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Patricia A. Bowman  
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MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACHES IN FLORIDA:  
A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EXPERIENCE,  
COACHING ACTIVITIES, 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 School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership  
in the College of Education  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

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2011

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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this research was to investigate and clarify the work lives of middle school literacy coaches in central Florida by studying their backgrounds and experiences before assuming the role of literacy coach. Additionally, the beliefs of literacy coaches on what factors influence reading achievement were examined. The responses of 44 participating middle school literacy coaches were used to investigate (a) the academic and professional experiences of each coach, (b) the percentage of time spent in 13 literacy coaching activities, and (c) the working factors related to student reading achievement as evidenced on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

Data from a web-based survey and personal interviews were used to collect pertinent data to create an awareness and understanding of the work lives of middle school literacy coaches. Descriptive statistics were used to present demographic information regarding the coaches. Exploratory regression analyses were performed using time devoted to coaching activities and school performance data to determine existing relationships. Qualitative analyses were used to determine emergent literacy coach themes from survey responses. All data were triangulated to develop case studies for a group of 10 literacy coaches. Narrative descriptions of all coaching and individual school data were presented in the context of schools' percentage of student subgroups that attained Adequate Yearly Progress in 2010.

The results of the study indicated that, although literacy coaches believed that modeling lessons was the most influential activity in positively affecting reading proficiency, very little of their time was spent in that activity. Recommendations

included professional development for administrators on the use of a literacy coach and for literacy coaches on their usage of time.

To my husband, Sam, who has truly been the wind beneath my wings.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Rosemarye Taylor who served as my advisor for both of my advanced degrees. She coached and challenged me to complete this process. She is, and always will be, my inspiration to continue the journey to be the most effective instructional leader that I can be. I would also like to thank, Dr. George Pawlas for not only his editing expertise but also because he always reminded me that every day is precious and should not be taken for granted. Thank you to Dr. Bryan Zugelder who would not let me fail personally or professionally. Finally, my thanks are extended to Dr. Stephen Sivo who is the most effective teacher I have ever seen. He truly leaves no student behind.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

### Introduction

In response to the national attention brought on by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Florida's Governor Jeb Bush signed Executive Order 01-260 (Executive Office, 2001) which established *Just Read, Florida!* (Florida Department of Education, n.d.). This order was a result of an understanding that reading is a critical factor in an individual's success in life and because researchers indicated that a failure to read proficiently resulted in grade retention, assignment to special education, and/or long-term assignment to intensive services. Research results were cited in the executive order indicating that only 4 of 10 students at the middle school level read on grade level. The *Just Read Florida!* initiative provided for the funding of 900 literacy coaches in Florida's public schools. The role of the literacy coach was to address the growing numbers of students who were not proficient by scoring below a level 3 as measured by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in reading. Proficient students were those who achieved FCAT levels of 3, 4, or 5. The position of literacy coach was a relatively new concept which was evolving from the traditional position of a K-12 reading specialist. Though the goal remained to increase students' proficiency in reading, this position required that the literacy coach provide training and support for teachers, rather than instructing students.

### Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 called for reform in the public school setting. School districts in the state of Florida added the position of literacy coach in K-12 public schools as a part of the 2001 *Just Read, Florida!* initiative. Thus, at the time of this study, the position of literacy coach was no longer new in Florida public schools, and yet there was a need to determine the effectiveness of the position in middle schools.

Dole (2004) reported that very few research studies had been conducted to determine the impact that a literacy coach had on reading achievement in schools. He also indicated that “this will change as more educators and researchers begin to understand their potentially critical role in professional development of teachers” (Dole, 2004, p. 468). The need for further research was also documented in a 2008 RAND Corporation Reading Group study:

While reading coaches are prevalent in many schools across the nation, there is little empirical evidence regarding the nature of coaching and its effectiveness in changing teacher practice and practically no evidence related to coaching effects on student achievement, particularly at the secondary level. . . Given the increasing popularity of coaching and its significant cost--in terms of financial and human resources--there is a critical need for research in this area. (p. 5)

As the position of literacy coach evolved and expanded throughout schools across the United States, the increase of research on their experiences emerged (Toll, 2006). However, there had been very little peer-reviewed research conducted addressing the role of literacy coaches, their work, or how they learned to improve their skills (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010).

According to an earlier RAND Reading Study Group report (2002), the results of standardized tests in reading indicated that proficiency in reading was diminishing. At

the same time the achievement gap between white students and minority students was alarmingly broad. Accountability requirements forced schools to seek new methods to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement (Schuch, 2004). In the RAND (2008) study, it was determined that reading skills for eighth grade students, particularly those in the lower and mid-range performance groups, were improving. However, it was also revealed that the gap between white students and minority students persisted. The continuing need for literacy coaches was apparent, and a focus on developing individual teachers was indicated.

The purpose and value of the position of literacy coach as it relates to student achievement was being questioned by school districts at a time when Florida was experiencing devastating budget cuts. Therefore, the problem to be studied was the relationship between how time was spent by middle school literacy coaches and changes in reading proficiency of middle school students as evidenced by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Reading for school years 2006-2010.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate several dimensions of literacy coaching. Explored were (a) the relationship between the background and experiences of middle school reading/literacy coaches, (b) the time literacy coaches engage in specific activities, (c) and changes in the percentage of students attaining proficiency as evidenced on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) of reading.

## Conceptual Framework

The study was organized to permit the investigation of three areas: (a) the demographics, academic backgrounds and professional experiences of the identified middle school literacy coaches; (b) the development of an understanding and identification of the roles, activities, and work performed by the coaches; and (c) the impact that the coaches' demographic backgrounds, academic backgrounds, professional experience, and time spent on certain coaching activities had on instruction and student achievement.

The theoretical beliefs on which the role of literacy coach was founded were that: (a) the conventional workshop that did not have an adult learning application component had less influence on practice than did professional development that was job-embedded (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Knight, 2009) and (b) coaching teachers had an impact on improving instruction as it related to student reading achievement (Sparks & Hirsh, 2000). A review of the literature on instructional coaching supported these beliefs.

### Coaching as a Model of Professional Development

The concept of instructional coaching is not a new application in professional development. Considered to be the first researchers of the concept of coaching, Joyce and Showers (1982) described the primary elements of coaching as a unique staff development model.

As a training device, coaching differs from training for skill acquisition on several dimensions. Though practice is necessary to maintain skill levels, according to Joyce and Showers (1982), feedback is critical to goal achievement:

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. (Joyce & Showers, p. 170)

Commonly referred to as peer coaching, the Joyce and Showers (1982) model was based on the idea of teachers working together to improve student achievement.

Teachers were trained on new research-based strategies that would address student needs. They would practice their skills and come together to discuss the success of the strategies for the teacher as well as the students. This reflection enabled teachers to modify and/or hone their application of the new strategies. The theory was that continual reflection and subsequent practice translated into a greater possibility of continued teacher use of the strategies. Joyce and Showers (1982) also postulated that this model not only allowed teachers to give each other technical feedback but also provided companionship and mutual support in an effort to improve instruction that would meet the learning needs of students. In their later research, Showers and Joyce (1996) found that teachers who

consistently practiced newly learned skills and strategies with each other were more effective than teachers who worked alone.

Sparks and Hirsh (2000) developed a national plan for improving staff development. They reported that there was an increasing amount of literature that supported the dependence of student achievement on improved teacher knowledge and teaching skills. They affirmed that it was what the teacher knew and what the teacher did that had the greatest impact on student learning. The authors asserted that “effective professional development must make the connection between subject matter and pedagogy” (Sparks & Hirsh, 2000, p. 5). In their review of the literature, the following were identified as characteristics of effective staff development: (a) results-driven and job-embedded; (b) focused on teachers becoming deeply immersed in subject matter and teaching methods; (c) curriculum-centered and standards-based; (d) sustained, rigorous, cumulative, and (e) directly linked to what teachers do in their classrooms (Sparks & Hirsh, 2000, p. 5). The concept of job-embedded professional development was the basis of instructional or peer coaching, as it was the act of reciprocal practice and reflection.

In their report about professional development for reading teachers, Grant, Young, and Montebriand (2001) stated that:

The concept of peer coaching and mentoring as a means of professional development was gaining favor in many school systems. Derived from a reflective practice theoretical foundation, this format provided long-term support for teachers and was integrally connected with classroom practice. (p. 23)

They stressed the importance of coaching as reflective practice with the purpose of improving instruction.

A few years later Neufeld & Roper (2003) wrote a report focused on the use of coaching in developing instructional capacity. In their report, they advocated for teacher professional development as a means of educating all students by improving instruction. They recounted the results of prior research and stated that professional development among other things “must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. 3). Neufeld and Roper (2003) also stated that coaching adhered to these principles and had been determined to improve practice.

As the concept and practice of coaching was becoming more defined and classified, Poglinco and Bach (2004) described two types of coaching in the coaching model in America’s Choice Schools: (a) in-class coaching for individual teachers and (b) small group focused professional development sessions. The activities associated with both of these types were instructional modeling, joint lesson planning with teachers, co-teaching, formal observation and feedback, informal one-on-one contact/conversations, and mentoring of new teachers (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). The authors reported that both types of professional development were effective when used together and indicated that teachers were much more apt to change their instructional practices and try new methods when the coach modeled strategies in their classroom.

Knight (2009) reported that there had been a keen interest in coaching for the past two decades. He postulated that the reason was due to the recognition that the one-stop workshop without an adult learning application was not effective. Knight (2009) identified three common coaching practices in schools at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>

century. These defined practices were: (a) literacy coaching (Moran, (2007) and Toll (2005), (b) cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston (2002), and (c) instructional coaching (Knight (2007). According to his research, all three of the practices shared the following common attributes whose goal was improved student learning:

1. There was a focus on professional practice. The purpose of coaching was to improve student achievement by improving instruction.
2. The training provided by the coaches was job-embedded. Coaches collaborated with teachers by planning together, studying content, reflecting and then putting the new learning into practice within the classroom.
3. Coaching was intensive and ongoing. Coaching was designed to meet the individual needs of each teacher. The number of interactions between coach and teacher was dependent on the needs of each teacher.
4. Coaching was based on the tenet that its function was grounded in partnership. Coaches were viewed as equal partners, and teachers lead the process in determining how the coaching proceeded.
5. Coaching was dialogical in that the conversations with teachers were reflective rather than instructive.
6. The practice of coaching was nonevaluative. Coaches did not judge teachers. Instead they engaged in conversations about quality instruction.
7. The relationship between coach and teacher was confidential. The relationship that was established between coaches and teachers would, in all likelihood, be more successful if teachers felt that they could speak openly about their concerns.
8. The practice of coaching was facilitated through respectful communication. Coaches needed to be good communicators who listened and provided thoughtful and open-ended questions to stimulate effective dialogue with teachers. Their observations of teaching should be practical and communicated with encouragement and honesty. (Knight, 2009, pp. 18-19)

Over the last several decades, the professional development model for training teachers evolved from a workshop application to a coaching model. The coaching model had been proven to promote teacher collaboration and foster professional growth resulting in improvements in teacher efficacy.

## The Literacy Coach and Instructional Leadership

As schools across the United States have implemented literacy programs to increase student achievement in reading, literacy coaches have assumed a leadership role in the change process. Researchers have indicated that improved instruction will have the most positive effect on achievement and that effective professional development is critical to success. Coaching has been combined with professional development to promote change in teaching practices.

Sturtevant (2005) defined the literacy coach as a key player and a master teacher who provided “essential leadership for the school’s entire literacy program. This leadership role included helping to create and supervising a long-term staff development process that supported both the development and implementation of the literacy program over months and years” (p. 11). These literacy leaders were responsible for guiding teachers in the use of effective and appropriate strategies, and they acted as a link between teachers and administrators in fulfilling the literacy vision.

Kemp (2005) suggested several roles for the literacy coach. One role was to “assume the role of an advisor who gave recommendations to school staff members” (p. 24). Literacy coaches promoted the utilization of research-based strategies in all classes, helped teachers develop an increased knowledge base about literacy instruction, engaged in reflective practice, and analyzed the effect on learning. Moreover, coaches helped to guide the implementation of school improvement plans with measureable progress objectives that served to move students to higher achievement levels.

Taylor and Moxley (2006) discussed the position of literacy coach in terms of leadership. They defined the literacy coach as “a teacher leader who has the responsibility to promote and enhance literacy instruction with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement as measured by reading, writing, and content learning” (p. 8).

Blase and Blase (1999) conducted a study on the characteristics of instructional leaders who positively influenced classroom teaching. Over 800 teachers were surveyed about the effective instructional leadership of principals. The data gathered from teachers determined that principals who utilized coaching as a part of their professional development plan improved teaching particularly in the area of modeling lessons. The authors concluded that the work of coaches fostered teacher growth and promoted the idea of life-long learning. It was the instructional leadership of the coaches and their principals, according to Blase and Blase (1999), that contributed to the desirable atmosphere where teachers were encouraged to collaborate and improve their instruction.

In summary, the evolution within professional development as it relates to increased student achievement began as a traditional workshop where strategies were presented and teachers were expected to return to their classrooms and implement them. Researchers did not frequently report success due to the fact that teachers were left to themselves to either struggle or fail with implementation of new learning.

Peer coaching promoted collaboration among peers. It established a practice of teachers meeting together after new learning to spend time collaborating about new strategies, effective implementation, and reflection on the results of implementation.

Later models of coaching, such as instructional coaching, cognitive coaching and literacy coaching, enhanced collaboration by focusing on new principles. These principles defined coaching as intensive, ongoing, and job-embedded. The evolution of literacy coaching proved the need for coaches to be instructional literacy leaders. Literacy coaches were not only responsible for determining the needs of students and teachers, but also acted as a liaison between administration and the teachers to further the literacy vision for their schools. The relationship between teacher and coach as non-evaluative and confidential was also recognized as important.

