.

#### Literacy Coach 9

Literacy Coach 9 was a white male, with experience as an intensive reading instructor, and between 6-10 years of experience in education. At the time of the survey, he had worked at his school for two years, and begun his role as reading coach later in the school year on October 1, 2005. He studied health care management as an undergraduate and has had extensive training for the role of literacy coach, including the reading endorsement. For his graduate training, he earned two degrees: an M.A. in counseling and the M. Div. in theology. His high school was located in a developing area of a major

metropolitan area with a minority rate of 77 percent and an SES reporting of 38 percent in 2005.

Coach 9 spent most of his time engaged in professional development (30 percent), little time engaged in other activities (5 percent), but also reported little time spent on coaching (5 percent); coach-teacher conferences (8 percent); modeling (10 percent). He did conduct literacy walkthroughs weekly, conferred daily with teachers and spent many times during the month coaching teachers on reading strategies. The problem of role confusion among peer teachers seemed evident with this literacy coach, some thought him an evaluator, some not understanding his real mission of service to teachers through the role. A major hindrance for this literacy coach was the perception teachers have of him in the role; it was one of confusion:

Teachers perceive it as ‘evaluation.’ Teachers see me as an ‘expert’ rather than a collaborative team member. Teachers view my coaching as ‘for someone who is weak and needs help.’ Many faculty view the reading emphasis as part of a cycle of faddish or ‘strategy of the year’ campaigning that will go away when the district and/or state shifts focus onto another trend.

Coach 9 does have does not have an office or a classroom library, but he does have a dedicated professional development room. His budget is roughly 2,001-5,000. He stated that “Co-teaching” and “Modeling lessons” seemed to have the most effect on student reading achievement at his school. His only other duty is that of an A.C.T. supervisor.

Coach 9 found positive results in working with a teacher on a specific type of instructional strategy:

Differentiated Instruction: I met with a reading teacher who was struggling in a setting of whole class instruction. I suggested for her to break the students into three groups: Independent Reading, Focused, direct Instruction, and computer reading lab. She separated the class into 2 groups and used independent reading

as a one day strategy for the whole class. She was so excited about the successes in academics and behavior! It was refreshing.

This coach focused further on teacher perceptions of him, and stated: “I believe after I develop relationships, collaborate with teachers, and continue to do meaningful professional development with teachers, they’ll respect me and begin to use me as a resource.” Coach 9 believed that a ‘Get Caught ‘ reading program with awards ceremony may weigh in on overall school results. He also noted the introduction of the small learning community concept in this large high school. The collaborative teaching model he was emphasizing was a concept he found successful. He emphasized modeling, and being supportive to teachers, and he observed the importance of the need to “stay out of office and in classrooms.” He expressed concern over the teachers who thought his work was evaluative, not supportive and coaching-oriented. He used staff development days to provide training on content area reading, and he encouraged and was part of an atmosphere for collaboration and teaming. What is impeding his success as a literacy coach? According to Coach 9, I am “more into assessment than I want to be.” He wants to improve this atmosphere of evaluation rather than support. His relationship with administration was one of shared discovery. His advice to new coaches is to be approachable, develop good relationships, earn the trust of colleagues, ask for feedback, and earn the trust of key players in the school. A literacy coach is “dynamic to the school.”

For this school, the only score to increase was higher level reading gains (improvement of 3 percentage points), while lower quartile (-15), overall reading gains

(-5), writing (-5), 3 and above (-2), and percent passing (-1) all decreased in percentage points. While many school factors would account for these drops, it was clear that the Literacy Coach 9 began in the role late in the year, seemed uncomfortable with his role and how he was perceived, and he spent a significant portion of his time working on assessment and testing. His time spent on direct coaching was clearly minimal. It was observed by him that modeling made a difference in student achievement; however, he spent only 10 percent of his time on the activity. He did recognize a need to spend more time in the classrooms and engage with the activities he knew to be more effective, and this recognition seemed to have been first step in his future planning.

#### Literacy Coach 10

Literacy Coach 10 also began late in the school year, October 13, 2005, and had worked at the school for a very short time, 7-9 months. She had been a secondary social studies teacher, and at the time of the survey, had spent 16-20 years in education. She studied history as an undergraduate, and she had completed the first competency for reading endorsement in December 2005. In this respect, she may have had a little less training in reading than the Literacy Coach 9. Her principal created the new position and she took it, coming from a middle school. Literacy Coach 10, like Coach 9, worked at a high school in a developing area of a metropolitan area with. In 2005, this high school reported a 66 percent minority rate with 36 percent of its student body at the lower SES category.

Coach 10 spent most of her time handling student assessment (25 percent) yet did manage to spend about 35 percent of her time engaged in coaching-related activities as a composite. She reported little time spent on other activities (5 percent). She rarely conducted literacy walkthroughs yet conferred weekly with subject area teachers on reading.

She had received support from the faculty and English department chair. She identified a major hindrance to her success, “Our school has had many teacher slots not filled so just trying to get consistent instruction has been a battle.” She did report having an office, a dedicated professional development room, and a classroom library. Support ranked high among activities she perceived to have the most effect on student reading achievement in her school, and she stated: “Supporting the teacher in any capacity that is needed such as getting them the necessary training.” On the other hand, time for these activities was taken away by a common problem for literacy coaches: testing. In fact, she said, “I spent many hours in FCAT preparation (the sorting and checking of names). Is this part of coaching?” A success for her was defined in a specific example. She “introduced a novel to an ESOL class by activating their prior knowledge.” Tied to the staffing issues mentioned by this coach, was the effect of teacher shortages: “Many classes that had too many substitutes.” She said she enjoyed relating to other teachers because she had “been there.” At first, her job role was not clearly defined at all. She understood that her job role was to influence teachers, and this is often very difficult she noted. She did argue that a primary function of her role is to be “supportive.”

She spent too much time engaged in preparing the materials for FCAT assessment. On the other hand, she does want teachers to understand results produced from data and assist them with the interpretation of that data. One of her self-acknowledged strengths was data collection and analysis as well as communication of results. She has a strong relationship with her administration; indeed, her office was placed within the office of the Assistant Principal for Instruction (a key high school academic leadership position). She reported a strong relationship, and she felt comfortable going to administration at any time.

Coach 10 described a large communication gap with the school's community; over 66 percent of the students come from diverse backgrounds, and many of these students are also classified as ESOL. The school had dictionaries for every country in its curriculum materials. High teacher turnover was common in this school, and much of the role of literacy coaching consisted of working with new-to-teaching teachers. Many of the students at this school were being taught by substitute teachers. It was fun for Literacy Coach 10 to "Go into classrooms and work with students" indicated a student-focused approach, which could be interpreted to mean that the literacy coach had not made the transition from teacher to coach herself.

Literacy Coach 10's school fared some better than the other school in this comparison group. The students moving to 3 and above (4 percent) and the increase in higher level reading (4 percent) provided success in the midst of a (-10 percent) drop in the lower quartile, (-4 percent) drop in overall reading gains, (-2 percent) drop in writing, and a (-1 percent) drop in tenth graders passing reading. Much like Literacy Coach 9,

this coach began late in the school year in a newly created position with lots to do in a short amount of time.

#### *Comparison Group Four: D-Rated Schools*

Comparison group four included three schools that have earned a “D” in the State of Florida Accountability System in the last two years prior to the test administration of 2006.

#### Literacy Coach 23

Coach 23, a white male, who had worked at middle school prior to taking on this role two years ago, had worked in education between 11-15 years. He followed his principal to this school to achieve the same success both had in their working together at the middle school. Coach 23 taught language arts, majored in English Education, and reported extensive training for the literacy coach role, including reading endorsement. He knew that in coming to this school he would have to target the improvement of the lowest quartile of students in reading achievement. His school was located in a rural location that was located close to an inner city area; for this school, almost half of its population (48 percent) was minority status, and 54 percent of its students fell into the lower SES category.

Coach 23 spent most of his time engaged in professional development (24 percent) and planning for the professional development (21 percent). About 25 percent of his time was spent on coaching-related activities. He reported no time spent on other

activities. He conferred with teachers and conducted literacy walkthroughs on a weekly basis. His support came from a full-time assistant, and she stated: “I also receive excellent support from my principal and district level curriculum and professional development departments. We have a reading coach cadre that meets once a week. We have also had outside consultants and vendors provide training.” Coach 23 had an office and classroom library, but no dedicated professional development room. With a budget of 2,001-5,000, this coach can purchase materials for the role.

For Coach 23, “Specific strategies modeled and used in intensive reading classes,” seemed to have the most effect on student reading achievement in your school. A success for this literacy coach was defined through a program, “I have started a reading mentoring program with our leadership class and upper level honors English classes. These students are mentoring our lowest level and ESE students in reading once a week. This has had a major impact on how our English teachers are teaching reading.”

In this school the solution to improve reading is clearly reading classes, and Coach 23 reported, “We now have every Level 1 and Level 2 student in a reading class, over 1,000 students.” As for the school undergoing major changes, “we are in the middle of a three year reading research project with FCRR and Just Read Florida. We have also instituted school wide content area training in reading.” Data analysis, developing a literacy council, creating a literacy campaign, and a book drive were mentioned by Coach 23 as contributions to his success. The school developed a mentoring class for at-risk readers in which students read books together. This coach also led the rewriting of English 1 and 2 curriculums to emphasize non-fiction texts. He knew he had to re-focus

the school on non-fiction for the students to succeed. The “sheer volume of teachers” made his work difficult. He was simply unable to reach every teacher in his quest for school-wide across the content area literacy. His work is well-supported by his principal with whom he spent about 20 minutes a day working on literacy development for the high school. These two had a ritual of attending a conference away from the school each summer.

This coach suggested that a new literacy coach entering a school should be “supportive” to teachers, communicate data to teachers; “get it out there,” he said. Visibility is important, and it is important for teachers “to see you as a resource,” he said.

The school earned a “D” in 2004-05, and a C in 2005-06. Its results, except for the lower quartile (-7 percent) were promising, as no fewer students failed as a school percentage, 2 percent made more learning gains, 4 percent more students made higher level reading gains, 3 percent improved in writing, and (-1 percent) dropped in percentage of students moving to 3 and above reading levels. The lower quartile remained a challenge for this school for 2006-07.

### Literacy Coach 21

Literacy Coach 21, a white female, had started at this high school in the last year, and including this last year, had spent, 21-30 years in education. She wanted to make a “wider impact,” and she also felt that teaching could sometimes be “isolating.” She taught reading and language arts as well as special education. For Coach 21, her school was located in a quasi-rural, heavily populated area on the geographic edge of a large

school district. Its minority status was 35 percent, and 25 percent of its population fell into the lower SES category.

In the 2005-06 school years, she spent more than a quarter of her time involved with other activities (29 percent). Only 1 percent of her time was spent on modeling or coaching (1 percent). She spent 13 percent of her time on student assessment, and another 13 percent on data analysis. She rarely conducted literacy walkthroughs, conferred with teachers weekly, and coached teachers many times during the month. She reported strong support but lack of time for her job role:

My administrators are very supportive, but there is much to do and a limited amount of time. Teachers are resistant to having other adults in their classrooms, so we are working to break down those barriers. It takes a lot of time to build the trust needed to be effective. The reading program here was pretty unorganized, so we spent a lot of time getting it up and running and getting new teachers moving in the right direction. That took time from subject area teachers.

Time fit into the category of major hindrances as well:

Time...lack of...too many things to do that don't fit into the state's little boxes on the PMRN report. Things like ordering materials, testing new entries, talking to parents, unpacking and organizing materials, un-jamming the copier, looking for materials for subject area teachers...daily stuff that takes time, but somehow 'doesn't count.'

This coach had an office but no professional development room or a classroom library to use for demonstrations and teacher check-out. He budget is limited to \$0-100. However, she did state as an answer to question 24 of the survey, "I don't really know what the budget is. If we need things, the principal finds a way to cover it."

She attributed her success to workshops, making small steps with teachers, a supportive principal, and documenting reading strategies in lessons every week. She realized she needed to be in classrooms more. Much "other stuff" got "dumped" on her

to do. She struggled with changing the mindset at her school, because as she described, teacher's doors are closed, and it is a profession of isolation. She worked to change this culture of isolation and change teachers who were "content-focused, not kid-focused." She had learned to target key people that wanted to experiment and work toward literacy development and build trust with teachers. She understood this part of the literacy coach-teacher relationship. She did spend too much time involved with testing. The task that took her time was the constant testing and recordkeeping associated with the frequent entries and withdrawals at her school, a pattern which was explained by the high mobility of the students at this school.

Gains for this school were found in the lower quartile (7 percent), writing (5 percent), and overall reading gains (3 percent). Losses occurred in 3 and above (-4), percent passing (-5), and higher level reading (-1).

### Literacy Coach 22

Coach 22, a white female, was a reading teacher, who had 21-30 years of experience and had worked at her present school for more than 3 years. She was the department chair of a large reading department. Like the other two schools, this school is located in a well-populated yet rural location. In 2005, 39 percent of its students were reported as minority status, and 30 percent of its population was reported to be in the lower SES category.

She spent most of her time handling student assessment (30 percent), and spent an equal amount of time engaged in other activities and coach-teacher conferences (each

20 percent). She rarely conducts literacy walkthroughs but spends time conferring with teachers on a daily basis. As far as support, "I am pretty much on my own...the teachers ask me for resources/advice more in an informal way...Occasionally I will meet with a teacher in a formal 'conference' setting. Support is really not an issue." Yet time is also a hindrance for Coach 22, "The hindrances are finding time to do inservice for teachers...there is so much testing and other activities going on that there is no good time for 'during the day' inservice. The same teachers do show up when I have workshops." This coach had an office, but no professional development room or classroom library.

The administration was very supportive if she could catch them as she is mostly left to herself; the administration did send many teachers to conferences to support literacy development. She had little time to conduct formal coaching, she reported. Reading assessments, excessive record-keeping, proctoring and test preparation, and the school culture she believed all impeded her success as a literacy coach.

She believed modeling in classrooms, supporting teachers, providing resources, working with her reading teachers, and the school's reading thinking activity all influenced achievement at her school. Many of her meetings with teachers were informal and supportive in nature. She argued that no specific training was offered on literacy coaching. She did say that the role had more responsibilities than it should.

For this school, results were bleak and the trend continued downward in 2006. Losses occurred in the areas of 3 and above (-5 percent), percent passing (-4 percent), reading gains (-5), lower quartile (-9), higher level reading (-3). Writing did improve with a gain of five percent more students meeting high standards.

### *Comparison Group Five: F-Rated Schools*

Comparison group five consisted of two high schools that had both received F's based on results from the 2005 FCAT test administration.

#### Literacy Coach 3

Literacy Coach 3 completed the survey but could not be reached for an interview. She was an African-American female who had worked for two years at her present school, put in 11-15 years in education, and was an ESE reading teacher prior to taking on the role of high school literacy coach. She studied psychology as an undergraduate and was working on the reading endorsement and was in progress for a Master of Education in Educational Leadership. She started in her role in October 20, 2005. Her school is located in an urban, inner city area, in which 85 percent of its students were reported as minority status, and 53 percent fell into lower SES category.

Coach 3 spent no time on modeling and most of her time with student assessments (25 percent). She spent about 20 percent of her time engaged with direct coaching activities and 15 percent of her time was devoted to other activities. She conducted monthly literacy walkthroughs and conferred with teachers monthly, but had to relegate spending time coaching teacher on reading strategies to when she made time. Her support structures were strong, but her time needs were great, "Time to do everything that really needs to be done." Coach 3 had an office, a dedicated professional development room, but no classroom library. She did not report a budget amount.

She perceived that “spending time with teachers” seemed to have the most effect on student reading achievement in her school. Her other duties included testing and lunch duty. She had no reported issues or concerns. A major success for her was found in “encouraging a teacher to continue with Corrective reading, that she can do it. That is will get easier the more she does it. Now she likes it and wants to teach it next year.” She reiterated her belief in working with teachers to influence results. Did anything happen at your school this year that may weigh in on overall reading results? She reported success in her connections to teachers, “A combination of things, but working with the teachers trying to find ways to help the students succeed.” The school added corrective reading in the 2004-05 years, and in 2005-06, a focus on reading in the content areas and words of the day were implemented as school-wide reading programs.

#### Literacy Coach 11

Literacy Coach 11 did not complete a survey but did agree to be interviewed. She was concerned about the media’s portrayal of her school as a failure. In fact, she noted that the last time the media made contact with the school they “never spoke to the person in charge of literacy.” An urban, inner-city school, her school was reported as 98 percent minority status, with 66 percent of its population in the lower SES category.