### The Activities of Middle School Literacy Coaches

For the purpose of identifying and measuring the activities of middle school literacy coaches in Central Florida the activity domains identified by the State of Florida were used. The Florida Department of Education identified 13 activity domains that could be measured using the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN). The identified activities included:

1. Whole Faculty Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designated to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals.
2. Small Group Professional Development: Providing or facilitating small group professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designed to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.
3. Planning: Planning, developing, and/or preparing professional development, including: surveying teachers for PD needs; preparing content for PD for teachers, parents, and others; planning a schedule of PD delivery, gathering

- PD materials; preparing a lesson for modeling and planning a coaching session with a teacher.
4. Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating lessons while teachers observe or co-teaching lessons in classrooms.
  5. Coaching: Coaching (initial conversations, observation, and reflecting conversation) teachers in classrooms which includes observing teachers, formulating feedback regarding lessons, discussing feedback with teachers, and reflecting with teachers relating to reading or content area lessons.
  6. Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, and other topics related to reading. Informally conversing with teachers in a variety of ways (phone, E-mail or fact-to-face) on topics concerning reading such as fluency building, organizing literacy centers, students in need of intervention, etc.
  7. Student Assessment: Facilitating and coordinating student assessments, including scheduling the time and place for assessments, and notifying teachers of the assessment schedule.
  8. Data Reporting. Entering assessment data into any data management system.
  9. Data Analysis: Analyzing student data to assist teachers with informing instruction based on student needs. This includes personal study of data reports, principal/coach data sessions, and teacher/coach data sessions.
  10. Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues.
  11. Knowledge-Building: Attending meetings in the school, district, or region regarding reading issues. Examples include meeting with school/district administrators or coaches, school/community groups, curriculum teams, Reading Leadership Teams, School Improvement Plan Teams, etc.
  12. Managing Reading Materials. Preparing the budget for reading materials, reviewing and/or purchasing the materials, maintaining inventory, and delivering reading materials. Also included are duties such as gathering teacher resources and organizing leveled books for classroom libraries in collaboration with school staff.
  13. Other: Time spent on other duties assigned. (Florida Department of Education, 2011, pp. 13.6-13.8)

The information gathered each year from the PMRN system was not public.

Also, when the grant program funding literacy coaches was terminated in 2008, the requirement was not enforced for literacy coaches to enter into the PMRN system their time spent on the 13 activities.

Because a primary focus of this study was to investigate how coaches spend their time and the relationship to changes in student achievement, and because there were so few studies that related coaching activities to improving student achievement, the researcher sought to link these two in her study. To accomplish this, the researcher requested permission from Boulware (2007) to modify his Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context survey. Boulware (2007) completed a similar study of high school literacy coaches. Boulware's survey was developed to gather self-reported time assessments from literacy coaches. The instrument not only collected time-on-task data but also asked open-ended questions to develop textual data sets to analyze discourse, develop themes, and to build case studies (Boulware, 2007).

### Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The measure by which schools, districts, and state are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). In order to have made AYP, a school must have 100% of its sub groups meeting established proficiency criteria in reading, writing, and math. In 2010, the proficiency criteria were 72% for reading and 74% for math.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Standardized assessment tests associated with Florida's A Plus accountability plan. One such test measures proficiency in reading

Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). A designation for students whose families qualify for free or reduced school lunch based on their average yearly income.

Literacy Coach or Reading Coach. A person assigned to the responsibility of leading and training teachers about literacy instruction with the goal of improving student achievement in reading. In this study the term “literacy coach” is used. However, the terms “reading coach” and “literacy coach” are used interchangeably depending upon the terms used in the identified studies within this proposal.

Proficient. Scores of level 3, 4, and 5 on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) indicate that a student is at or above grade level.

Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN). A data management system hosted by the Florida Center for Reading Research which captures student data and coaching activities.

Reading Coach Activity Log. In the State of Florida reading coaches are required to report their hours of time spent in each of the 13 reading coach activities on the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) every two weeks.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes middle school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2010?
2. What relationship, if any, was there between the percentages of time spent by middle school literacy coaches in coaching activities and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010?

3. What activities did middle school literacy coaches perceive as influential in increasing reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading in years 2006-2010?

### Population

The researcher invited the literacy coaches of the 61 middle schools in four central Florida school districts of Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia, to participate in the study. These school districts were selected as sources of the population because they indicated that they employed literacy coaches in their schools. An online-survey system hosted by [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) was used to collect data between February and March, 2011. A total of 44 literacy coaches completed the survey. A total of 19 of the literacy coaches who participated in the study originally agreed to personal phone interviews. Of the 19, 10 coaches were actually interviewed in April, 2011 and formed the group from which case studies were developed. The case studies were constructed using the interviewees' school performance data between 2006 and 2010 and their schools' percentages of criteria met toward AYP in 2010.

### Methods

The methodology used in this study was threefold. First, descriptive data were gathered to report the demographic and background data of middle school literacy coaches. These data were also used to build multi-level case studies around a group of selected coaches. Second, simple descriptive statistics and regression analyses were used

to measure the time spent on literacy coaching activities and school performances as evidenced on the FCAT reading assessment. Qualitative data analysis strategies were also employed in the analyses associated with survey data, interview transcripts, and individual school performance data of the selected group of the middle school literacy coaches.

### Instrumentation

#### Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey

The survey that was used in this study was the modified version of Boulware's (2007) Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context survey. His instrument was analyzed for validity of content by a panel of graduate students who provided feedback to him. The modification of the survey was based on contemporary issues that added additional domains to the activity logs of the PMRN system of 2010. The accuracy of the revised survey instrument was also reviewed by a panel of literacy coaches with whom the researcher was in contact. Data from the instrument were not used to arrive at generalizations regarding the background and experiences of literacy coaches outside of the four central Florida school districts.

#### Interview Questions and Strategies

To develop a richer and more thorough understanding of the work lives of the middle school literacy coaches in central Florida, 19 coaches volunteered to be interviewed by phone after taking the on line survey. Ten coaches were interviewed in

April of 2011. The interviews took place by phone. The specific questions, to which each coach was asked follow:

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

Qualitative data obtained from the responses to these questions were transcribed, paraphrased, and analyzed for similar and differing themes.

### Case Study Methodology

Case studies were developed using school and coach demographic data, regression analysis, survey data, and phone interviews. Anonymity was protected for all participants. No schools or school districts were named in the studies.

The case studies were constructed to describe the context in which the literacy coaches performed their responsibilities. Case study methodology permitted the researcher to use all of the collected data to present scenarios regarding literacy coaches, their activities and their perceptions of their effectiveness. According to Merriam (1998),

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. (p. 19)

Qualitative analysis software NVivo 9 from QSR International was used to determine themes and identify constructs for the multiple case studies. Themes were determined by the number of times key words or phrases were used in the answers to open-ended questions on the survey and answers to personal interview questions.

### Survey Implementation

The four school districts granted permission to conduct the study with their middle school literacy coaches. Data collection procedures were similar to those used in the Boulware (2007) study. The Dillman (2000) Tailored Design Method (TDM) was used to gather a greater sample of respondents by the use of the online survey. The invitations to participate in the survey were sent electronically with a link which provided one click access to the survey on [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com). The electronic invitations were sent to school principals in February, 2011. If principals granted permission for their literacy coaches to participate in the study, they simply forwarded the web link to them so that they could access the online survey. After three weeks, another electronic reminder was sent to principals whose coaches had not taken the survey. No compensation was given for the survey process.

### Data Collection and Analysis

School performance data were accessed through the Florida Department of Education (2011) assessment database. Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

reading data were gathered from test administrations from years 2006 to 2010. The data were analyzed for mean differences in student achievement among percentages of students over the five-year period. The primary data were the percentages of students whose FCAT reading scores met proficiency levels of 3, 4, or 5 as determined by the Florida Department of Education.

Independent data variables were based on the total percentage of time spent by each coach during the first semester of the 2010-11 school year. The data matrix was constructed, and the analyses were performed following the pattern in the Boulware (2007) study of high school coaches. Following are the principles followed in matrix construction and data analyses:

1. Once literacy coaches posted their data to the [SurveyMonkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) website, 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 devoted to particular coaching activities related to change in levels 3 and above from FCAT reading 2006-2010.
3. The regression equation used in the analysis was built around this predictive model: For every increase in the number of hours devoted to particular coaching activities, an increase in reading gains among students becomes evident.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 16.0 (SPSS) software was used to analyze the survey data. The statistical tests and analyses included multiple-regression and the appropriate verifications for regression testing. Case study methodology was used to organize the data and report interview information.

#### Data Sources

Table 1 presents the research questions, the sources of data and the statistical analyses that were used in the study.

Table 1

*Research Questions, Sources of Data and Statistical Analyses*

Research Questions	Sources of Data	Statistical Analysis
1. What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes middle school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2010?	Survey items 15-19, 27-33	Descriptive Statistics
2. What relationship, if any, was there between the percentages of time spent in coaching activities by middle school literacy coaches and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010?	Survey items 1-12, 26	Descriptive Statistics SPSS 16: Inferential Statistics  Correlation/Regression Analysis
3. What activities did middle school literacy coaches perceive as influential in increasing reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading in years 2006-2010?	Survey items 13,14, 20-25  Interview questions	Qualitative Information  Verbal Representation  NVivo 9 Qualitative Analysis software

Limitations

This study was limited by the self-reported data and interview information provided by the targeted central Florida middle school literacy coaches.

### Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to the four identified central Florida school districts who employed literacy coaches.
2. This study was delimited to middle school literacy coaches in the four central Florida school districts that were targeted in this research.

### Significance of the Study

This study endeavored to determine if the percentage of time literacy coaches devoted to working directly with teachers had a positive effect on reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test of reading for students in grades 6-8. The results of this study had the potential to add to the growing body of research regarding the value and effectiveness of a literacy coach. The results of this study could impact a principal's decision to employ a literacy coach.

### Organization of the Study

This chapter has provided an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature and related research pertinent to the problem that was the focus of this study. Chapter 3 details information about the methodology used to conduct the research. Described are the population, instrumentation, and data collection procedures. Also explained are the qualitative and quantitative data analyses methods used in the study. Chapter 4 provides the results of the data analyses. Chapter 5 contains a summary and

discussion of the findings, conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

### Summary

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the study. Included were the purpose of the study and a statement of the problem. Research questions, population, instrumentation, and data collection and analyses were briefly described. As a part of the conceptual framework, the research on literacy coaching including (a) the concept of coaching as a model of professional development and (b) literacy leadership were introduced and briefly reviewed.

## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

### Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature and research related to literacy coaching. In identifying the literature to be reviewed, the researcher used a number of books and journals to which she had direct access in her personal library because of her continued interest in this topic. The majority of the literature reviewed for the study was accessed using search tools available through the University of Central Florida library. EBSCO host and other Boolean searches were primary resources. Online journals and searches of prior dissertations were conducted using descriptors such as literacy coach, reading coach, professional development, and student achievement. The researcher also consulted with a library research assistant to ensure that her search was thorough.

This chapter has been organized to include a discussion of relevant research and literature reviewed in preparation for this study. The following five elements associated with literacy coaching are discussed: (a) the purpose and challenges of literacy coaching, (b) the background and preparation of the coaches, (c) their roles and responsibilities, (d) the relationship of literacy coaching to student achievement, and (e) time as it impacts literacy coaching.

### The Purpose and Challenges of Literacy Coaching

In her discussion, Toll (2005) described the expansion of the position and suggested that there were three contemporary purposes for literacy coaching. Teacher

remediation was the first purpose. In an era where teachers were perceived as damaged or flawed and in need of being fixed, literacy coaching focused on improving teacher performance.

A second purpose for literacy coaching, according to Toll (2005), was program implementation. Often school districts and/or schools identified programs to address the literacy needs of struggling readers. In these cases, literacy coaches were utilized to monitor the implementation of the reading programs. Literacy coaches would model the correct implementation of the program and then assist teachers with “fine-tuning their efforts” (p. 12).

According to Toll (2005), the third purpose was the preferred and more honorable motivation for using a literacy coach. That motivation was for teacher growth. Toll distinguished between teacher improvement and teacher growth, indicating that growth was self-directed and supported teachers in “meeting goals that seemed ‘right’ in the sense that it honors the worth and dignity of teachers” (p. 14).

In describing the activities of literacy coaches, Toll (2005) identified four categories of tasks completed by literacy coaches: (a) model expertise, (b) monitor, (c) serve, and (d) collaborate.

Toll (2005) described the four categories of tasks. In modeling expertise, literacy coaches modeled approaches to instruction, classroom organization and assessment. In monitoring, coaches maintained a vigil over the implementation and/or improvement of an identified program to improve literacy. This placed literacy coaches in a position of evaluation which was customarily an administrative function. In the third activity,

serving, literacy coaches were at the service of teachers and waited for teachers to approach them for assistance. Finally, collaborative literacy coaches partnered with teachers to effect and support teacher growth.

Bean (2004) identified principles that coaches should take into consideration when performing coaching activities:

1. Coaches should share plans and ideas with teachers so that they understand the process and purpose of coaching and how coaching would affect student learning.
2. Coaches should obtain teacher input- coaches must listen to teachers so that they were better prepared to address their literacy and instructional needs.
3. Coaches should provide support- for material needs and/or for teacher additional training.
4. Coaches should take time to develop trustful relationships in order to become an effective coach.

To do this, Bean (2004) suggested that literacy coaches start coaching those teachers who were enthusiastic and demonstrated their ability to maintain confidentiality. In doing so, coaches could develop a reputation that would encourage other teachers to participate in the coaching process.

The roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches have been outlined in a variety of publications. In a 2006 collaborative effort among the International Reading Association (IRA) and the respective National Councils of Teachers of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, four standards for middle school and high

school literacy coaches were established. These standards were defined to present (a) the specific leadership skills and (b) the content area related to each of the standards as follows:

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.

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. (International Reading Association, 2006, p. 5).

Standards 1, 2, and 3 established that secondary literacy coaches were to be skillful collaborators, job-embedded coaches, and evaluators of literacy needs. Standard 4 made explicit that a secondary literacy coach also be a skillful instructional strategist (International Reading Association, 2006).