Coach 11 mentioned having administrative experience, taught English and language arts and served as a learning specialist. She cited many school improvements in her list of items that contributed to her success as a literacy coach. The school is operating on the state-mandated continuous improvement model, so as a result, the school

created a focus calendar, and teachers were working on curriculum teams attempting to align curriculum across the school. This coach did not mention any coaching specifics, but did emphasize her role in providing data analysis for the school and principal. She had just received an assistant for the massive paperwork involved in her role. Not having a clerical assistant impeded her work; she described the paperwork and documentation as the “nitty-gritty” of the job. At the top of her wish list was a common period of time on a weekly basis to discuss and assist teachers. She reported an excellent relationship with school administration, and she and the principal had worked together for ten years prior to date of interview.

She described herself as a hard-worker, very task-oriented, and that there would never be a need to micromanage her. She was the literacy liaison for the principal. “The coach needs to have that kind of relationship, or teachers will lose in the end,” she said. She believes she is “truly here to assist” teachers, ringing a tone of support. She outlined intense negativity about her school, but illustrated focal points on student programs and strategy development for teachers. All of this she said was overwhelming.

After repeated and careful analysis, this last interview struck a unique chord in comparison to all the literacy coaches. Coach 11 appeared to have taken on the role of a chief of staff to the principal, analyzing the school data, acting as a conduit to the faculty on literacy, and with few references to direct or indirect coaching, the fulfillment of the role seemed questionable in practice at this school. Indeed, clear inferences could be made that this was an efficient, administrative assistant with evident knowledge and power connected to the principal, not so much an actual literacy coach.

This school found gains in 3 and above (2 percent), percent passing (4), higher-level reading (3 percent), writing (1) percent, yet small losses in overall reading gains (-2) and the lower quartile (-1). These results, while mixed and somewhat positive, did not produce anything more than another F for the school in 2006. In this case, it was not so much the change in percentage, loss or gain, but the low level of attainment that had been the norm for the school in past years.

### *Summary of Data Analysis for Research Question Three*

Research question three asked: What is the perception of high school reading coaches about working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement? The literacy coaches perceived peer, district, and administrative support to be the most useful in conducting their work. Many of the coaches reported frustrations with lack of time, overwhelming responsibilities, teacher apathy, and paperwork. Some of the literacy coaches felt the faculty was unclear of their roles. Most of the coaches had offices, but professional development rooms and classroom libraries were in place for about half of the coaches surveyed. Many of the coaches reported modeling to be the most influential on student achievement in reading, but a major discrepancy was found in the coaches own reporting of the time they spent on modeling. They believed modeling to be influential but did very little of it. Literacy coaches addressed the issue of support, modeling, time, FCAT preparation, content area teachers, and coaching throughout their responses. Case study analyses revealed the context in which coaches worked as well as confirmed the contradiction with modeling and time spent on this activity. It was also

clear that many high schools have performance issues with the lower quartile of students in reading. In fact, A-rated schools lost their status because of the lack of adequate performance among lower quartile students.

Chapter Four presented the results of the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The subject of literacy coaches will remain on the minds of educators for some time especially in the light of accountability and standardized testing systems. Literacy coaches do so much more than we should expect of them as the research has shown. Policymakers want them to influence student achievement; developing methods to infer achievement from literacy coaching will continue to be explored as longitudinal data from literacy coaches will soon be available as the newer definition of the role emerges. It will now be time for clarification of the role, in the minds of those who support the role as well as those who are recipients of literacy coaching services, the teachers.

### Problem Statement

The research conducted in this study has contributed to what we know about literacy coaches in central Florida, who they are, what they do, and what successes and concerns they had to report. Although investigating the relationship among time spent on coaching activities was the research intention, the qualitative data emerged as the more effective description of how coaching activities may influence student achievement.

### Methodology

A larger sample size was needed for calculating regression and determining relationships among the independent variables of coaching activities on the dependent variable of change in student achievement. With only 25 examples to work from, inferential

statistics were not possible. Descriptive statistics proved more useful for exploring simple and multiple regression models. The use of a web-based survey system enhanced the ease of data return, eliminating, at least for this study, a serious problem with survey rate of return.

### Population and Data Collection

The population of 69 percent of surveyed coaches demonstrated a successful return rate for this study. Web-based data collection was made easier than using a paper survey with self-addressed envelopes because once the survey was completed, its data was returned to a viewable database. Literacy coaches from four school districts, from urban, suburban, and rural schools responded and created a representative population from which to create understandings about the work lives of high school literacy coaches. Eleven coaches from this population were interviewed to provide triangulation of data for case studies. This population created a framework with which to understand literacy coaching in central Florida.

### Instrumentation

The survey instrument's strength could be found in the collection of open-ended responses. The reported percentages of time spent on literacy coaching activities assisted in regression analyses, theme development, and case studies. Because the survey system was set to 100 percent, the literacy coaches had to think about their use of time, and given their required bi-weekly reporting to the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network,

this would not have been a far reach into memory. Literacy coaches had the ability to access their yearly data from the reporting system they were accustomed to using.

### Data Analysis

The use of regression for predicting the effect of particular activities or groups of activities may have been more useful with a larger sample size, such as may be possible after surveying 65-80 percent of the reading coaches in the State of Florida. The data that proved more useful emerged from what the coaches wrote in the open-ended question boxes and said in interviews. Such a comprehensive study of literacy coaches may have to take place over a year-long period with a different research timeline, or develop a system to survey all coaches at once. Indeed, the use of NVivo 7 qualitative software assisted in searching for themes from survey responses and their texts.

### Summary and Discussion of Findings

The following discussions illustrate the research findings of this study and explore the answers to the three research questions which defined the study.

#### *Research Question 1*

What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes high school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2006? An overwhelming majority of the coaches in the central Florida study were white women and most came from a language arts/English education background. Of this group, many had

at least 11-15 years of experience and some 21-20 years of experience. This was an experienced group of educators, using the definition of 5 years or fewer as less experienced. Most of the coaches in the study had spent at least 12 years at his or her school, and 51.9 percent 3 or more years. The literacy coaches chosen for this role, usually by principals, have been at their schools for at least a decade. As a general rule, the literacy coaches in this study were a well-trained group with extensive training records and types of professional development related to the role, and almost half held a graduate degree.

### *Research Question 2*

What relationship, if any, exists among percentages of time spent on literacy coach activities and the mean change in high school students making FCAT reading achievement gains between spring 2005 and 2006 administrations? No clear and definable statistical relationship among coaching activities and increases in school performance was found using a regression analysis. However, with these small data sets, one can still describe the upward trends in some data analyses. Perhaps with a larger sample size and using a larger data set from the Florida Center for Reading Research, or another data collection and research agency, then more concrete correlations can be shown in the future.

Useful data were reported in the table showing the time all the surveyed coaches in aggregate form spent on each of the ten coaching activities. In all analyses, other activities ranked highest among time spent on literacy coaching activities as reported by

respondents in the study. This indicated a variance from what the literature suggested for the fulfillment of the role. Modeling and coaching appeared at the bottom of the list for time reported engaged in these activities. Of any independent variables as predictors of change in school-wide reading performance, coaching teachers had the strongest relationship to student achievement in three analyses, simple regression, multivariate analysis, and district comparison. The literature suggested that literacy coaches were spending much of their time on student assessments and data analysis, and this was the case in this study as well. It is clear from the aggregate analyses of literacy coaching activities, that the priorities for these roles established in the literature and in standards for the profession were out of alignment with practice in central Florida high schools.

The data from the supporting questions on the subject of time also proved useful in understanding the challenges the high school reading coaches faced and will face in the 2006-07 school year. Literacy walkthroughs happened but 34.8 percent of the coaches said this happened rarely. Responses to the question of conferring with teachers were mixed. Sixty-five percent of literacy coaches found their PRMN logs to be useful in reporting their amount of time spent engaged in literacy coaching activities.

As exploratory data, these numbers do indicate possibilities for future studies. For the purposes of this study, no clear correlation existed in the model established for this research.

### *Research Question 3*

What is the perception of high school literacy coaches related to working factors that influence positive changes in FCAT reading achievement? Much of the qualitative data for this study was collected in questions 17-30 and through eleven interviews of high school coaches within five comparison groups. Case studies were developed as a tool for understanding differences among coaches working at different types of schools. A multi-case methodology was applied to five case study groups, each representing schools that had received either an A, B, C, D, or F in the State of Florida accountability system. Within each case narrative were embedded school profiles, 2005 school performance data, literacy coaching activities, data analyses, survey data, interview data, and 2006 school performance data.

The answer to what coaches perceived to influence student achievement in reading was described through survey question analysis, thematic analysis, and case study comparison groups. Literacy coaches perceived modeling to have one of the most influential effects on student achievement, but they reported spending little time on this activity as an aggregate. Both thematic and case studies bore this out. A thread that emerged from the case studies was the concept that modeling in classrooms was necessary for achievement but in actual practice this was done infrequently.

Literacy coaches found their peers to be supportive as they did their district and school administration. For these literacy coaches, time was a major hindrance to their successes; it was taken-up with many other activities, including test administration, paperwork, compliance folders, and even student supervision. Literacy coaches

identified many positive and negative happenings at their schools that they believed influenced student achievement. They did note the effectiveness of reading consultants, more reading classes and bigger reading departments, progress monitoring tools, and school wide-emphases on reading content area. They found over-testing, lack of teacher buy-in, too many substitutes, hurricanes, excessive entries and withdrawals, and incorrect placement of students to be major problems in the process of influencing student achievement in reading.

Many of the schools in this study were found to be undergoing major redesign processes in order to facilitate the growth of student achievement. Coaches believed that one of their primary roles was to provide support for teachers as they all worked through the process of building school-wide literacy. Some of the coaches were concerned that they were perceived as evaluators not coaches, and many references were made to teachers understanding their roles. Coaches who found themselves successful in the role pointed to concepts such as trust and relationships and personal contact as key factors in their ability to influence teachers and improve literacy learning for students.

It was clear from the case studies that some coaches had started sometime within the 2005-06 school year, so they did not have the complete year to be introduced properly, work on the complex school networks, or even understand their job roles. Many of the coaches included in the case studies reported their belief that modeling influenced student achievement, but these same coaches in some cases did not actually commit the time to modeling as a literacy coaching activity. The discrepancy created a point for improvement in the evaluation of what reading coaches did.

## *Conclusions*

One conclusion that can be drawn from the descriptive data is that of the categories of time, the “other” category ranked the highest for literacy coaches in 2005-06. Many of the coaches had paperwork and compliance frustrations that may have affected the quality of their work and the time they spent on the craft of coaching. The literacy coaches reported participating in varieties of extensive professional development on literacy coaching strategies. Once experts in the knowledge and concept of literacy coaching, coaches must then reallocate time to those activities that they perceive to positively influence achievement—classroom modeling, coaching, conferring with and supporting teachers.

A clarification of the role by school leadership is necessary to fulfill the promise of the policymaking; literacy coaching should involve coaching and working directly with teachers most of the time. Role confusion and role conflict were evident in a search of the literature. Weller (2001) discussed the problems of role ambiguity with department heads. Ballard and Murgatroyd (1999) researched the confusion that occurred in guidance counseling positions. Both types of positions involved non-instructional support, and like literacy coaching, were not defined by direct classroom teaching. School leadership must work to clarify job tasks and set priorities with their coaches, and remove barriers to defining and fulfilling the role.

Chapter One provided context for the literacy coach study, introduced the problem, and outlined the research questions, definitions, assumptions, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two synthesized the existing literature relevant to the problem under

study. Chapter Three described the methodological framework including information on the population, instrumentation, and data collection and analyses. Chapter Four presented the results of the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

### Implications for Best Practice

One suggestion centers on the use of time: school administrators may want to re-examine the tasks they have assigned coaches and also find clerical staffing to supply each with an instructional assistant or clerk. What is needed now? The enhancement of the literacy coaching profession needs (a) professional development for administrators on the best use of literacy coaches, and (b) professional development for literacy coaches on the use of time related to student reading achievement.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The data reported in this study came from the actual literacy coaches working in the field. Applying a more comprehensive contextual approach to further research would assist in developing a complete picture of the background, usage of time, and work environment. Other variables to include in further research would include observational data; for example, the researcher could observe a reading coach for one week conducting the activities of his or her job role. Interviews and survey research with the teachers at particular schools would create an even more complete perspective. Specific data from classes whose teachers are working with the coach may produce some interesting results

as well. Perhaps a study of the influence processes literacy coaches use as perceived by teachers and administrators would make a quality further study.

The question of school effect and literacy coaching should be studied using some more sophisticated statistical models and analyses, such as structural equation modeling or hierarchical modeling, both techniques that can account for types of schools, other achievement results, influence factors, teacher, administrator, and student perceptions. All of these factors can be combined to build a statistical model to test for stronger relationships among related independent variables from both the literacy coaching perspective and school factors perspective.

Based on the findings of this study, it may be of benefit to scholarship to study perceptions of principals about their role and functions in the principal/literacy coach working relationship, and how this dynamic may be developed so that each can craft their respective roles with respect to school-wide literacy development.

**APPENDIX A: UCF HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL**



Office of Research & Commercialization

March 13, 2006

Don Boulware, Assistant Principal  
Spruce Creek High School  
801 Taylor Road  
Port Orange, FL 32127

Dear Mr. Boulware:

With reference to your protocol #06-3300 entitled, **“Reading Coach Activities and Professional Background,”** I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved on 3/8/06. The expiration date will be 3/7/07.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB office when you have completed this research study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

*Barbara Ward*

Barbara Ward, CIM  
UCF IRB Coordinator  
(FWA00000351 Exp. 5/13/07, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File  
Rosemarye Taylor, Ph.D.

BW:jm

**APPENDIX B: ELECTRONIC COVER LETTER**

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida working on my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership (K-12). I am asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship among reading coach background, activities, and work culture with high schools in the eastern central region of Florida.

The anticipated benefits of this study include (a), improving training and development for reading coaches (b), adding value to the professional role of the reading coach through legitimate study(c), predicting successful best practices for reading coaches in the field, and (d) adding content to the literature on the subject of reading coaches.

In this survey you will be asked some demographic information as well as some information about your academic and professional background as a reading coach. In addition, you will be asked to report the time spent on particular coaching activities from the months of July 2005 to February 2006. If necessary, please use the data from your Reading Coach Activity Log bi-weekly reports to assist with an accurate report of the percentage of time you spend on each activity.

Indeed, the researcher will know the identity of each respondent; however, a code will be assigned to each respondent so that all data from survey responses will be analyzed and reported in aggregated form. All data will be kept as confidential, and only the research

study team will have access to data. All information will be kept in a password-protected computer and any associated paper documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be collected using a secure, encrypted website. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Following the completion of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to request a copy of the results. Your participation in this study is voluntary. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. No compensation for completing this survey will be provided. Some individuals may be selected for follow-up telephone interviews.

If you have questions about this research, please contact Don Boulware at (386) 214-1277 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Taylor, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership in the Department of Educational Research, Technology, and Leadership at the University of Central Florida. Her contact number is 407-823-1469. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed at UCF IRB Office at University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 302, Orlando, FL 32826-3252. The phone number is 407-823-2901.

If you agree to participate in this study, please select the “I Accept” button below to communicate your informed consent to participate in this study.

## **APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

Text Copy  
Of  
Web-Based Survey

Opening Page

Informed Consent Page

School Code Number Entry

**Reading Coach Demographics/Academic and Professional Background**

3. Please indicate gender

Male

Female

4. Please indicate your particular race or ethnicity

All possible races/ethnicities will be listed.

5. When do you start as a reading coach at your school?

6. What was your primary teaching assignment prior to taking on the role of reading coach?

7. How many years have you been teaching?

0-3

4-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-30

More than 30 Years

8. How long have you worked at your present school?
9. What was your undergraduate major?
10. What training have you had in preparation for the role of reading coach?

Select all that Apply

- Reading Endorsement
- College Coursework
- District Training
- Graduate Coursework as part of non-reading degree
- Master's Degree in Reading
- Online Training
- School Site Training
- Vendor Training
- Independent Study
- Other (please specify)

11. Have you earned a graduate degree?

Please list degrees earned or in progress.