In summary, literacy coaches have been charged with the responsibility of improving reading proficiency in the schools or districts where they served. Experts in the field have provided a variety of purposes for literacy coaching that included improving teacher instruction for development or growth and monitoring the implementation and progress of new literacy programs. Literacy coaches have also been advised to adhere to certain principles in order to successfully implement literacy programs and become effective coaches. The International Reading Association collaborated with the National Councils of Teachers of English, Mathematics, Science

and Social Studies to outline standards that should be met and attributes that literacy coaches should possess.

### Literacy Coach Background and Preparation

In order to be considered for the position of literacy coach, applicants needed certain skills, experiences and preparation. A national web-based survey of current middle and high school literacy coaches was conducted to gather data about (a) their educational backgrounds, (b) their teaching experiences, (c) the professional development that they received, and (d) their roles and responsibilities as literacy coaches (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2008). The survey items were based on language from the 2006 IRA standards. Although the sample size was small ( $n = 147$ ), participants at the middle school level made up 37% of the population, and 17% reported that they served both middle and high schools. Of the total number of respondents, 94% had earned bachelor's degrees in either English education, elementary education or outside the area of education. A total of 76% reported that they were certified teachers in their state, and 40% had earned a master's degree in literacy. The mean number of years in the classroom was 19, and the years of teaching experience ranged from two to 40 years. The average amount of experience teaching at the middle or high school level was 15 years. In preparing to act as a literacy coach, respondents reported receiving development in varying activities. Of the respondents, 74% reported participating in district-level professional development, 71% had completed graduate-level coursework, and 69% were prepared through professional reading (Blamey et al., 2008).

In considering the appropriate people for the position, Knight (2006) wrote that administrators must hire the “right” instructional coaches. He suggested that the applicants must be excellent teachers because they would be modeling lessons. He advised that coaches must be flexible because they would need to change their daily plans to accommodate the needs of teachers. He further advised administrators that applicants should be “highly skilled at building relationships” (p. 40) because teachers were more apt to try out what a coach suggested if they liked the coach.

Roller (2006) reported that a national survey of literacy coaches reported on hiring requirements and literacy coach duties. The electronic survey was completed by 140 literacy coaches. Of the respondents, 76% had been teachers at the elementary level, 17% at the middle school level, and only 7% at the high school level. Of the 140 respondents, 37% reported that a master’s degree was required to obtain their position, but only 19% indicated that a master’s degree in literacy or a related area was required. A total of 77% shared that they were required to have had 1-3 years of successful teaching experience to become a literacy coach. The coaches indicated that they felt prepared to carry out the activities required for their positions. Most reported that they were required to attend professional development trainings from their district or the state and that the training gave the information that they needed to feel competent (Roller, 2006).

Literacy coaches must come to the job prepared academically but they must also possess additional skills. Poglinco, Bach, Rosenblum, Saunders, and Supovitz (2003) reported on the background and experience of literacy coaches. They identified two

areas, mastery of subject knowledge and teaching skills, as having been consistently identified by administrators and coaches as necessary for coach effectiveness.

Bean (2004) suggested that literacy coaches must not only have current knowledge of literacy research and instruction and have experience as successful teachers but they must also have the ability to work with adults. This was an additional skill and one that separated the role of a coach from the normal role of the teacher.

Burkins (2007) identified qualifications (characteristics) for literacy coaches based upon personal experience as a literacy coach. She identified content expertise not only for literacy but also for adult learning. She also reported that theory and experience combined to provide coaches with the expertise they needed. Burkins also addressed the importance of relationship competence, indicating that a coach must be able to support learning and communicate respect. She reported that this was broader than “working well with people” (Burkins, 2007, p. 34) in that it was necessary to understand the teacher as a whole person, assume the best in people, foster their trust, and have an awareness of coaching limitations. Coaches, as viewed by Burkins (2007), also needed to be efficient managers of paperwork, time, schedules, funds, and materials. Finally, Burkins identified reflectivity as the most important quality because this is the “glue that shapes the other three characteristics into a permutation that will render her effective” (pp. 34-36). This reflection is the continual evaluation of self and of the work

Coaches have been expected to be able to teach adults. Cantrell, Burns, and Callaway (2009) described a study of middle and high school content area teachers that infused literacy strategies in their content area curricula. The researchers used data

gathered in interviews with these teachers to determine where literacy strategies had been successfully implemented. A total of 31 of the interviewed teachers were selected to participate in an extensive year-long professional development program developed by the Collaborative for Teacher and Learning in order to train them on teaching literacy techniques. After the training, they served as literacy coaches to all 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in six schools in a southeastern state.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade content area teachers participated in a five-day institute and were taught the five sub-domains of the program. Those domains included vocabulary development, reading comprehension, fluency, writing to learn, and writing for knowledge transfer. The new coaches assisted teachers with the transfer of their learning to practical application in the classroom by modeling lessons and acquiring the necessary materials for implementation. The coaches reduced teacher skepticism and supported the teachers throughout the implementation period. At the end of the program, teachers were surveyed and were asked to identify the specific strategies that increased specific literacy abilities. As reported by Cantrell et al. (2009), most teachers reported that vocabulary and reading comprehension were the technical skills most essential for content area learning and referred to students' "conceptual understandings of content vocabulary" (Cantrell et al., 2009) as essential for building literacy abilities. A total of 43% of the respondents mentioned student abilities to read and comprehend content area texts. Almost half of the teachers reported an improvement in student learning. Teachers responding to a survey about their coaches indicated that after observing successful modeling by on-site coaches they had a greater appreciation of the practices and

strategies, regardless of the additional time required. They frequently reported that a key factor in implementing the program was the access to the coach who helped them “increase their personal expectations regarding student ability, behavior, and success (Cantrell et al., p. 89). Coaches were viewed as accessible master teachers with content knowledge. They built a trusting relationship, and they proved themselves able to work with adults.

In most of the literature reviewed, researchers (Bean, 2004; Burkins, 2007; Knight, 2006; Poglinco et al., 2003) suggested that effective coaches had the academic background, were experts in subject knowledge, were experienced, successful teachers and were able to work with adults. However in a single-case study of instructional coaching and professional learning, Galluci et al. (2010) challenged the idea that literacy coaches were actually prepared to enter the position as “established experts” (p. 921). They questioned that literacy coaches were prepared to support those they coached. Because of the financial investments that schools were putting into literacy coach positions, the researchers wanted to examine the experiences of a novice coach who worked also as a junior high English teacher. As they suspected, the coach’s experience was a matter of on-the-job training. He was expected to replicate the model of an outside literacy expert in furthering the district’s literacy vision. His task was to “appropriate these ideas, transform them into the context of his own work and then share his new practices with others in ways that could lead to continued learning cycles” (Gallucci et al., 2010, p. 953). Because of the enormity of the task, the researchers also raised questions about how a district was to support the learning of the coach. In following the

case of the novice literacy coach, the researchers concluded that there must be adequate professional development not only for the coach but for teachers and administrators alike in order for coaching to be effective in the implementation of a literacy vision.

A study of middle school literacy coaches in Florida was conducted in 2008 and reported by McCombs and Marsh (2009). The researchers also questioned the background and preparation of literacy coaches. Principals, coaches, and teachers in 113 middle schools in eight large Florida school districts were surveyed. Although many of the respondents indicated that coaches had positive effects on them and their schools, some of the respondents questioned if literacy coaches had “enough ability to support adult learners” (McCombs & Marsh, 2009, p. 502). Several of the surveyed coaches requested more professional development on adult learning.

A synthesis of the literature regarding the background and preparation of literacy coaches indicated that literacy coaches must have certain skills, attributes and experiences. They must have the academic background and content knowledge to transfer to teachers, and they must have successful professional experience as classroom teachers to earn their respect. Literacy coaches must be able to gain the trust of those they coach, and they must have the skills to work with adults. Recent researchers (Galluci et al., 2010; McCombs & Marsh, 2009) indicated that there was a question about literacy coach preparedness and professional training in adult learning.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Literacy Coaches

A 2004 International Reading Association (IRA) brochure set the minimum qualifications for hiring literacy coaches before implementing a coaching intervention. The IRA stated that literacy coaches should meet the following minimum qualifications: (a) excel as teachers of reading, preferably at the levels at which they are coaching; (b) have in-depth knowledge of reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction; (c) have expertise in working with teachers to improve their practices; (d) be excellent presenters and group leaders; and (e) have the experience or preparation that enables them to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction for classroom teachers (International Reading Association, 2004).

The IRA recommended that only teachers who met these minimum qualifications be considered for literacy coach positions and that their professional development should be ongoing in order to broaden their knowledge and skills. It was only with this foundation that literacy coaches would understand their roles and responsibilities and be able to increase their effectiveness.

In a national survey of the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches by Blamey et al. (2008), an interesting aspect emerged. A total of 74% of respondents indicated that their roles as literacy coaches remained “undefined” (p. 318). An additional 15% reported that their roles had been determined by the district without their input. Only 11% of the respondents declared that their roles had been determined through a collaborative process between the district and the coach. As a result of the

ambiguity of the role, many of the literacy coaches reported that they spent a great deal of their time trying to create an identity (Blamey et al., 2008).

Poglinco et al. (2003) gathered data on America's Choice Design Coaching Model in America's Choice Schools. The purpose of the report was to research coaching and to recommend policy. They reported that there did not appear to be an official or written job description for the coaches in the choice schools. Coaches understood the skills they needed such as teaching experience, a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, and people-oriented skills, but several coaches indicated that not having a clear description of their roles and responsibilities made their jobs more difficult and added to the misunderstandings between administrators and school staff.

In a research synthesis and proposed research agenda, Snow, Ippolito, and Schwartz (2006) reported that the "roles and expectations of secondary literacy coaches remain less clear" (p. 36). Recognized as a challenge for a secondary literacy coach, the authors listed requisite and discretionary responsibilities and qualifications based on currently available descriptions in professional development programs to give a clearer description of their roles and responsibilities.

The roles, responsibilities and experiences of a middle school literacy coach were also examined in a research study by Calo (2008). It was concluded that there was not a consistent view of literacy coaching but rather a continuum of roles and responsibilities. Of the 51 middle school literacy coaches from around the United States who responded to the survey, 66% reported that they did not have a voice in determining their roles and responsibilities. Regarding their specific responsibilities, 90% of the literacy coaches

reported that they were involved with student assessment as often as several times a month. A smaller percentage (66%) reported that they were involved with modeling strategies at least several times a month (Calo, 2008).

Many authors and researchers have endeavored to define the roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach. Burkins (2007) listed the eight most common responsibilities of coaches:

1. Coordinate professional learning.
2. Work with teachers on instruction.,
3. Act as the literacy specialist for the entire school.
4. Manage literacy materials.
5. Participate as a member of the school community.
6. Manage the literacy data.
7. Act as a constant student of literacy and of life.
8. Manage time and resources as an employee of a school district. (pp. 30-32)

Taylor, Moxley, and Boulware (2007) discussed the complexities of the roles of literacy coaches. Clearly defined roles by literacy coaches had a tendency, according to these authors, to include a mixture of roles. These roles called for coaches to: (a) use model research-based literacy strategies, (b) model reading intervention, (c) provide literacy professional development, (d) model collaboration, (e) lead professional learning community, (f) have people skills, (g) assist with data analysis, (h) assist teachers with using data to make ongoing instructional decisions, (i) engage parents and community in the literacy process, and (j) monitor progress in literacy learning.

Walpole and McKenna (2004) agreed that literacy coaches must have knowledge of reading instruction, diagnosis, and assessment. They noted, however, that this knowledge alone was insufficient. The authors argued that literacy coaches must also be continual learners, grant writers, planners, researchers and a teacher at the same time.

They reported that literacy coaches were continually directing improvement within the school, district and state.

Literacy coaches work with teachers to strengthen literacy strategies. Kemp (2005) suggested that the primary roles of a literacy coach were:

- 1) resource person who knows the research, the programs, the strategies and the assessments.
- 2) facilitator who provides assistance and guidance as teachers develop a repertoire of literacy strategies.
- 3) presenter who explains and demonstrates strategies and programs.
- 4) adviser who gives recommendations to school staff members.
- 5) mentor who demonstrates the ability to share knowledge and experience with colleagues effectively and to promote peer collaboration. (p. 24)

Sturtevant (2005) reported the responsibilities of literacy coaches were to (a) lead literacy teams, (b) guide teachers in using appropriate strategies, and (c) liaise with teachers and administrators. She suggested that the coaching role was “highly collaborative” (p. 12) and that they must be viewed by teachers as one who understands teachers’ “goals, frustrations and vision--not as supervisors who evaluate their performance” (p. 12). Coaches must be “highly knowledgeable in reading and literacy” (p. 12). They must be “highly regarded by content area teachers” (p. 12), and they must understand the secondary culture and student. They also must develop the skills necessary to “effectively collaborate with adults on a professional basis” (p. 12).

Feger, Woleck and Hickman (2004) reported that the coaching skills, strategies and supports needed to be successful were:

1. Knowledge and skills
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Content knowledge
4. Pedagogical knowledge
5. Knowledge of the curriculum

6. Awareness of coaching resources
7. Knowledge of the practice of coaching (p. 15).

Gerardi (2005) surveyed seven literacy coaches in Los Angeles' District 7 who were working through the UCLA university based research center (Center X). Gerardi documented an evolution of the role of literacy coach from the initial stage of building rapport to the final stage of content literacy. According to Gerardi, a literacy coach must focus on creating trustful relationships with teachers and administrators. In her research, the novice coaches spent their first year establishing that rapport. Veteran coaches, once that trust had been established, were able to focus on whatever was necessary to assist teachers with improving their practice.