## 12. 2005-06 Coaching Activities

**In the past year, what have you spent your time doing in your job role?**

**For the school year 2005-06, please indicate percentages (%) of time engaged in the activities listed below.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional Development sessions such as seminars, action research, study groups designed to increase educators' knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning: Planning, Developing and/or Preparing Professional Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating model lessons in classrooms for teachers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coaching: Coaching (planning conversations, observations & reflecting conversation, offering feedback) teachers in classrooms.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction,

	intervention strategies, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Assessment: Administering or coordinating student assessments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis: Analyzing, Using, and Reporting Student Data
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge-Building: Building my personal knowledge of SBRR and assessment through study or professional development.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: Time spent on other duties assigned.

13. How often do you conduct literacy walkthroughs to provide teachers with feedback?

- Rarely
- Daily
- Weekly
- Bi-Monthly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Yearly

14. How often do you spend time conferring with subject-area teachers about reading?

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

15. How useful is the log you keep to track reading coach activities?

Please describe:

16. When do you spend time coaching teachers on reading strategies?

- Much of the Day
- When I can Make Time
- At Least Once a Week
- Many Times during the Month
- I Struggle with Making Time for This

17. What support have you received from others in providing literacy-coaching services?

18. What hindrances have you encountered in providing literacy-coaching services?

19. Do you have an office?

Yes

No

20. Do you have a dedicated professional development room?

Yes

No

21. Do you have a classroom library to use for demonstrations and teacher checkout?

Yes

No

22. What is your approximate budget for purchasing books, attending conferences, and professional development?

\$0-100

\$101-250

\$251-500

\$501-1000

\$1001-2000

\$2001-5000

More than \$5,001

23. How many professional conferences have you attended in the last 12 months?

National?

State?

24. Please list the conferences you have attended:

25. If you had to pick, which coaching activities seem to have the most effect on students' reading achievement in your school?

26. Other

List other Duties as Assigned

What other non-coaching activities have you been assigned?

27. Successes:

Please describe some coaching successes you have had in this past school year, 05-06, in terms of effect on teacher changes that will improve student achievement?

28. Issues/Concerns:

Do you have any issues or concerns?

29. Did anything happen at your school this year that may weigh in on the overall reading results?

If yes, then please describe.

No

30. Is your school undergoing any major restructuring or school-wide reforms this year that may weigh in on the overall reading results?

If yes, then please describe.

No

31. Would you mind if the researcher contacted you for a short interview?

Yes

No

## **APPENDIX D: COACHING LOG**

<p>Quarterly Report</p> <p>Reading Coach Model Grant</p>
<p><i>Please submit the following information as it pertains to the Reading Coach Model Grant on or before October 1, 2004; January 1, 2005; April 1, 2005; and July 1, 2005.</i></p>
<p>Reporting Period: _____ through _____</p>
<p>Coach's Name:</p>
<p>School:</p>
<p>District:</p>
<p>Have all professional development materials and assessment materials indicated in the Reading Coaches Model grant been purchased and received? If not, please indicate the status of these orders. Which CCRP's/SRP's are being used in your school?</p>

Required seven days of in-service provided to teachers by reading coaches: Please indicate the content covered, length of training, materials used and the number of teacher attendees.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	

**Status of student achievement to date:**

Please indicate what assessments are being used to determine student achievement progress, the interval of progress monitoring, and the data results from administering these assessments. Please provide the data disaggregated by grade level and FCAT Achievement Level. Use attachment if needed.

Additionally, please indicate what percentage of your students have deficiencies in each of the five components of reading instruction (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) based on diagnostics you have administered. Please provide these percentages disaggregated by grade level and FCAT Achievement Level. Use attachment if needed.



<b>2. Planning</b>  Planning, developing and/or preparing professional development.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total
<b>3. Modeling</b>  <b>Lessons</b>  Demonstrating model lessons in classrooms for teachers. Please indicate grade levels and subject areas.	N/A	Aug	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total

<b>4. Coaching</b> Coaching (planning conversation, observation & reflecting conversation) teachers in classrooms. Please indicate grade levels and subject areas.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total
<b>5. Coach-Teacher Conferences</b> Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, etc. Please indicate grade levels and subject areas.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total

<b>6. Student Assessment</b> Administering or coordinating student assessments. Please indicate grade levels.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total
<b>7. Data Analysis</b> Analyzing student data.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total

<b>8. Meetings</b> Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total

<b>9. Knowledge Building</b> Building my knowledge of SBRR and assessment through personal study or professional development.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total
<b>10. Other</b> List other duties as assigned.	N/A	Aug.	Sept.	Total
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
	Apr	May	June	Total
<p><b>Other pertinent information:</b></p> <p>Example-coach involvement in SIP development, additional training received, etc.</p>				

**Successes:**

Please indicate successes that have occurred in the last reporting period.

**Concerns:**

Please indicate any concerns that you have.

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

## Interview Script

Good \_\_\_\_\_:

I have contacted you for an interview to complete my study on reading coaches. I have a few short questions and, perhaps, a few follow-up questions.

This process is voluntary, and there are no known risks. Assisting with this study may benefit future research and help develop best practices on the subject of high school reading coaches.

\*Potential Interviewees will be referred to this information from the original web survey:

If you have questions about this research, please contact Don Boulware at (386) 214-1277 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership in the Department of Educational Research, Technology, and Leadership at the University of Central Florida. Her contact number is 407-823-1469. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed at UCF IRB Office at University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 302, Orlando, FL 32826-3252. The phone number is 407-823-2901.

Do I have your permission to begin the interview?

- Why did you decide to become a reading coach?
- What do you do that you believe influences student achievement the most?
- What contributes or has contributed to your success as a reading coach?
- What has impeded your success as a reading coach?
- Describe your relationship with school administration?

## **APPENDIX F: SURVEY INVITATION**

## Invitation to Reading Coach via School Principal

Dear Principal:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida, and I am researching the subject of high school reading coaches. I have attached your school district's approval letter stating permission to conduct research.

If possible, would you be able to forward this e-mail and included link to your school's reading coach? The link will bring up a web-based survey that your coach will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Anticipated benefits of this study include development of coaching best practices and contributions to research on this subject.

Dear Reading Coach:

Thank you for your time and assistance with this important project. Please follow this link to the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=50351550168>

Each school has been assigned a random code so that no school will be named in study.

Your school's code is \_\_\_\_\_. Please use this to begin survey.

Sincerely,

Don Boulware

UCF Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership

## **APPENDIX G: SUPPORT FROM OTHERS**

Question # 17	What support have you received from others in providing literacy coaching service?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Responses
1	My district's support teachers and supervisors are very supportive. We meet each month. Other Reading Coaches are very helpful.
2	
3	I have had a lot of support in learning my job and my responsibilities.
4	I work very closely with our Curriculum Resource Teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal of Instruction, and our Reading Writing Center Coordinator.
5	
6	When I make my own connections I have wonderful support. I do attend a lot of useful in-services and I am not shy about asking for help.
7	My peers in other schools have been extremely helpful in listening to problems and helping me brainstorm solutions.
8	
9	The CRT has been very supportive and the Literacy Council has been very actively involved.
10	Since I am new to Freedom I am still getting to know the faculty. My English department chair has been a tremendous help as well as the media specialist.
11	
12	My administration is highly supportive and the county regularly provides meetings and in-services.
13	
14	I have positive feedback from teachers who are using the strategies I have shared with them. They see me as a resource for ideas. i love that. Administration allows me the freedom I need to work with teachers and kids.
15	Principal is number one advocate who requires teacher to attend mandatory reading training. County reading specialist is very supportive and a great resource. School-based reading leadership team helps to access more teachers across all content areas.
17	I have two other coaches that I collaborate with on a frequent basis.
18	Monthly Reading Coach meetings
19	Reading Endorsement - Reading Coach at other local high school
20	
21	

22	
23	I have a full time assistant. I also receive excellent support from my principal and district level curriculum and professional development departments. We have a reading coach cadre that meets once a week. We have also had outside consultants and vendors provide training.
24	The reading coaches and district leadership has been tremendous. It's a great learning and support group.
25	
26	(name removed) County has a very strong support system for its coaches - monthly meetings with (name removed) are very helpful.
27	District has been very helpful in providing opportunities for training and resources
28	Support from the county, from other reading coaches, training from (name removed) provided by the county.