Blachowicz, Obrochta, and Fogelberg (2005) reported that an urban school district improved their literacy achievement from 55% in 2000 to 80% in 2003 by utilizing a coaching model for change. The major role of the coach was to provide professional development and assist teachers with the implementation of new literacy strategies. This included in-class training, modeling of lessons and providing support to teachers. The authors offered several strategies to develop an effective literacy coach model based on the model used by the urban Chicago district. One strategy was that coaches should use a variety of coaching options: strategy coach, guide on the side, and observation aide. A strategy coach modeled a literacy strategy for a teacher, discussed the strategy, assisted the teacher in planning to use the strategy in a lesson and then conferenced with the teacher to reflect on that lesson. The guide on the side sat with students who may have difficulty with the strategy. This enabled the teacher to apply the strategy without having to monitor that group of students. Observation aide was used in

three forms. First, the teacher observed the coach modeling and wrote observation notes to share after the lesson. Second, the coach observed the teacher and provided feedback. Third, the teacher observed the students and took notes while the coach was modeling.

Puig & Froelich (2011) added a contemporary role to those already performed by literacy coaches. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) focused on an alternative method of identifying student needs in the form of Response to Intervention (RtI). Literacy coaches were now obligated to take into consideration not only targeted reading interventions but also literacy acquisition and instruction in the content areas. The depth of instruction was dependent on the tier level of the targeted students.

The clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach must be agreed upon by administrators and understood by teachers. If there is no understanding between which coaching activities affect student achievement, the literacy coach may spend more time on activities that are not associated with gains in reading proficiency (Taylor & Moxley, 2008).

In identifying the activities performed by a Florida literacy coach, The Florida Department of Education identified 13 activity domains that could be measured through the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN). In a Reading Coach Activity Log found on the PMRN user's website, the coach was required to enter how much time was devoted to the following activities:

1. Whole Faculty Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designated to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals.
2. Small Group Professional Development: Providing or facilitating small group professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designed to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.
3. Planning: Planning, developing, and/or preparing professional development, including: surveying teachers for PD needs; preparing content for PD for teachers, parents, and others; planning a schedule of PD delivery, gathering PD materials; preparing a lesson for modeling and planning a coaching session with a teacher.
4. Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating lessons while teachers observe or co-teaching lessons in classrooms.
5. Coaching: Coaching (initial conversations, observation, and reflecting conversation) teachers in classrooms which includes observing teachers, formulating feedback regarding lessons, discussing feedback with teachers, and reflecting with teachers relating to reading or content area lessons.
6. Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, and other topics related to reading. Informally conversing with teachers in a variety of ways (phone, E-mail or fact-to-face) on topics concerning reading such as fluency building, organizing literacy centers, students in need of intervention, etc.
7. Student Assessment: Facilitating and coordinating student assessments, including scheduling the time and place for assessments, and notifying teachers of the assessment schedule.
8. Data Reporting. Entering assessment data into any data management system.
9. Data Analysis: Analyzing student data to assist teachers with informing instruction based on student needs. This includes personal study of data reports, principal/coach data sessions, and teacher/coach data sessions.
10. Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues.
11. Knowledge-Building: Attending meetings in the school, district, or region regarding reading issues. Examples include meeting with school/district administrators or coaches, school/community groups, curriculum teams, Reading Leadership Teams, School Improvement Plan Teams, etc.
12. Managing Reading Materials. Preparing the budget for reading materials, reviewing and/or purchasing the materials, maintaining inventory, and delivering reading materials. Also included are duties such as gathering teacher resources and organizing leveled books for classroom libraries in collaboration with school staff.

13. Other: Time spent on other duties assigned  
(Florida Department of Education, 2011, pp. 13.6-13.8).

The Florida Department of Education indicated an expectation for literacy coaches to spend 50% or more of their time working with individual teachers observing instruction, providing feedback on instruction, and modeling lessons. The 2008 RAND Reading Group study indicated that only 15% of coaches reported spending at the most one-third of their time working with individual teachers.

#### Literacy Coaches and Student Achievement

In the RAND Reading Study group (2008) on the effectiveness of Florida literacy coaches, the researchers conceded that the effect of school-based literacy coaches on student achievement as evidenced on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test was “mixed” (p. 177). Student cohorts in 2003 and 2005 demonstrated a small but significant increase in reading achievement; however, there was not a significant difference for the 2004 and 2006 student cohorts (RAND, 2008). In this study, it was reported that literacy coaches believed that time working one-on-one with individual teachers yielded the greatest effect on reading scores (RAND, 2008).

In 2010, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that the 2009 national average reading score for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students was one percentage point higher than was reported in the 2007 assessment. In the state of Florida, the difference was more pronounced by a four percentage point increase. The percentage of proficient students from 2007 to 2009 rose from 71% to 76% (National Assessment, 2010). The question arose as to whether this improvement could have been a result of the

proliferation of literacy coaches in the state of Florida. At the time of the present research, few studies had been completed directly connecting student achievement with literacy coaching. There were, however, studies that were conducted to examine teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Rasmussen (2005) examined the effect of literacy coaches and their work with teachers on the reading achievement of sixth grade students. The results of the study did not provide evidence of a statistically significant improvement in reading scores. The researcher provided an explanation that time on coaching activities was minimal and that there had been insufficient time to study and determine long term success.

Smith (2006) studied the relationship between coaching activities, teacher learning, and student reading achievement. Smith discovered that there was little impact on student achievement and espoused the idea that middle school literacy coaches devoted more time to other school activities that were not related to coaching teachers.

A state-wide analysis of the effects of Florida's coaching initiative on middle school reading achievement from the 2002-2003 school year through the 2005-2006 school year was conducted by Lockwood, McCombs, and Marsh (2010). They used the “annual achievement data from 1998 through 2006 aggregated to the school-by-grade level as outcomes in regressions on school-by-year coaching indicators provided by Just Read, Florida! and a variety of control variables” (p. 376). The results of the analysis were mixed, but it was suggested that coaching may have had the greatest impact on the lowest performing schools possibly due to the fact those schools had coaches for a longer period of time.

In Florida, individual schools in Lake County Public Schools that made the most gains in reading had literacy coaches who spent a majority of their time with teachers in providing professional development, modeling, coaching, and conferencing. The coaches also used data to improve instruction (Taylor et al., 2007). Gains in FCAT reading achievement were marked by the reduced numbers of non-proficient students in the lowest quartile of students tested and the percentage of students making annual learning gains in each quartile.

Because previous studies linked teacher efficacy and student achievement, Cantrell and Hughes (2008) studied the relationship between teachers' perception of their self-efficacy in teaching literacy strategies and their ability and willingness to address student struggles with literacy in the content areas. Their data suggested that year long professional development using a coaching component was an integral part of developing teacher efficacy. Teachers were given a teacher efficacy survey on the first day of the program and again at the culmination of the project. Teachers were also interviewed. This resulted in an additional qualitative dimension in the study. In the survey, teachers revealed a strong sense of teacher efficacy between the first survey and the final survey in the spring. The findings from the interviews suggested that teachers believed that coaching was an integral part of their feelings of efficacy. This was due to the implementation of the techniques by modeling the strategies, observing lessons, and providing feedback. Teachers also reported that coaches provided resources and helped to develop lessons.

It has been suggested that coaching as a model of professional development may have an impact on student achievement by improving teacher efficacy (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Taylor et al., 2007). Coaching activities contributing to teacher efficacy included modeling strategies, observing, and conferencing with teachers.

### Time and Literacy Coaching

Literacy coaches have multiple roles and responsibilities. Because of the complexities of their positions, the element of time must be considered to determine the effectiveness of coaching as it relates to student achievement. O'Connor & Ertmer (2003) examined the perceptions of four literacy coaches in a Midwestern metropolitan school district. These researchers sought to determine the coaches' perceptions regarding the success of the school district's literacy initiative. All four coaches reported the need for administrative support, particularly in relation to time. Three of the coaches mentioned that they needed to allot their time differently in order to spend more time with teachers rather than in their weekly training sessions.

In the study of the coaching model in America's Choice Schools, Poglinco et al. (2003) reported that coaches believed that the "single most significant barrier to effective coaching was time" (p. 41). The coaches reported that they were often pulled in different directions and this was particularly prevalent at the middle school level. Coaches who worked for administrators who recognized this time constraint reported that they were more likely to be given fewer duties.

Gerardi (2005) surveyed seven literacy coaches in Los Angeles District 7 who were working through the UCLA university based research center (Center X). These coaches, too, reported that too much of their time was committed to meetings which often took them away from coaching.

Moxley and Taylor (2006) reported on a survey of 35 coaches in a Florida school district. The coaches reported that much of their time was spent on reading assessments and the management of data. Although this was a responsibility of the literacy coach, they believed that too little time was concentrated on working directly with teachers.

In a report to the Kauffman Foundation on school-based staff development, Brady (2007) reported on the results of a study based on a focus group of 13 K-12 coaches in a Kansas City, Kansas public school system who were selected by their peers and administrators. This focus group identified the top 10 problems of the school-based coach. Among the top 10 problems were “managing time and multiple priorities” (p. 49).

Roller (2006), the Director of Research and Policy for the IRA, reported on the 2005 results of a literacy coach survey on hiring requirements and duties. The report stated that coaches each were involved for two to four hours a week in observation, demonstration teaching, and discussions after lessons. A total of 49% of coaches indicated that assessment and instructional planning required four to five hours a week of their time. They reported that they spent less than one hour a week in planning specific lessons with teachers.

In the Calo (2008) study, only 40% of the 51 literacy coaches surveyed reported that they coached their peers as often as several times a month. Although this study did

not focus on time spent on tasks, narratives of the selected middle school literacy coaches revealed that time was a scarce resource. Time was the biggest obstacle mentioned in the survey responses. For 29% of respondents, time was an issue. Time was divided into several areas: general time constraints (15%), time in classrooms (4%), time working with teachers (3%), time with students (3%), time to read current research (3%), and time networking with other coaches (1%). Participants reported it was difficult to

find time to work effectively with those who volunteer. . . having time to be in classrooms and to work with teachers. . . lack of time to model lessons especially with new teachers. . . finding time to work closely with teachers and students. . . time to meet with staff to plan and discuss curriculum. . . time to create, organize and order materials and be in the classrooms. (Calo, 2008, p. 100-101)

Calo (2008) selected 7 of the 51 middle school literacy coaches for in-depth interviews regarding their roles and responsibilities and the support they received in being able to successfully complete their tasks. One coach indicated that working with new teachers on literacy strategies meant focusing on “quick things because they’re busy and I’m busy, so something that I can teach them that they can use” (Calo, 2008, p. 79)

Another coach reported,

The time with the amount of people is the hardest thing. Just trying to meet the needs of everybody. We have a lot of needs. We have teachers who are seasoned teachers, but there are new things coming down the pike, so they still have needs. So I mean it’s really hard. We have 171 staff members. It’s incredibly hard. It’s very hard. . . I try to help a lot of people, so it runs you pretty thin. (Calo, 2008, p. 109)

Lack of time was reported by 6 of the 7 literacy coaches who were interviewed in Calo’s (2008) study. Consequently, she identified time as one of the most significant challenges that middle school literacy coaches face.

Shidler (2009) reported on her three-year study to determine the impact of coaching time on student achievement and teacher efficacy. In reporting her results, she concluded that there was a significant correlation between coaching time and student achievement in year one but that in years two and three there was not a significant impact. She summarized as follows: “The results of this study and findings of others imply that more time on coaching is not always better. It is the type and quality of the interaction that becomes the deciding factor” (Shidler, 2009, p. 459).

In his dissertation research, Boulware (2007) investigated the relationships between background and time for 36 high school literacy coaches in four central Florida school districts and the effects these factors had on reading achievement. He reported that Florida high school literacy coaches believed that the modeling of literacy strategies was one of the most useful and influential activities and had a positive impact on reading achievement. He also indicated that very little time was devoted to that activity. Boulware’s (2007) discussion of time was particularly relevant for the present study.

The surveyed literacy coaches reported that they allocated more time to other activities than any activity associated with student achievement in reading. The mean percentage of time spent in other activities was 14.75%. Modeling of lessons and coaching were at the bottom of the list. The mean percentage of time for modeling was 7.4%. For coaching, it was 6.77%. In his regression analysis, coaching demonstrated the strongest relationship, R square (.039). This was, however, a weak explanation for variance (Boulware, 2007, p. 65). Boulware concluded that the allocation of time was not aligned with established priorities to positively impact reading achievement.

McCombs and Marsh (2009) observed that Florida literacy coaches indicated that working one-on-one with teachers occupied a significant amount of their time, but only 15% of the coaches surveyed reported that up to 30% of their time was devoted to one-on-one activities. This was well under the Florida state goal of 50% of time being dedicated to working with teachers in their classrooms. Coaches cited a “lack of time to get into classrooms due to the demands of coordinating and administering assessments” (McCombs & Marsh, 2009, p. 503).

All of these studies addressed the time that literacy coaches devoted to specific activities. Results indicated that literacy coaches, teachers, and administrators believed that the greatest impact on student achievement was a result of the one-on-one time literacy coaches dedicated to working with individual teachers. It was indicated, in all of the research results reviewed, that literacy coaches devoted less than half their time to activities that focused on working individually with teachers.

### Summary

In the first section of this chapter, literature and research focusing on the purpose and challenges associated with literacy coaching were reviewed. The position of literacy coach was created to improve teacher performance by monitoring program implementation and/or working with individual teachers so they grew in their knowledge and further developed their skills.

Experts in the field (Bean, 2004; Blachowicz et al., 2005; Burkins, 2007; Calo, 2008; Kemp, 2005; Sturtevant, 2005; Taylor et al., 2007; Toll, 2005) have identified the

most common activities of coaches as modeling instruction, monitoring programs, serving, and collaborating with teachers. According to these researchers, principles that coaches should follow when performing their responsibilities were to explain the purpose and process of coaching and how it affected student achievement. They should ask for teacher input, provide support and develop trusting relationships with teachers.

Agreed upon standards for literacy coaches were developed by the International Reading Association in conjunction with the National Councils of Teachers of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies (International Reading Association, 2006). The desired standards were that literacy coaches were to be skillful collaborators, embedded coaches, evaluators of literacy needs, and instructional strategists.

In the second section of the review, the background and preparation of coaches were discussed. Coaches have assumed their duties with a variety of professional backgrounds and degrees of preparation. Experts in the field advised that potential candidates should have experience as model teachers and that they should be skilled at building trustful relationships (Bean, 2004; Burkins, 2007; Gerardi, 2005; Knight (2006), Poglinco et al (2003). They must have a significant amount of background knowledge or expertise in reading and also in adult learning. Results from surveys and reports indicated a need for ongoing and continual professional development for coaches so that they would be more effective in their positions (Blamey et al., 2008; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Roller, 2006).

In the third section of the review, in which the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches were discussed, a significant number of literacy coaches reported that

their roles were nebulous and often misunderstood not only by themselves but by administrators and teachers. Efforts to identify the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches have been made so that all had a greater understanding of what could be accomplished. Agreed upon common roles were that coaches would model strategies, provide professional development, and analyze data. The roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches must be agreed upon and understood by administrators and teachers particularly so that coaches can spend their time in activities that are closely associated with student achievement.

In the fourth section of the review, literacy coaching was discussed in terms of its relationship to student achievement. Few studies were found that linked literacy coaching with student achievement. A 2008 RAND study indicated that a very small percentage of coaches spent up to one third of their time in those coaching activities, and results of their impact on student achievement were mixed. However, a 2010 NAEP report highlighted the pronounced increase in the 2009 reading proficiency of eighth grade students in Florida. The report also indicated an increase in reading proficiency for students who qualified for either free or reduced lunch (FRL). A decrease in the gap between eligible and ineligible students from years 2007 to 2009 was noted.

The element of time as it related to literacy coaching was reviewed in the fifth and final section of the chapter. Repeatedly cited in research findings was literacy coaches' inability to spend a significant amount of time coaching teachers because of other demands, many of which had nothing to do with coaching. Activities identified by the state of Florida that were most likely to impact student achievement were those that

required coaches to work one-on-one with teachers such as observing instruction, providing feedback and modeling instruction. Florida had set a goal that coaches would spend at least 50% of their time on those activities. In the research reviewed for this study, time was one element that was of concern and continued to be voiced by literacy coaches and researchers.

The literature and research related to the problem of the study have been reviewed in this chapter. Chapter 3 contains the methodology used to conduct the research. The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 4. A summary, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations are offered in Chapter 5, the concluding chapter of the dissertation.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter contains the description of the procedures used to collect data from middle school literacy coaches in four central Florida school districts. Included are the problem statement, population, and research questions. Also reported is information related to the instrumentation used in the study, procedures employed in data collection and the statistical analysis associated with each of the three research questions.

### Purpose of the Study

This study, focused on middle school literacy, was based on an earlier study conducted by Boulware (2007) entitled *High School Literacy Coaches in Florida: A Study of Background, Time, and Other Factors Related to Reading Achievement*. This study, a near replication of the Boulware (2007) study, endeavored to examine background, professional experience, time and other factors that impacted reading achievement at the middle school level by surveying and interviewing middle school literacy coaches. Case studies were also developed to create models and examine school level data and demographics by using qualitative data about middle school literacy coaches.

### Population

The intended population of this study was comprised of the 61 middle school literacy coaches in the central Florida public school districts of Orange, Osceola,

Seminole, and Volusia County School Districts. Although there were 66 middle schools in the target districts, only 61 indicated that they employed full time literacy coaches. No special centers or pure magnet schools were considered. Thus, the total population was 61.

In researching the 61 middle schools in the four districts with full time literacy coaches, no middle school received less than a grade of C, as determined by the Florida Department of Education's Office of Assessment and Accountability, for this test administration year: 41 (67.2%) of the schools received a grade of A, 13 (19.7%) received a grade of B, and 7 (11.4%) received a grade of C. Of the 10 coaches interviewed, eight of their schools received a grade of A, and two received a grade of B. Only one of these schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In 2010, only two schools of the 61 middle schools in the four central Florida school districts made AYP. Of the 61 coaches who were contacted, 44 responded to the survey for a final return rate of 71.2%.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions designed to support the study's mission to examine the work of middle school literacy coaches:

1. What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes middle school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2010?

2. What relationship, if any, was there between the percentages of time spent in coaching activities by middle school literacy coaches and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010?
3. What activities did middle school literacy coaches perceive as influential in increasing reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading in years 2006-2010?

### Instrumentation

#### The Florida Middle School Literacy Coach Survey

With the author's permission (Appendix A) The Florida Middle School Literacy Coach Survey was modified from the Literacy Coach Engagement and Work Context Survey used in the Boulware (2007) study. The modified survey for middle school literacy coaches added questions that were based on more contemporary issues which had arisen since the Boulware (2007) study. These issues were determined based on more recent research in the area of literacy coaching. The Middle School Literacy Coach Survey (Appendix B) used in the present research was organized into three parts. Part 1 of the survey, Coaching Activities, was designed to elicit responses to open-ended questions regarding coaching activities, opinions of successes, impediments to coaching, and the coach's school environment. Part 2, Coaching Activities and Time, was developed based on the activity domains found in the PMRN reading coach log. Coaches were requested to enter the percentages of time that they devoted to each of the 13

activity domains during the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year. Part 3, Literacy Coach Demographics/Academic and Professional Background, provided an opportunity for coaches to share demographic background information, professional experience, and their preparation for their roles as literacy coaches. The Dillman (2000) Tailored Design Method (TDM) was used to gather a greater sample of respondents by the use of the online survey. According to Dillman, “Tailored Design is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce both high quality information and high response rates” (p. 29). Dillman’s principles were used in the development of the online survey. The use of web-surveys over email or paper questionnaires was discussed by Dillman as follows.

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. They can be designed so as to provide a more dynamic interaction between respondent and questionnaire than can be achieved in e-mail or paper surveys. Extensive and difficult skip patterns can be designed into Web questionnaires in ways that are mostly invisible to the respondent. Pop-up instructions can be provided for individual questions, making it far easier to provide needed help with questions exactly where that assistance is required and without having to direct the respondent to separate set of instructions. Similarly, drop-down boxes with long lists of answer choices can be used to provide immediate coding of answers to certain questions that are usually asked in an open-ended fashion in paper questionnaires. (p. 354)

### Literacy Coach Interviews

The final question on the online survey invited literacy coaches to volunteer to participate in a phone interview with the researcher. A total of 19 coaches initially indicated that they could be reached for a personal interview by providing an affirmative answer and providing their contact information. Only 10 coaches, however, were

actually reached and interviewed. These coaches formed a focus group around which case studies were eventually constructed.

The 19 literacy coaches who indicated their willingness to participate in phone interviews were initially contacted by the researcher via email. Four coaches did not respond to any email or additional phone requests to participate in the personal interviews. Five of the coaches responded to the first email; however, they did not respond to further email or phone requests to arrange an interview. The telephone interviews were conducted between April 20, 2011 and May 3, 2011 and were conducted during the work day or in the evening depending on the preference of the literacy coach. The 10 coaches who could be reached were interviewed to further examine their background and work activities.

The purpose of the telephone interviews was to give coaches a greater opportunity to describe their work lives and to express their opinions as to their actions which had the greatest impact on student achievement. The 10 literacy coaches were asked five questions pertaining to their opinions and their work as a literacy coach, and interviews ranged from 20 to 25 minutes in length. The researcher used a standard script (Appendix C) to conduct the 10 interviews. The researcher explained the purposes of the interview to each participant as (a) expanding on information provided in the online survey, and (b) contributing to the research and helping to develop best practices regarding middle school literacy coaches. Interviewees were assured that there were no known risks in their participation, that their anonymity would be maintained, and that the information they

shared would be held in strict confidence. The five questions that were asked of each of the 10 middle school literacy coaches who were interviewed were as follows:

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

The coaches interviewed came from middle schools that had earned state-assigned school accountability grades of either an A or B based on results of the 2010 administration of the FCAT. Of the 10 coaches interviewed, eight were from “A” rated schools and with student free and reduced lunch (FRL) populations that ranged between 23% and 85%. Of the 2010 “A” rated schools, two schools had risen from a “B” in 2009. The coaches from the two “B” rated schools had student FRL populations of 75% and 85%. One school with a 2010 “B” rating had risen from a “C” the previous year. Only one of the 10 schools from which literacy coaches were interviewed made AYP in 2010. No school made AYP in 2009.

#### Case Studies

Case studies were based on school and coach demographic data, the regression analysis, survey data, and the telephone interviews of the 10 coaches interviewed. The case studies were constructed to describe the context in which the literacy coaches

performed their responsibilities. Case study methodology permitted the researcher to use all of the collected data to present scenarios or themes regarding literacy coaches, their activities, and their effectiveness. Merriam (1998) explained that

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)

### Data Collection

After receiving permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Central Florida (Appendix D), permission was requested from the four targeted school districts to conduct this study. Once permission to conduct the study was granted from the four target central Florida districts (Appendix E), surveys were sent to literacy coaches through electronic means between January and March 2011. Principals were the initial point of contact. By forwarding the email and attached letter (Appendix F) to coaches, principals agreed to allow their literacy coaches to participate in the study. The letter to coaches attached to the email explained the purpose and any known risks of the study and also provided contact information for the coaches to get further information from the researcher and/or the university committee chair of the study.

Once the literacy coaches agreed to participate in the study, they followed the online link to [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) to access the Florida Middle School Literacy Coach Survey. Potential respondents were led to an opening page where they were asked to give their formal informed consent to participate in the study (Appendix F). Also, in this section, coaches entered a unique school code which identified their school to the

researcher. Each school number was known only to the researcher, and the anonymity of respondents was ensured.

Initial contact with the 61 middle school principals occurred in January of 2011, and a total of 23 literacy coaches submitted their online surveys in response to the first request. Second and third requests for response to the survey were sent to principals in February and March, 2011 (Appendix G). At the conclusion of the data collection period, a total of 44, 72.1% of the population, had submitted an online survey. Of the 44 responses, 41 coaches completed the entire survey, bringing the usable return rate to 67.2%. Data from the 41 surveys comprised the data set available for quantitative analysis in the research.

The survey instrument used in this study was hosted on the [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) website which facilitated access for participants and the researcher in regard to data entry. The survey link and identifying school code were sent to principals to forward to their literacy coaches. Participating coaches simply clicked on the link, gave their informed consent, entered their specific school code and proceeded to respond to the survey items. The site maintained the information input by the literacy coaches and also sorted and averaged the data.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data from the online survey, the personal interviews and school data were gathered and used in the development of group case studies.

Survey data submitted by middle school literacy coaches was obtained between January

and March, 2011. School accountability grades, FCAT reading achievement data, and individual school demographic data for years 2006 through 2010 were obtained from the Florida Department of Education website in April of 2011. These data were organized with the use of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

#### Data Analysis for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 addressed the descriptive data describing the demographics and the academic and professional backgrounds of each middle school literacy coach who participated in the study. The data were organized into tables to present the background characteristics of the literacy coaches. Tables were accompanied by descriptive narrative statements to further explain the results of the analysis.

#### Data Analysis for Research Question 2

For Research Question 2, SPSS 16.0 statistical software was used to apply simple and multiple regression models showing the relationship between the factors or predictors of the data sets and changes in school reading proficiency. The percentage of time that each literacy coach reported in the key PMRN coaching activity domains of modeling, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences were placed in a regression equation with the percentage of proficient reading students (%AL3±) from FCAT administration year 2006 along with the change in proficiency from the 2010 (%AL3±) administration.

Data regarding time were extracted from the 41 usable surveys and entered into SPSS for each of the 13 PMRN coaching activity domains. The difference between the

percentage proficient between 2006 and 2010 was calculated manually and entered into a final column on the SPSS spreadsheet. The change between the administration years for each school was matched to the time entered by their literacy coach for each coaching activity. The data were checked for accuracy prior to subjecting it to further statistical analyses.

Three multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between selected coaching activities and changes in FCAT reading performance on three different metrics at the school level. These selected coaching activities, which served as independent variables for all the models, included the percentage of time respondents claimed to be involved in modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences. Dependent variables included (a) percentage proficient, (b) percentage making learning gains, and (c) percentage of students making learning gains within the lowest quartile. Separate models were run for each dependent variable. Assumptions for outliers, multicollinearity, linearity, normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance were checked and there were no apparent issues.

### Data Analysis for Research Question 3

Factors that literacy coaches indicated had an effect on reading achievement at their schools was the focus of Research Question 3. The data were obtained from the Florida Middle School Literacy Survey, interviews with literacy coaches, and school demographic and proficiency information obtained from the Florida Department of

Education (2011) website. These data were reviewed for common attributes and further analyzed in constructing case studies for three school groups.

A critical aspect of designing the case studies was the coding of survey and interview data to build themes. Coding was a key analytical tool in this study. As detailed by Stake (1995), “Coded data are obtained primarily from categories dividing a variable (p. 29). Stake (1995) described a “tally system” (p. 30) and the purpose of using coded data as being the classification of “whole episodes, interviews, or documents, making them more appropriately retrievable at a later time” (p. 32).

In reviewing the responses to the open-ended questions contained in the online survey and the data obtained via telephone interviews, common themes were initially identified and coded. Identified themes were subsequently studied using sophisticated NVivo software from QSR International. As in the Boulware (2007) study, this software was used to code, designate, and analyze text.

Gibbs (2002) described the design of an earlier version of NVivo. He described NVivo 7 as “strongly influenced by grounded theory and therefore the program give good support for the method” (p. 165). He defined grounded theory as follows:

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. (Gibbs, 2002, p. 165)

The following abilities and features of the NVivo software were described on the 2007 QSR International website.

- NVivo’s powerful query tools let you uncover subtle trends, and automated analysis features let you sit up above your data and drill down into it. For

example, search for an exact word or words that are similar in meaning to quickly test theories

- NVivo lets you track your ideas and steps with ease. Use annotations to jot down your thoughts, create memos to capture detailed observations or use links to ‘glue’ items with similar themes together. (QSR International, 2007)

NVivo 9 software was used to code, designate, and analyze the text from survey items 13 (support), 14 (hindrances), 20 (influence of coaching activities, 21 (other duties), 22 (successes), 23 (issues or concerns), 24 (school events), and 25 (school restructuring). Significant themes such as time and other duties that influenced student achievement were determined by running queries across all of the text from these eight survey items.