## **APPENDIX H: HINDRANCES**

Question # 18	What hindrances have you encountered in providing literacy coaching service?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Responses
1	Since I have only been in this position for just 3 months, I am feeling my way. This position can overwhelm you, and I am playing catch-up with tasks that should have been done one or two years ago. Our school has not had a reading coach full time until I was appointed in Jan. Sometimes I am pulled in different directions to 'help' with a wide variety of projects including FCAT testing. This takes time away from coaching, but these things must be done. By being a part of the 'team,' I grease the wheels of the machine so that I can be a part of the working operation here. I want to be able to call upon others for assistance in reading initiatives on campus. Doing these 'other' tasks will help in that, I hope.
2	
3	Time to do everything that really needs to be done
4	Finding the time to complete data analysis while also coaching teachers.
5	
6	You are sort of put into a job without a mentor for yourself. It is o.k. if you are willing to make the bridge (as I am) but many are not and flounder because of that.
7	*I do not yet have the training to be a competent coach. Much of my time is spent trying to learn expectations. *I am not comfortable in leading teachers. We meet and agree on practices - then they do whatever they want. Most teach English. *Few really want to teach reading. Most are dragged in and promised a move as space comes available. There is little buy-in to the program.
8	Lack of knowledge by faculty. The faculty was never told what my role was or what my job entails.
9	Teachers perceive it as 'evaluation'. Teachers see me as an 'expert' rather than a collaborative team member. Teachers view my coaching as 'for someone who is weak and needs help. Many faculty view the reading emphasis as a part of a cycle of faddish or 'strategy of the year' campaigning that will go away when the district and/or state shifts focus onto another trend.
10	Our school has had many teacher slots not filled so just trying to get consistent instruction has been a battle.
11	
12	Too many responsibilities and not enough time to actually coach
13-15	No Responses

16	All the testing/clerical/record keeping/meeting responsibilities force me to divide my time between classroom/teacher involvement and coaching services. Re #19 - I share office space with the school's ID-making computer. It gets crowded in here at the beginning of school and just before prom.
17	Schedules of teachers are full.
18	I feel like too much of my time this year has been devoted to organizing, administering, and monitoring the reading AIP folders.
19	Time - some teachers strictly content orientated and not open to helping students better understand content by using reading strategies
20	I feel the biggest hindrance this year was all of the assessing I ended up doing rather than the classroom teachers along with the paperwork that kept me in my office rather than in the classroom providing the support needed. Another huge hindrance we are facing is the fact that many teachers feel they are not reading teachers. I would like to reach these teachers and be able to show them the small but very beneficial changes they could make in the classrooms to enhance there subject area teaching.
21	Time....lack of...too many things to do that don't fit into the state's little boxes on the PMRN report. Things like ordering materials, testing new entries, talking to parents, unpacking and organizing materials, un-jamming the copier, looking for materials for subject area teachers....daily stuff that takes time, but somehow 'doesn't count.'
22	The hindrances are finding time to do in-service for teachers...there is so much testing and other activities going on that there is no good time for 'during the day' in-service. The same teachers do show up when I have workshops.
23	
24	teacher apathy and resistance
25	
26	Too many off-site meetings, too many demands (though related to the job) that take away from actual coaching of teachers. Also, losing my instructional assistant for the last 9 weeks of school has been devastating - I now do a lot of clerical duties.
27	Teacher resistance!!!!

28	<p>The teachers at my school are not sure about the role of a reading coach. I have offered many times throughout the year to come into their classrooms and model lessons as well as, observe them using various literacy strategies we have worked on. I have modeled for 3 teachers and only observed 2. People are not comfortable with the idea of having someone come into their classroom and observe. They still associate this with evaluation even though I tell them I am not, and they know me well enough to know I am not going to evaluate them or even let anyone know what I see. This is the most frustrating part of my job, I really want to be doing this aspect of coaching but, no one will let me in. I am trying to find ways to change this for next year.</p>
----	--

**APPENDIX I: COACHING ACTIVITIES AND EFFECT ON ACHIEVEMENT**

Question # 25	If you had to pick, which coaching activities seem to have the most effect on student reading achievement in your school?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Responses
1	I think the ones that have helped my teachers the most have been my ability to support them through curriculum development (including creating materials/units to be used in the classroom), scheduling of students, material acquisition, and modeling.
2	
3	Spending time with the teachers.
4	Teachers working together to share best practices. The coach is there to facilitate and provide input when needed.
5	Modeling Lessons Professional Development Conferences
6	I believe the modeling I do in the classrooms is quite effective - when you have a cooperative teacher. I also find it very fulfilling to meet with teachers and give them strategies to help their students. I have done this a lot and many are so grateful. I am very good at getting them supplies and materials to enhance their teaching. I work a lot one-on-one with students also. I do enjoy this and it seems to help motivate some of those who are giving the teachers a difficult time in the classroom. I may tutor them, give them incentives to finish work, behave, etc.
7	
8	Modeling Lessons
9	Co-teaching and Modeling lessons
10	Supporting the teacher in any capacity that is needed such as getting them the necessary training.
11	
12	Providing in-services and modeling in teacher's classrooms
13	
14	Teacher coaching/ conferencing. The teachers always go back and try the new ideas or strategies. Not every student buys in...but just the fact that their teacher is not doing the same old thing gets them motivated.
15	Modeling for teachers in classes and then coaching the teacher through his/her lesson planning.

	<p>Modeling lessons/observing teachers using strategies. Reinforcing reading strategies in Science and Social Studies to the point where the kids get the connection - and begin to apply the strategies to their own reading. Also, being aware of what individual teachers are covering in their curriculum and providing a variety of literacy materials to broaden their coverage. Having the students know that I'm a reading coach (I even have a tiny gold whistle that works), gives me credibility when I'm presenting in a class or just seen in the halls. Enthusiasm for all things reading helps, too.</p>
16	
17	Modeling Lessons with coaching follow-up.
18	Modeling lessons in the classroom so the teacher can then implement them.
19	Modeling Lessons Professional Dev
20	<p>Modeling effective reading strategies in a real classroom situation is very effective for both the student and the teacher. However, I have had a difficult time getting in to the teachers rooms this year. I hope to improve on this in the future. Holding Professional Development Workshops has been beneficial for the teachers at our school. I have a series of them I am currently holding. They are strictly voluntary and even though there are only a hand full of teachers taking advantage of it this year I hope to continue it and see them grow in the future.</p>
21	<p>Giving teachers strategies that are easy to use...that they can take back to class and use the next day without having to hassle preparing materials or gathering equipment. For the most part, the subject area teachers are so consumed with their content; they don't have extra time to worry about preparing reading materials. If they can take an idea and apply it easily and quickly, they will use it. I get very little feedback on what works and what doesn't...an occasional e-mail or quick chat in the hall is what I have to go by.</p>
22	<p>I think that the time I spend talking to students one-on-one when I test them is probably the most valuable. Most of them A).do not know their scores and B) do not not know what the passing score is C) do not know how to take a test. I counsel them on all three at the time that I test them.. but this is not really a coach's job.</p>
23	Specific strategies modeled and use in intensive reading classes.

24	working with classroom teachers
25	
26	Follow-up discussions with teachers after observing classes. On-site professional development (including study groups). Being available to answer questions/make suggestions.
27	Effective assessment and placement plan, professional development for teachers
28	The professional development I have provided this year.