Finally, survey and interview data were used to create case studies of the literacy coaches using three groups. These case studies provided a deeper understanding of the work and opinions of 10 Central Florida middle school literacy coaches and the schools in which they worked. The coaches’ schools were grouped and were labeled as follows: Group I in which 90% to 100% of schools made AYP, Group II in which 80% to 89% of schools made AYP, and Group III in which less than 80% of schools made AYP during the 2009-2010 school year.

### Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in collecting and analyzing the data for this study. The population, methods, and procedures associated with the study have been described. The instrumentation has been explained, and data collection and analysis procedures have

been detailed. Contained in Chapter 4 is a report of the analyses of the data. Chapter 5 presents a final summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate several dimensions of literacy coaching. Explored were (a) the relationship between the background and experiences of middle school reading/literacy coaches, (b) the time literacy coaches engage in specific activities, (c) and changes in the percentage of students attaining proficiency as evidenced on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) of reading.

This chapter contains the analysis of the data. Included are demographic data for the middle school literacy coaches included in the study. Tables and accompanying narratives are used to describe the work environment of the literacy coaches and their professional and academic characteristics. Statistical analyses of data were employed to determine existing relationships, if any, between the independent variables (13 literacy coach activities) and the dependent variable (change in student achievement) as measured by a change in student reading proficiency from 2006 to 2010. Other school performance data examined against key literacy coaching activities included changes in the percentage of students who made annual learning gains for (a) the overall student population and (b) the lowest quartile students.

Three case study groups were used to describe coaches' perspectives. Group I included middle schools where 90% to 100% of all student subgroups attained AYP in 2010. Group II consisted of schools where 80% to 89% of all student subgroups attained

AYP in 2010. Group III featured schools that reported under 80% of all student subgroups making AYP in 2010.

### Data Analysis for Research Question 1

What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes middle school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2010?

This research question was addressed through descriptive statistics that would provide a detailed picture of the background training received by those in this particular sample. Of the 61 coaches who were contacted, 44 (72.1%) responded to the survey for a final return rate of 72.1%.

Table 2 presents statistics regarding length of time as a reading or literacy coach. Of the 34 literacy coaches who responded to this question, 17 (50%) consisted of literacy coaches who had four or more years of experience. The remaining experience levels were almost evenly divided between reading or literacy coaches who had less than one year of experience (9, 26.5%) and those with slightly more experience (8, 23.4%).

Table 2

*Length of Time as Reading or Literacy Coach (N = 34)*

Length of Time	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 1 Year	9	26.5
1-3 Years	8	23.4
4 Years or More	17	50.0

Table 3 describes the types of teaching assignments respondents held prior to their current roles as literacy coaches. Among the 31 literacy coaches who responded to the question regarding previous teaching assignment, 14 (45.1%) reported that their immediate previous teaching experience was in reading intervention or other reading-related position. A sizeable group (7, 22.6%) reported that they had been in another role such as a district staff member, ESOL teacher, and media specialist. The remaining literacy coaches (10, 32.3%) indicated a variety of prior positions.

Table 3

*Teaching or Work Assignment Prior to Literacy Coach Role (N = 31)*

Role	<i>n</i>	%
Other Reading	9	29.0
Other Role	7	22.6
Reading Intervention	5	16.1
English or Language Arts	4	12.9
ESE	2	6.5
Elementary School	1	3.2
Social Studies	1	3.2
Elective	1	3.2
Curriculum Resource	1	3.2

Descriptive statistics regarding respondents' length of time in classroom teacher roles are located in Table 4. A total of 15 (44.1%) literacy coaches had less than 10 years of experience as a classroom teacher, and 19 (55.9%) had at least 10 years of experience. Only one literacy coach (2.9%) had fewer than four years of experience. Approximately

one-third of the literacy coaches (11, 32.3%) were veteran teachers with over 15 years of experience.

Table 4

*Length of Time as Classroom Teacher (N = 34)*

Length of Time	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 4 Years	1	2.9
4-6 Years	7	20.6
7-9 Years	7	20.6
10-12 Years	4	11.8
13-15 Years	4	11.8
16-18 Years	2	5.9
19-21 Years	5	14.7
22 Years or More	4	11.7

Table 5 presents the coaches' length of time at their current schools. Of those responding, 12 (36.5%) coaches reported that they had worked at their present school for three years or less. An almost equal number (11, 33.4%) had worked at their schools for four to six years.

Table 5

*Length of Time at Present School (N = 33)*

Length of Time	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 1 Year	5	15.2
1-3 Years	7	21.3
4-6 Years	11	33.4
7-9 Years	4	12.1
10 Years or More	6	18.1

Undergraduate major, one indicator of teacher background and training, is depicted in Table 6. The largest segment of literacy coaches (13, 38.2%) majored in Elementary Education as undergraduates. Other popular majors included English (6, 17.6%) and English Education for secondary schools (5, 14.7%).

Table 6

*Literacy Coaches' Undergraduate Major (N = 34)*

Major	<i>n</i>	%
Elementary Education	13	38.2
English	6	17.6
English Education, Secondary	5	14.7
Psychology	3	8.8
Exceptional Education	2	5.9
Social Science	2	5.9
Educational Media Specialist	1	2.9
Liberal Studies	1	2.9
Middle School (Integrated)	1	2.9

Table 7 provides descriptive statistics for other degree-related characteristics, such as level of degree completion and major area in which any graduate degrees were completed. Nearly all (30, 93.8%) of the literacy coaches in the sample held at least a master’s degree, while seven (21.9%) held a specialist’s degree or higher. A sizeable number of the sample (13, 40.6%) held a graduate degree in reading education. All but one individual who held a graduate degree held one in another education-related field.

Table 7

*Literacy Coaches’ Other Degree-Related Characteristics (N = 32)*

Statistic	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Highest Degree Completed</b>		
Bachelor's	2	6.2
Master's	23	71.9
Specialist	3	9.4
Doctorate	4	12.5
<b>Area of Graduate Degree</b>		
Reading Education	13	40.6
Other Education	16	50.0
Non-Education	1	3.1
No Graduate Degree	2	6.2

An exploration of types of preparation for their roles of literacy or reading coaches is provided in Table 8. A total of 34 literacy coaches responded to this question and cited several different activities for their preparation; therefore the total number of responses exceeds 34 as does the reported percentages. As many as 25 coaches (73.5%) indicated having had district training. Possessing the reading endorsement was indicated

by 23 (67.6%), independent study was cited by 23 (67.6%), and college coursework was noted by 17 (50%) of the respondents. The least prevalent preparation methods included vendor training indicated by 10 (29.4%) of respondents, other training reported by 10 (29.4%), and graduate coursework within a non-reading degree noted by seven (20.6%) of the respondents. Other training included prior experiences, volunteer work, and even the presence of no training at all.

Table 8

*Preparation for Literacy or Reading Coach Role (N = 34)*

Major	<i>n</i>	%
District Training	25	73.5
Reading Endorsement	23	67.6
Independent Study	23	67.6
College Coursework	17	50.0
Graduate Degree in Reading	14	41.2
Online Training	14	41.2
School Site Training	13	38.2
Vendor Training	10	29.4
Other	10	29.4
Graduate Coursework in Non-Reading Degree	7	20.6

*Note.* *n* = multiple responses from participants.

### Summary of Data Analysis for Research Question 1

In summary, demographic data indicated that the most common teaching background for literacy coaches was in reading or a reading related role. A majority of literacy coaches had over 10 years of experience and had at least a Master's degree. A significant number and percentage of literacy coaches (7, 21.9%) had a Specialist's

degree or higher, and two-thirds of the literacy coaches held a reading endorsement. In regard to their preparation for their roles, 17 (50%) of the coaches reported having had college coursework, 23 (67.7%) had engaged in independent study, and 25 (73.5%) had received district training. Given these data, it was not surprising that literacy coaches generally had extensive teaching background in English/language arts or reading to be considered for the role of literacy coach. The data also indicated that these literacy coaches had broad training experiences. It was the teaching experience and training that emerged as clear indicators of preparation for the multifaceted responsibilities of middle school literacy coach.

#### Working Environment: Data from Supporting Questions

Four additional questions were asked regarding the work environment of literacy coaches. These questions related to office space (item 15), space for professional development (item 16), access to a classroom library (item 17), and approximate budget for purchasing books, attending conferences, and professional development (item 18).

In regard to access to office space (item 15), all literacy coaches indicated having an office. Fewer than half, however, (18, 43.9%) indicated having a professional development room (item 16). Similarly, just over half of the respondents (21, 51.2%) reported having a classroom library (item 17) to use for demonstrations and teacher checkout. In responding to item 18 as to the approximate budget for purchasing books, attending conferences, and professional development, almost half of the respondents

shared that their budget was between \$0 and \$100 (15, 41.7%), and five (13.9%) had budgets over \$5,000.

### Data Analysis for Research Question 2

What relationship, if any, was there between the percentages of time spent in coaching activities by middle school literacy coaches and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010?

Literacy coaches were asked to report the percentages of time spent in the 13 literacy coaching activity domains in the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year. The aggregate responses for literacy coaching activities as reported in the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year as well as the minimum and maximum percentage of time reported by the respondents are presented in rank order, highest to lowest, in Table 9. The survey system was set at a 100% maximum to avoid errors in mathematical computations.

The highest ranking activity reported by the literacy coaches in this population was coach-teacher conferences. Conferences with teachers included meetings for lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, and other topics related to reading. Conferences also included informal conversations via phone, email, or face-to-face meetings with teachers on reading topics such as fluency building, organizing literacy centers and students in need of intervention.

After coach-teacher conferences, use of time was reported (highest to lowest) as follows: coaching, student assessment, planning, meetings, other duties, modeling lessons, data analysis, small group professional development, knowledge-building,

managing reading materials, data reporting, and whole faculty professional development. The Florida state goal was that literacy coaches would spend at least 50% of their total reported time in the domains of modeling lessons, coaching and coach-teacher conferences. The mean percentage of time that literacy coaches spent in these activities totaled 35.68%. Literacy coaches repeatedly reported on the survey that modeling lessons had the greatest impact on student achievement; however, this activity was ranked seventh in terms of time devoted to it. Time spent on other duties assigned was ranked sixth. Other duties were defined as activities that were not considered to be central to the role of literacy coach

Table 9

*Rank Order Percentages of Time Devoted to Coaching Activities (N = 29)*

Rank	Activity	M Percentage	SD	Minimum	Maximum
1.	Coach-teacher conferences	16.24	11.93	0	60
2.	Coaching	11.72	8.37	1	30
3.	Student assessment	9.76	9.90	0	50
4.	Planning	9.00	5.81	0	20
5.	Meetings	8.93	5.89	2	25
6.	Modeling lessons	8.24	8.78	0	40
7.	Other	7.07	10.36	0	50
8.	Small group professional development	6.79	5.39	0	20
9.	Data analysis	6.76	3.98	2	20
10.	Knowledge building	5.21	3.76	0	17
13.	Materials	4.07	3.25	0	11
14.	Data reporting	3.41	3.45	0	10
15.	Whole faculty professional development	3.03	3.09	0	10

## Coaching Factors Regression Analysis

For Research Question 2, SPSS 16.0 statistical software was used to apply multiple regression models to show the relationships between the percentages of time that each literacy coach spent in the three coaching activity domains identified as most critical by the State of Florida (modeling lessons, coaching and coach-teacher conferences) and various student performance measures in reading. The percentages of time that each literacy coach reported in each of the three most important PMRN coaching activity domains served as the independent variables in three separate multiple linear regression models in all of the regression equations. Each of the three regression equations featured different dependent variables representing changes from 2006 to 2010: (a) percentage proficient (%AL3±), (b) percentage making learning gains, and (c) percentage in the lowest quartile making learning gains.

Data regarding time were extracted from the 41 usable surveys and entered into SPSS for each of the pertinent PMRN coaching activity domains. The differences between proficiency, learning gains, and low quartile learning gains between 2006 and 2010 were calculated and matched to the literacy coach data for each school. The data were checked for accuracy prior to subjecting it to further statistical analyses.

Three multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the selected key coaching activities and changes in FCAT reading performance on three different metrics at the school level. These selected coaching activities, which served as independent variables for all the models, included the percentage of time respondents claimed to be involved in modeling lessons, coaching,

and coach-teacher conferences. Dependent variables included the overall percentage of proficient readers, percentage of students making learning gains in reading, and percentage of students making learning gains within the lowest quartile of students. Separate models were run for each dependent variable. Assumptions for outliers, multicollinearity, linearity, normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance were checked; and there were no apparent issues.

Table 10 illustrates the results of the multiple linear regression model demonstrating how the combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences predicted change in student reading proficiency, containing coefficients and values of significance. The combination was not statistically significant in predicting student reading proficiency,  $F(3,22) = 0.96, p = .42$ . Likewise, no individual coefficients were close to being significant at the .05 level. The positive coefficients for coaching and coach-teacher conferences implied that as these values increased, change in proficiency increased. Likewise, the negative coefficient for modeling lessons implied that as this percentage decreased, the percentage for change in proficiency increased. The model for predicting change in proficiency as a function of the linear combination of modeling lessons, coaching and coach-teacher conferences, though not statistically significant at the .05 level, was: Change in Proficiency =  $3.50 - (0.17) (\text{Modeling Lessons}) + 0.11 (\text{Coaching}) + 0.02 (\text{Coach-Teacher Conferences})$ .