**APPENDIX J: OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED**

Question # 26	Other List other duties as assigned. What other non-coaching activities have you been assigned?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Responses
1	Mentoring an at-risk 9th grade student group for a 15 week program. I meet with them every Friday morning for one hour. I follow up with notes during the week. I became a Ruby Payne/Framework for Understanding Poverty trainer recently. I will be part of a four person training team to train my faculty over the next two-three years consisting of my CRT, my API, and my principal. Because we have changing demographics, we believe this knowledge will be critical to the continued success of our campus.
2	
3	Testing, lunch duty,
4	Language Arts Department Chair
5	Substitute in a teacher's classroom in her absence
6	My 'other' numbers are quite high because I am also the Learning Resource Teacher. So, half of my duties reflect that.
7	before and after school supervision
8	
9	A.C.T. Supervisor
10	I spent many hours in FCAT preparation (the sorting and checking of names). Is this part of coaching?
11	
12	Provide the district with tip-sheet information Curriculum development Administrative meetings
13	I have no extra assignments that do not in some way relate to coaching.
14	I am a member of SAC and was a member of our Closing the Gap Initiative that has defaulted to our School Reform committee. I am the Reading Department Chair, on the school Leadership Council, a contact person for FCAT Explorer and SRI/RC (Scholastic Reading Inventory/ Reading Counts); and work with media specialists on programs that promote Reading; I coordinate tutoring for 11th and 12th grade summer FCAT retakes; I research and work with Guidance to schedule students appropriately into Intensive Reading classes as well as work with middle school/high school articulation.
15	Student Government Advisor Academy Coordinator Reading Department Chair
16	Morning hall duty.
17	Textbook help (minimal) Testing help (minimal)

18	I have chosen to start a student/staff reading club. I prepare our school-wide read for our Wednesday read. These activities could fall under a Reading Coach's job (above and beyond classroom modeling, etc.) These have not been assigned; I've chosen to do them to build an atmosphere of literacy on campus.
19	Assessments Progress monitoring Family Reading Nights Book Clubs
20	FCAT prep has been the most time consuming.
21	I am very lucky. They have pretty much left me alone to do my job. FCAT testing did take several days, but that's about it. On a rare occasion I will have to cover a class, but only in emergencies. My time is drained away by the sheer size of our school...we get literally hundreds of new entries (and an equal number of withdrawals) during the year. Getting those kids screened and correctly placed could be almost a fulltime job in itself.
22	very few.. but I find that I end up doing most of the screening and diagnostic testing and sending the AIP letters... the teachers want their time to teach.
23	
24	None
25	
26	I am co-chair of the English Department.
27	
28	Head of Literacy Council, Freshman Class Sponsor

## **APPENDIX K: LITERACY COACHING SUCCESSES**

Question # 27	Successes: Please describe an experience that may have influenced a teacher to make changes in the way he or she approaches reading?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Response
1	Endorsement classes tremendously impacted the way that I taught both the 110 and 55 minute blocks. It affected curriculum, materials, techniques and methods. I have been able to share that information with several of my reading teachers, as well.
2	
3	Encouraging a teacher to continue with Corrective Reading, that she can do it. That it will get easier the more she does it. Now she likes it and wants to teach it next year.
4	When our teachers participated in a model unit presented by the reading coach and Reading Writing Center Coordinator. This helped the teachers to see what can be done in reading classes.
5	Modeling of 'Reverse Mapping'
6	I work closely with the content area teachers (as the LRT). I have modeled many reading strategies. One of my social studies teachers, in particular, has begun using many of these strategies in his classroom. For example, he now uses anticipation guides, ten best words ( to focus vocabulary), etc. Giving content area teachers reading strategies to use helps them become better teachers of their subject area. The students have a better understanding of the material.
7	
8	
9	Differentiated Instruction: I met with a reading teacher who was struggling in a setting of whole class instruction. I suggested for her to break the students into three groups: Independent Reading, Focused, direct Instruction, and computer reading lab. She separated the class into 2 groups and used independent reading as a one day strategy for the whole class. She was so excited about the successes in academics and behavior! It was refreshing.
10	Introduced a novel to an ESOL class by activating their prior knowledge.
11	
12	Hearing about new ways to incorporate reading strategies and then using them in the classroom. Teachers have stopped me in the halls or in my office to tell me about their successes.
13	I have given a series of mini-FCAT workshops isolating each FCAT skill individually and suggesting strategies and classroom activities for the teachers to use. I have had a lot of feedback letting me know that these workshops were very helpful.

14	My personality lends itself to ask tough questions in a manner that is not threatening. I get them to talk and tell me what they are doing/ using. It comes very naturally. All coaches should go though 'people-skills' training. This job is more than just Reading knowledge. It is a sales job as well.
15	Staff development that has involved teachers in discussion about their own reading process. This has prompted teachers to take a closer look at how they present their material and how students deal with comprehension.
16	I concentrated on modeling reading strategies in our social studies classes this year. As a result I've seen an increase in the use of graphic organizers, the SQ3R method, and grouping. A first year teacher invited me into his classroom and we did a 'tag team' demo of a chapter in the bestseller Freakonomics. This teacher is now infusing Before, During and After Reading techniques in his lessons with great success.
17	Late Start Day Professional development. I have several teachers that are implementing strategies within their content area that they learned through this staff development.
18	
19	Modeling in the classroom helps the teachers implement reading strategies to strengthen skills within content areas.
20	I feel that I am continuing to make head way on earning the trust and respect of the teachers at (name removed). Many are seeking me out and asking for a multitude of different tasks and assistance in how to better their teaching. Lately, many non-instructional staff members (ex. Guidance counselors) have even been inquiring how to better help our students through the reading process. Our assessing process is ongoing. I feel it has been very positive and many of the teachers are really trying to learn their students' individual needs. At the beginning of the year I struggled with teachers willingness to add work stations (differentiated instruction) to there daily routines. Little by little more and more teachers are becoming and feeling successful
21	I try to be sure that the teachers in my workshops actually do every activity that I am recommending they do with their students. If they don't try them, they get too insecure to give it a go in the classroom. One particular activity we did was a small group carousel activity focusing on using a vocabulary concept map. The teachers had a great time, I hooked them up with free chart paper so they didn't have to worry about that, and gave them lots of 'hands-on' tips about how to make this work smoothly in the classroom. I got several very enthusiastic e-mails after that session and was invited into some classrooms to see the results. This activity could be applied in any content area, so everyone who attended went out of there with something they could use. It allowed the teachers to see how getting kids moving, talking, sharing, and THINKING can improve their understanding and retention. They also were shown how to use the same process for content understanding and test review... It was a big hit.

22	Some teachers have tried the vocabulary strategies that I have presented and found them to be successful.
23	I have started a reading mentoring program with our leadership class and upper level honors English classes. These students are mentoring our lowest level and ESE students in reading once a week. This has had a major impact on how our English teachers are teaching reading.
24	Several teachers have reported to me that they have tried various activities and students liked them. Some have bombed, but they may try again. Few have reported any measurable change in student learning.
25	
26	Spending a lot of time with a struggling teacher, offering suggestions, and following up with more visits and discussions. The teacher was on the verge of losing his job, but is now doing markedly better and will be keeping his job and continuing to improve.
27	
28	I provided training to the PE Department on our writing plan and showed them how they can incorporate writing into their curriculum. The weight-lifting coach at our school actually had his students do a writing assignment on the origins of weight-lifting and he shared the essay his students wrote with me and they were very good. I was impressed that even the PE department has 'bought-in' to our literacy changes.

**APPENDIX L: LITERACY COACH ISSUES/CONCERNS**

Question #28	Issues/Concerns: Do you have any issues or concerns?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Response
1	Since I have only been in this position for just 3 months, I am feeling my way. This position can overwhelm you, and I am playing catch-up with tasks that should have been done one or two years ago. Our school has not had a reading coach full time until I was appointed in Jan. We are working to 'be all on the same page,' but we are not all there yet.
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	Yes. We are trying to figure out the ESOL/reading certification question. From all of my studies (checking DOE, etc.) it seems it is recommended that ESOL teachers have reading - but not required. This is not what came down to us originally from the county office. We are still trying to clarify this.
7	
8	
9	Just about others' perception of what the reading coach does. I believe after I develop relationships, collaborate with teachers, and continue to do meaningful professional development with teachers, they'll respect me and begin to use me as a resource.
10	
11	
12	Just that there is a great deal of stress in this position.
13	Just that I feel coaches are being pulled in too many different directions. I would do a lot better about getting into classrooms if I could have a secretary.
14	I hate all of the record-keeping! We have a very transient population. It makes it hard to keep track. Also....Tier I and Tier II NEED separate course numbers from the state!!!! It is difficult to place transfer students. State Reading Fluency Probes need to get up and running for High School!!!
15	Overwhelming number of students who must be tested and monitored. Not enough reading teachers to meet student need.
16	SRI testing using an outdated network program that does not perform up to standards. Lack of any clerical support for filing folders, updating information etc. The PMRN Coach's Log has not been particularly positive.

17	I wish that reading coaches had more time to collaborate with each other about what we are doing on a day to day basis.
18	See #18
19	Amount of time to prepare professional development for late start days. We need to turn in our work to the district so that we have resources to pull from.
20	Paperwork is my biggest concern. I feel that I am not able to do as much 'Coaching' as I would like. Paperwork is taking up such a big chunk of time and there are only so many hours in the day. I have to meet the needs of the teachers, but at times trying to do this and get the paperwork completed I am in a revolving door. My top priority should be to assist the teachers to better their reading instruction in the classroom, but many times I feel I have to push that to the side and get the paperwork finished. While many of our teachers are really grasping the importance of differentiating and striving to improve their classroom, there are many teachers who are struggling and not as willing to make the necessary changes. As the Reading Coach, I am providing the support as much and as often as possible as I can. Along with making necessary changes I am still trying to stress and provide support of the importance of understanding and using the data we are continuously collecting on our students. Many teachers are struggling to understand and use the information for our students. I feel that I am continuing to make headway on earning the trust and respect of the teachers at (name removed). Many are seeking me out and asking for a multitude of different tasks and assistance in how to better their teaching. Lately, many non-instructional staff members (ex. Guidance counselors) have even been inquiring how to better help our students through the reading process. Our assessing process is ongoing. I feel it has been very positive and many of the teachers are really trying to learn their students' individual needs.
21	My biggest concern is getting into the classrooms more. I am just now getting everything else under control and am able to move my focus to the classrooms. It's hard to just suddenly start showing up in classrooms. Teachers are intimidated. I am starting by seeking invitations. I've had a few and will continue to be increasingly visible in the classrooms. I am working with the department chairs to get them to push their teachers to open their doors more.
22	I am concerned that I often feel that I am not making much of a difference. I know I am a huge support to the reading department but I find that I am doing less and less with the rest of the faculty as my reading department has grown.
23	
24	Teachers are resistant to implementing specific reading strategies. Administrative support is hugely lacking in getting coach into classrooms and holding teachers accountable for reading instruction

25	
26	All reading coaches in large high schools need an instructional assistant. Without one, coaches spend an inordinate amount of time on 'mundane' activities. Also, since coaches must be off campus a lot, the assistant is needed to 'hold down the fort' and prepare materials for the coach and teachers.
27	
28	Besides not getting to really 'coach,' no.

## **APPENDIX M: SCHOOL HAPPENINGS**

Question # 29	Did anything happen at your school this year that may weigh in on overall reading results?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Responses
1	Lack of correct placement of students by guidance. Lack of notification of teachers about reading assignments until during pre-planning.
2	
3	A combination of things, but working with the teachers trying to find ways to help the students succeed.
4	No.
5	
6	We had two wonderful reading consultants who have been coming the past few years. We also have an extremely supportive administrative team. I would also like to think that with all of this, and with me helping, our teachers were able to prepare their students to do their best on the FCAT.
7	
8	
9	The Literacy Council sponsored two major events that I believe will help reading. We sponsored a 'Get Caught Reading' campaign and put the names of students 'caught' outside of a classroom or the media center into a weekly prize drawing box. The other is an emphasis on the 15 books of Just Read, Florida -- we will have a roundtable discussion where students will discuss and cast votes for the books they like. Then we'll hold an Academy Awards show for 'Best Book' in 7 categories. Students who participate in the roundtable discussions will be formally invited to a red carpet welcome at the media center and will see the results of the books they voted for. They will also participate in prize drawings after each book is announced. Finally, there will be a grand prize drawing for one student after the 'Best Book Overall' is revealed. Everyone is excited!
10	Many classes that had too many substitutes.
11	
12	More buy in by teachers that they can help students with reading in their content areas.
13	
14	Last year the hurricanes dreadfully affected our entire student and faculty ability to cope with the stress. This year I get the sense that the students are taking it more seriously inn the 9th and 10th grades. I certainly hope so! I keep telling them that if they do great...I can retire! They won't have to deal with my craziness anymore!

15	School-wide emphasis on reading instruction and mentoring students in every content area.
16	In a word, No. We tried a variety of activities to motivate, encourage, engage our students. Between all the OVERTESTING in general and a one-size-fits-all FCAT, I think we're seeing an increased number of students disengage from the whole testing process.
17	We used a progress monitoring tool that got teachers and students to focus on individual reading strengths and weaknesses.
18	
19	Late start & teachers opening the door for modeling.
20	The major concern I have about our school and it is not just this year, it is every year is the constant entry and withdrawal activity we have. We lose a lot of instructional time with students when they are constantly coming and going.
21	We did sooooo many things to address various issues that impact scores. It will be difficult to identify which strategies were actually effective. The major thing we did was dramatically expand the reading department, build a true team of reading teachers, and increase the number of students served in Intensive Reading. We all shared strategies and ideas...it's a wonderful team. I hope that will help the scores. We also identified the lowest 30% of 9th and 10th graders so all teachers could see which students were at risk and give them more attention and support. All teachers now have access to their students' test data. We also had year-long homerooms where the teachers, for the most part, tried to build relationships with students. These were then the rooms used for FCAT testing. Kids and teachers were in familiar settings with familiar people. We also eliminated the massive groups that tested in the auditorium and broke all testing down into classroom sized groups - 20-25 kids.
22	We have increased our reading department to 12 teachers and I am sure that that will have an impact on our scores. It meant that we were able to service many more students this year.
23	We now have every level 1 and level 2 student in a reading class, over 1000 students.
24	
25	
26	More than ever, there has been a school-wide commitment to reading, with accountability for teachers to use the strategies they have been taught.
27	Student accountability for FCAT scores
28	See below

**APPENDIX N: RESTRUCTURING OR REFORM EFFORTS**

Question # 30	Is your school undergoing any major restructuring or school-wide reforms this year that may weigh in on overall reading achievement results?
Coach Number	Open-Ended Response
1	Yes, we are making decisions now about reading program adoption.
2	
3	We went through it last year with Corrective Reading. Reading in the content areas as well. Adding the word of the day.
4	No.
5	
6	Not really. We have been doing smaller learning communities for a while. However, we did more with school-wide mentoring this year. This was a very positive program. I imagine that it would have a very positive effect on the FCAT results.
7	I think the emphasis on smaller learning communities too precedence over reading classes.
8	
9	Yes -- Small Learning Community concept.
10	No
11	
12	We are placing as many level 1 and 2 students as possible in reading classes. We are also restructuring our English classes for next year to provide more reading and writing instruction. In addition, we have been training using the Ruby Payne Frameworks model as well as a focus on differentiated instruction and data driven instruction.
13	
14	I truly hope this is confidential! I feel that our school thinks they have moved on and have done a fabulous job in the past with Reading (We have the (name removed) program here.) (Them why do we have so many level 1 readers!) I cannot get them to buy in to reinstating a 'Drop everything and Read' program. The one they had was an FCAT prep task. The kids and teachers disliked it. It was not the right approach, I think. I wish the state mandated a DEAR time for every school!!!
15	Yes, we are incorporating REading Apprenticeship practices across the curriculum. (Schoenbach, 1999)
16	We went to block scheduling and SLCs. The changes have been mostly positively embraced by faculty and students. We also had over 30 new faculty members, many of whom are brand new teachers. Whether this impacts our reading achievement results remains to be seen.
17	Small Learning Communities - 9th grade center Curriculum and assessment alignment

18	Opening an Education Academy; Working towards creating small learning communities; creating a ninth grade transition team
19	Working on High School Reform
20	We are trying to really embrace the district purchases and focusing on meeting the requirements of the district and the state, placing students in the classes they should be in.
21	We are working on Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. We have established permanent homerooms to build continuing relationships. Kids will stay with the same homeroom teacher year after year. We are working on helping the faculty members to know each other better...with 175 teachers there are some you have never even seen and so build trust and opportunities to share good ideas. We had a series of 24 staff development workshops - 6 on reading, 6 on writing, 6 on classroom management, and 6 on technology...all aimed at raising achievement. We also had a few longer workshops...35 teachers attended a reading workshop before school started. We pushed some more capable kids up into more difficult classes hoping to stretch their learning. We had a Word-of-the-Day program focusing on Latin and Greek word parts and providing activities for all teachers to use in class every day. We are doing lots of things...whether they will work remains to be seen.
22	We will be implementing school wide reforms next year. We did increase our reading department this year and add another 6 sections of READ 180.
23	We are in the middle of a three year reading reserach project with FCRR and Just Read Florida. We have also instituted school wide content area training in reading.
24	
25	
26	No
27	Small learning communities
28	We have really focused on having teachers use literacy strategies in their classrooms. We are also involved in a county-wide reading project. We have created a school-wide writing plan that we began implementing in January.

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