Table 10

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Proficiency Rate (N = 26)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Constant	3.50	2.11		
Modeling lessons	-0.17	0.11	-.32	.13
Coaching	0.11	0.11	.20	.34
Coach-teacher conferences	0.02	0.08	.05	.79

Note.  $F = 0.96$ .  $R^2 = .12$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Although the model was not statistically significant based on the overall  $F$  test, it did indicate a moderate degree of practical significance based on  $R^2$  values. A total of 12% ( $R^2 = .12$ ) of the variation in change in proficiency was accounted for by the combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences. According to Cohen's definition (Shavelson, 1996), this qualified as a moderate relationship. Overall, though there was no evidence that percentages of time spent in modeling lessons, coaching, or coach-teacher conferences influenced a change in proficiency rate, there was some degree of practical significance associated with this relationship.

The next model constructed, addressing the combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences in predicting change in student annual learning gains in reading, is displayed in Table 11. This model was not shown to be statistically significant,  $F(3,21)=1.29$ ,  $p=.31$ . Examining the individual predictors, the coefficient for coaching indicated borderline significance ( $p=.07$ ) but was not significant at the .05 level. The positive coefficients for coaching and coach-teacher conferences implied that as these values increased, change in learning gains increased. The opposite effect held true

for the negative modeling lesson coefficient; as this percentage decreased, the change in learning gains decreased.

Table 11

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Learning Gains (N = 25)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Constant	-3.83	1.33		
Modeling lessons	-0.03	0.07	-.08	.70
Coaching	0.13	0.07	.40	.07
Coach-teacher conferences	0.03	0.05	.13	.53

*Note.*  $F = 1.29$ .  $R^2 = .16$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The model for predicting change in annual learning gains as a function of the linear combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences, though not statistically significant at the .05 level was: Change in Learning Gains =  $-3.83 - (0.3)$  (Modeling lessons) + 0.13 (Coaching) + 0.03 (Coach-teacher conferences). Although this model was not statistically significant based on the overall  $F$  test, it did indicate a relatively strong degree of practical significance based on  $R^2$  values. A total of 16% ( $R^2 = .16$ ) of the variance in change in learning gains was accounted for by the combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences. Using Cohen's definition (Shavelson, 1996), this qualified as a relatively strong effect size. In sum, there was no evidence that percentages of time spent in modeling lessons, coaching, or coach-teacher conferences influenced change in learning gains in a statistically significant fashion, but

there was a relatively strong degree of practical significance associated with this relationship.

Table 12 displays the results of the final multiple linear regression model, depicting the linear combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences as a predictor of change in annual learning gains in reading of the lowest quartile of students. The combination of independent variables was shown to be a statistically significant predictor of lowest quartile learning gain change,  $F(3, 20) = 5.54$ ,  $p = .006$ . The statistically significant model is the following: Change in Lowest Quartile Learning gains =  $-6.59 + (0.9) (\text{Modeling lessons}) - 0.23 (\text{Coaching}) - 0.04 (\text{Coach-teacher conferences})$ .

Table 12

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Lowest Quartile (N = 24)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Constant	-6.59	1.03		
Modeling lessons	0.09	0.05	.30	.10
Coaching	-0.23	0.06	-.71	.01**
Coach-teacher conferences	-0.04	0.04	-.18	.30

*Note.*  $F = 5.54$ .  $R^2 = .45$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The coefficient for coaching appeared to be the predictor with the highest level of statistical significance ( $p = .001$ ). The negative coefficients for coaching and coach-teacher conferences implied that as these values decreased, the change in learning gains increased. The positive coefficient for modeling lessons implied that as this percentage

increased, the percentage for change in learning gains increased as well. All of these patterns were a reversal of those of the other two models.

In addition to the model's statistical significance based on the overall  $F$  test, it did indicate a strong degree of practical significance based on  $R^2$  values. A total of 45% ( $R^2=.45$ ) of the variance in change in lowest quartile annual learning gains was accounted for by the combination of modeling lessons, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences. Using Cohen's definition (Shavelson, 1996), this qualified as having a strong degree of practical significance. There was evidence that percentages of time devoted to modeling lessons, coaching, or coach-teacher conferences influenced change in the lowest quartile annual learning gains in reading with both statistical and practical significance.

The regression models involved the three PMRN coaching activities deemed most important by the State of Florida, but it was also important to address the individual relationships between the remainder of the activities and changes in proficiency, learning gains, and lowest quartile learning gains in reading. Spearman correlations between each of the 13 PMRN coaching activities and the three variables representing these changes between 2006 and 2010 were run to test this relationship. Spearman correlations, the nonparametric equivalent of Pearson correlations, were chosen due to the combination of small sample size (less than 30). Some of the coaching activities featured many responses where coaches indicated they had put in very little time or no time at all, thus skewing the distribution away from that of a normal distribution. Because Spearman correlations do not need to meet this assumption of normality, they were therefore a more conservative method by which to test these relationships. Table 13 presents the results of

these correlations. There was a steady mix of both positive and negative correlations, but most were somewhat close to zero and therefore indicated no relationships between the activity and the performance indicator. The only statistically significant correlation was that of modeling lessons and change in proficiency,  $r = -.42, p = .03$ . In other words, as modeling lessons increased, change in proficiency decreased.

Table 13

*Spearman Correlations Between Coaching Activities and Student Progress (N = 27)*

Activity	Gains					
	Proficiency		Overall		Lowest 25%	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Whole faculty professional development	-.35	.07	-.10	.63	.19	.34
Small group professional development	-.03	.89	.04	.84	.14	.49
Planning	.12	.55	.03	.89	.01	.99
Modeling lessons	.42*	.03	-.30	.12	-.21	.30
Coaching	.09	.66	.33	.09	-.35	.08
Coach-teacher conferences	.06	.78	.16	.43	-.01	.98
Student assessment	-.11	.58	-.18	.36	.13	.52
Data reporting	-.15	.44	-.14	.48	.04	.83
Data analysis	-.18	.38	-.20	.31	.03	.89
Meetings	.26	.19	.17	.39	-.18	.38
Knowledge building	.24	.23	.09	.66	-.14	.49
Materials	-.05	.81	-.16	.43	.32	.10
Other	.04	.83	-.30	.13	-.10	.63

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

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

Literacy coaches were asked a series of questions regarding the frequency of activities with reading and non-reading teachers. These data are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

*Literacy Coaches' Activities: Reading and Non-Reading Teachers (N = 41)*

Frequency of Coaching Activities (Item)	N	%
Conduct literacy walkthroughs and provide teachers with feedback (1)		
Rarely	2	4.8
Daily	9	21.4
Weekly	22	52.4
Bi-monthly	5	11.9
Monthly	1	2.4
Quarterly	3	7.1
Yearly	0	0.0
Confer with reading teachers about improving vocabulary (2)		
Never	0	0.0
Daily	4	9.8
Weekly	19	46.3
Monthly	17	41.5
Yearly	1	2.4
Confer with reading teachers about improving fluency (3)		
Never	0	0.0
Daily	3	7.3
Weekly	14	34.1
Monthly	21	51.2
Yearly	3	7.3
Confer with reading teachers about improving reading comprehension (4)		
Never	0	0.0
Daily	12	29.3
Weekly	22	53.7
Monthly	7	17.1
Yearly	0	0.0
Confer with non-reading class teachers about improving vocabulary (5)		
Never	1	2.4
Daily	2	4.9
Weekly	16	39.0
Monthly	18	43.9
Yearly	4	9.8
Confer with non-reading class teachers about improving fluency (6)		
Never	13	32.5
Daily	0	0.0
Weekly	7	17.5
Monthly	10	25.0
Yearly	10	25.0
Confer with non-reading teachers about improving reading comprehension (7)		
Never	1	2.5
Daily	5	12.5
Weekly	15	37.5
Monthly	16	40.0
Yearly	3	7.5

*Note.* Not all respondents answered every item.

Item 1 sought to determine the frequency of literacy walkthroughs during which feedback was provided to teachers. Of the 42 respondents, 22 (52.4%) indicated making weekly walkthroughs, and nine respondents (21.4%) reported making daily visits. No literacy coach reported making only yearly visits.

Literacy coaches were queried as to their work with reading teachers in regard to improving vocabulary (item 2), improving fluency (item 3), and improving reading comprehension (item 4). Similar questions were posed regarding coaches' work with non-reading teachers (items 5, 6, and 7). It was clear that literacy coaches spent more time with reading teachers on improving vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension than they did with non-reading teachers. Details regarding the frequency of literacy coaches' conferences with reading and non-reading teachers are presented in support of the data displayed in Table 14.

A total of 19 literacy coaches (46.3%) reported conferring with reading teachers weekly about improving vocabulary (item 2), and another 17 (41.5%) admitted to monthly conferences. Four coaches indicated having daily conferences, and only one reported this as a yearly event.

Over half (21, 51.2%) of the respondents stated that they conferred with reading teachers about improving fluency (item 3) monthly. Equal numbers 14 (34.1%) indicated monthly and weekly conferences. Only three (7.3%) literacy coaches indicated conferring daily. Though no coach reported having never conferred, three coaches (7.3%) reported only conferring once a year in this regard.

Of the 41 literacy coaches that responded regarding reading comprehension (item 4), 22 (53.7%) indicated having weekly conferences; 12 (29.3%) reported conferring on a daily basis; and seven (17.1%) coaches reported having monthly conferences. No coaches indicated meeting only yearly or that they had never met.

In item 5, literacy coaches were asked about the frequency of their conferences with non-reading teachers about improving vocabulary. A total of 18 (43.9%) reported conferring monthly, and 16 (39.0%) indicated that they had weekly meetings. Only two coaches (4.9%) conferred daily. One coach (2.4%) reported never having conferred, and four coaches (9.8%) indicated that conferences with non-reading teachers about vocabulary was a yearly event.

In regard to working with non-reading teachers on improving fluency (item 6), 13 literacy coaches (32.5%) indicated never having done so. A total of 20 coaches reported conferring monthly (10, 25%) and yearly (10, 25%). The remaining seven coaches (17.5%) indicated that they had weekly conferences.

Literacy coaches were also asked to indicate the frequency of time spent conferring with non-reading teachers about improving reading comprehension. Of the respondents, 16 (40.0%) indicated having monthly conferences; 15 (37.5%) reported weekly meetings, and five (12.5%) recorded their meetings as occurring daily. Only one literacy coach reported never having met, and three indicated that reading comprehension meetings occurred yearly.

Table 15 displays the allocation of literacy coaches' time to various coaching activities. Literacy coaches were asked to report information related to times spent in

lesson study (item 8), book study (9), action research (10), reading strategies (11), and times at which coaching took place (12).

Table 15

*Allocation of Literacy Coaches' Time to Various Coaching Activities (N = 41)*

Allocation of Time to Coaching Activities (Item)	N	%
Time spent with teachers in lesson study (8)		
Never	12	29.3
Daily	0	0.0
Weekly	10	24.4
Monthly	19	46.3
Yearly	0	0.0
Time spent with teachers in book study (9)		
Never	16	39.0
Daily	0	0.0
Weekly	3	7.3
Monthly	8	19.5
Yearly	14	34.1
Time spent with teachers in action research (10)		
Never	14	34.1
Daily	1	2.4
Weekly	3	7.3
Monthly	10	24.4
Yearly	13	31.7
Time spent coaching teachers on reading strategies (11)		
Much of the day	9	22.0
When I can make time	5	12.2
At least once a week	14	34.1
Many times during the month	12	29.3
I struggle with making time for this	1	2.4
Time at which coaching takes place (12)		
Before school	1	2.4
After school	1	2.4
During planning periods	36	87.8
In-service days	0	0.0
Early release days	0	0.0
Other	3	7.3

A total of 19 coaches (46.3%) reported engaging in the activity monthly. Ten coaches (24.4%) indicated they spent time weekly, and 12 coaches (29.3%) reported

never having devoted any time. No coaches reported engaging in lesson studies daily or yearly.

Literacy coaches were asked about the time they spent with teachers in book study (item 9). The infrequency of this activity was indicated by 16 coaches (39%) coaches who reported that they never spent time in book studies and 14 coaches (34.1%) who only annually engaged in the activity. Eight coaches (19.5%) indicated monthly book study time, and three coaches (7.3%) cited weekly time.

Very little time was devoted to action research (item 10). A total of 27 coaches (65.8%) indicated never or only yearly devoting time to action research. Ten of the coaches (24.4%) indicated time was spent monthly. The remaining four literacy coaches (9.7%) reported weekly or daily attention to action research.

In item 11, coaches were asked to report the time they devoted to coaching teachers on reading strategies. Of the respondents, 14 (34.1%) indicated that they met at least once a week, and 12 (29.3%) replied that they met many times during the month. A total of nine coaches (22%) reported spending much of the day, and five coaches (12.2%) responded that they devoted time to coaching when they could make time. One coach (2.4%) admitted struggling with making time for coaching teachers on reading strategies. and one coach admitted “I struggle with making time for this”.

In regard to the precise time that coaching occurred (item 12), a large majority of coaches (36, 87.8%) reported that coaching took place during planning periods. A total of five coaches (12.1%) noted before school, after school, or other.

## Summary of Data Analysis for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was used to analyze the relationship which existed between the percentages of time devoted to coaching activities by middle school literacy coaches and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010. Based on the data analyzed, there was no evidence that could be used to predict that modeling lessons, coaching, and teacher-coach conferences had an impact on reading proficiency levels or annual learning gains. Likewise, there was only one statistically significant individual correlation between a coaching activity and a change in performance measure (modeling lessons with change in proficiency). There was, however, an indication that these activities had a positive relationship with the annual learning gains in reading of lowest quartile students.

## Data Analysis for Research Question 3

What activities did middle school literacy coaches perceive as influential in increasing reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading in years 2006-2010?

Data from survey items 13, 14, and 20-25 addressed middle school literacy coaches' perceptions of what working factors had a positive influence on student reading achievement in their schools. Interview data from 10 volunteer literacy coaches were included in the analyses as well as school-level achievement data.

The first step in analyzing the data the initial coding of common responses from the survey items using NVivo 9. Next, themes were built by using the coded data from NVivo 9 search queries. Finally, case studies were constructed using all data sets. These

steps in the data analysis enabled a clearer picture of what the coaches reported about their work activities and how their schools performed on reading assessments.

### Quantifying the Survey Responses

Survey item 13 queried respondents in regard to the support they had received from others in providing literacy-coaching services. Literacy coaches indicated that they received most of their support from the district office. They also indicated support from other coaches/literacy teams, and administrators. Answers falling into the category of district office included monthly meetings, district administrators, and reading coordinators, and district training. These data are displayed in Table 16.

Table 16

*Item 13: Literacy Coaches' Perceptions of Support Received from Others (N = 33)*

Support Themes	Examples	Frequency
Coaches/Literacy teams	District leadership team	14
	Peer coaches	11
	Other coaches in school	1
District Office	District literacy staff	17
	District meetings	8
	Training	5
	Outside vendors	1
Administration	School	9
	District	1
Uncategorized	Time for presentations	1
	Time for classroom visits	1
	Other district contacts	1
	Knowledge-building	1
	Professional development (self)	1
	Financial	1

*Note.* Respondents provided multiple responses.

Literacy coaches were asked to report hindrances and challenges they had encountered in providing literacy-coaching services? Responses to this question are displayed in Table 17.

Table 17

*Item 14: Literacy Coaches' Perceptions of Hindrances to Providing Coaching Services (N = 33)*

Support Themes	Examples	Frequency
Time	Teacher lack of time	9
	Allocation of time/other duties	7
	Other meetings	3
	Administration of assessments	3
Teacher resistance		11
Changes and Mandates	Teacher attrition	1
	Program interventions	1
	Budget cuts	1
Duties and responsibilities	Non-literacy coach related	8
	Literacy coach related	1
	Teachers' other duties	1
Assessments	State and district	6
	Student screening	2
	Pulling data from assessments	10
Planning and Scheduling	Teacher planning	7
	Student scheduling	3
Uncategorized	Budget constraints	1
	Staff given unclear goals	1
	Philosophical differences	1
	Technological capacity	1

*Note.* Respondents provided multiple responses.

Without exception, the most commonly expressed hindrance to literacy coaching was a lack of time. Time was mentioned 22 times by the literacy coaches. Assessment,

and the planning and scheduling that accompany student assessment, were also cited as hindrances. A total of 7 coaches lamented about their other duties or responsibilities that had little to do with their position as literacy coaches. Within the category of teacher apathy or resistance, 11 coaches cited a misunderstanding of the role of the literacy coach. Coach 6 said “The biggest challenge is getting "buy in" from the content area teachers and even Language Arts teachers. It has taken many professional development presentations and tons of teacher/coach conferences to earn respect for my position” (TR 1, p. 27). Coach 17 said her challenge existed because “Teachers resist having coaching unless the administrator "makes" them” (TR 1, p. 28).

Item 20 asked literacy coaches to identify those coaching activities that seemed to have the most effect on students’ reading achievement in their schools. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 18. Modeling was the activity identified as having the greatest impact. Other key coaching activities that were considered to be effective were conferencing with teachers, observing/coaching teachers, and analyzing and using data to guide instruction.

Table 18

*Item 20: Literacy Coaches' Beliefs about Effective Coaching Activities (N = 28)*

Support Themes	Examples	Frequency
Modeling	Available if needed--no distinctions	18
Data analysis		9
Coaching/Observation		8
Coach-teacher conferences		7
Uncategorized	Improve instruction/assessment	3
	Conference with students	2
	Provide professional development	2
	Provide student incentives	1
	Assist in placement of students	1
	Evaluate resources	1

*Note.* Respondents provided multiple responses.

Item 21 requested that literacy coaches list duties assigned to them which were important but not directly related to improving student literacy. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 19. Student supervision was the most commonly referenced additional duty given to middle school literacy coaches. State, district and student assessments were also responsibilities held by literacy coaches. Coaches coordinated testing in many cases for the FCAT as well as state and district progress monitoring assessments. Literacy coaches were also often expected to assess individual students for placement in reading programs.

Table 19

*Item 21: Literacy Coaches' Duties Unrelated to Improving Reading (N = 32)*

Support Themes	Examples	Frequency
Duties	Supervising students	15
	Substituting for teachers	3
	Mentoring new teachers	2
	Meeting with faculty/staff/students	2
	Performing clerical tasks	2
	Substituting for the media specialist	2
	Teaching non-reading classes	1
	Proctoring testing	1
Meetings	Meeting with students	10
	Meeting with teachers	5
	Meeting with administrators	3
	Attending committee meetings	2
Testing	Supervising state and district testing	13
	Accessing student data	7
	Assessing students	6
	Supervising school testing	3
Planning	Planning with teachers	6
	Planning with administrators	3
	Assisting students	3
	Teaching classes	1

*Note.* Respondents provided multiple responses.

Item 22 requested that literacy coaches describe some of the coaching successes they had in the last 18 months in terms of effect on teacher changes that would improve student achievement. The successes reported were unique and varied. Literacy coaches' responses, in their entirety, are displayed in Appendix H.

Literacy coaches were also requested to state their greatest concern about being a middle school reading/literacy coach (item 23). The many concerns that were reported were used in performing the thematic analyses and developing the case studies in the subsequent analysis. A detailed list of literacy coaches' concerns are contained in Appendix H.

Item 24 asked respondents to cite events that occurred during the 2009-2010 school year that may have affected overall reading results. The responses, presented in Table 20, have been categorized to reflect positive and negative events. The complete listing of literacy coaches' responses are presented in Appendix H.

Table 20

*Impact of Positive and Negative Events on Overall Reading Results*

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Positive Events
1. Teachers who had been coached saw greater percentage of proficient students than did those who were not.
2. Increased the number of reading classes and teachers.
3. Increased FCAT scores and made AYP.
4. All students in reading class.
5. Despite cuts principal ensured that the intervention staff was maintained and that the class size was relatively low.
Negative Events
1. Teachers teaching courses with which they were unfamiliar or not certified.
2. Cuts in teacher staff
3. Teacher left and was replaced with new, struggling teacher.
4. Class size amendment caused less reading classes or greater number of students than ideal.
5. Cuts in support and administrative staff caused additional duties for coaches.
6. New administration.
7. High mobility rate of students.
8. Construction.
9. Lost high achieving students to a charter school.
10. Reading classes went from 80 minutes to 47 minute periods.
11. Poor teacher.
12. Inexperience teachers.
13. Additional ESOL students.

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In Item 25, literacy coaches were asked to report major restructuring or school-wide reforms in 2009-2010 that may have benefitted the overall reading results.

Coaches' responses are reported in Table 21.

Table 21

*Major Restructuring or School-Wide Reforms Benefiting Overall Reading Results*

Restructuring or School-wide Reforms
1. Added more level 3s into reading classes; added advanced reading classes.
2. Began Marzano's <i>Building Academic Vocabulary</i> across the content area classes
3. Three literacy coaches at the school.
4. Added an IB and AVID program.
5. Started using Read 180 for non-ESOL students and Journeys for ESOL students
6. All students enrolled in reading.
7. Professional Learning Communities.
8. Co-teaching in some language arts classes.
9. Partnered with another school in teaching language arts using a standards-based approach.
10. RtI training and analyzing data to improve instruction.
11. Increased professional development.
12. Increased the number of minutes in reading classes.
13. Most social studies completed FOR-PD.

Prominent Themes within Literacy Coach Working Factors

Based on literacy coaches' responses to survey items, search terms were queried in NVivo 9. A thematic overview was developed as a result of the examination of each survey answer. Prominent themes across questions were determined and are presented in the following narrative descriptions. These themes include (a) other duties and (b) time.

Other Duties

The primary source of information for the theme of other duties came from item 21 which asked the literacy coaches to list other duties assigned which may be important

but did not directly relate to improving student proficiency. In this question, 18 literacy coaches reported that they were responsible for student supervision. Specifically mentioned by the coaches were car and/or bus ramp duty, breakfast duty, daily lunch duty, study hall, hall duty, passing time supervision, and before and after school duty. Literacy Coach 25 provided that “Lunch duty, car duty, patio duty: they all take away from the time spent working with teachers but are necessary in the safe operation of a large school.” (TR 1, p. 36) Student supervision was also mentioned in item 14 as a hindrance or challenge encountered in providing literacy coaching services. Literacy coach 24 said “Moreover, the lack of time becomes compromised by all the extra “duties” that end up being placed upon reading coaches such as supervision, lunch duty and an extraordinary amount of “meetings.” (TR 1, p. 28) Coach 7 also cited “multiple duties that are not coaching related such as lunch duties and data entry, copying, scanning, etc.” (TR 1, p. 27)

Assessment was also mentioned frequently as another duty assigned. This emerged as a dominant theme within other questions in the survey. Coordinating and conducting state, district and student assessments were major work responsibilities of the literacy coaches. Assessment was the third ranked activity domain in terms of the greatest amount of time that literacy coaches spent in the first semester of the 2010 school year. In enumerating her list of other duties, Coach 7 discussed his/her responsibility dealing with assessment. She said “testing coordinator functions such as scheduling, materials distribution, proctoring and supervising testing, simple data entry

functions such as entering and withdrawing students in various assessment data bases (quite a job with a transient population like ours).” (TR 1, p. 35)

When answering item 14 about hindrances and challenges to literacy coaching services, Coach 7 said “The amount of time I am required to spend with assessment-planning, scheduling, entering data, correcting data (our school has struggled mightily with computerized assessment systems randomly assigning and reassigning teachers and students, losing data, etc.).” (TR 1, p. 27)

Coach 1 responded with “Way too much data pulling, testing and ‘secretarial’ type work. (TR 1, p. 26) Her frustration clear, Coach 5 said of her duty to screen and assess students “Data compilation, screening of incoming students. There is nobody else capable of doing most of the inane jobs.” (TR 1, p. 35)

### Time

Time, or lack thereof, was most frequently reported in survey and interview data.

It was reported by 25 of the coaches in item 14. Coach 4 said

Time, time, time. I am spread very thin working with all reading teachers as well as all content teachers. We only have PLCs twice a month, and all departments have their PLC at the same time on the same day, so I can only attend one department’s PLC--usually the reading department since I am also considered the reading department head. (TR 1, p. 26)

Coach 13 also noted the difficulty of finding meeting time with teachers.

Time--there are so many other meetings that reading teachers and others need to attend that it makes it difficult to meet and have deep discussions about just literacy. All teachers and administrators are pulled in too many directions. Every position/program believes (as they should) that their agenda is the most important. We need to prioritize what is most important for our students. (TR 1, p. 27)

Allocating time was a challenge for Literacy Coach 24 who stated that “The main hindrance is the lack of time. It is difficult to allocate the appropriate amount of time to complete lessons, planning, coaching, and research to the degree of 100% effectiveness.” (TR 1, p. 28) Completing the state reading coach PMRN activity log takes up much of Coach 37’s time. She stated,

There are not enough hours in the day. What seems to hinder me the most is finishing my state coaching log. There is never enough time in my day to do it and it is easy to lose track of what I have spent my day on. To get it completed I have to give up time in my day so I find that I try to get it done at home. (TR 1, p. 29)

In responding to item 21, as to other duties assigned, Literacy Coach 28 reported that her “biggest time stealer” (TR 1, p. 37) was the time that she spent on managing data for the quarter, semester, and end-of-course exams.

Coach 27 described a good use of her time when reporting one of her coaching successes in item 22. She said

I spent valuable time at the beginning of the year looking at the new FCAT item specs and provided valuable information to all teachers at my school so that we could make the necessary educational changes. This positively affected students’ achievement because our teachers knew and understood the new Florida benchmarks. (TR 1, p. 40)

Item 23 asked literacy coaches about the greatest concerns they had about being middle school literacy coaches. In relation to time, Literacy Coach 6 said “My greatest concern is that it takes time for teachers to change their attitude about how important literacy instruction is in the content area.” (TR 1, p. 42) Coach 11 worried about time in relation to district administration support citing “the length of time that the current, very supportive administration will be in place so that we can build an instructional culture

that will sustain itself.” (TR 1, p. 42). The greatest concern of Literacy Coach 21 was that literacy coaches “are not used as mandated and their time is not protected. They should be devoted entirely to providing professional development to teachers. They should not be used as resource teachers.” (TR 1, p. 43) Coach 34 agreed. “My greatest concern is that coaches are being stretched and that there simply is not enough time to do true coaching and meet the demands of the district and state data requirements. (TR 1, p. 44)

Item 24 requested information about anything that may have happened in the past school year that may have affected the overall reading results. Literacy Coach 11 reported a time difference in that reading classes were reduced from 80 minutes to 47 minute periods. At the school of Coach 15, all students were placed in a 30-minute reading class and read a grade level novel. She also reported this information in survey item 25 which addressed any major restructuring or school-wide reforms. Another school-wide restructure of time was at the school of Coach 22 who reported that they had actually increased the amount of time that students spent with reading intervention teachers.

### Summary of Survey Data Obtained for Research Question 3

In summary of the data analysis for Research Question 3, Central Florida middle school literacy coaches believed that their peers and literacy teams were their greatest source of support for their ability to deliver literacy coaching services. They also derived support from their administration. Several issues confronted literacy coaches that were

identified as challenges. Time was the most often mentioned issue that hindered coaches from providing literacy coaching services. The literacy coaching service that the coaches perceived as having the greatest impact on student proficiency was the modeling of lessons. This was inconsistent to what coaches reported as time spent in reported coaching activities. On average, only 8.2% of their time in semester one of 2010 was spent in modeling. Coaches also indicated that data analysis, conferencing with teachers, and observing and coaching teachers were most effective. Coaches spent slightly more of their time in these activities. They reported on average 6.7% in data analysis, 16.24% in conferencing, and 11.72% of their time in coaching/observing teachers.

Another issue that coaches mentioned as a hindrance to their ability to spend time in key coaching activities was the other responsibilities that they were assigned that did not have a direct impact on student achievement. The duties most often assigned to coaches were student supervision and the time spent on state, district, and student assessment. Coaches reported various successes in their work that they believed improved student achievement. They also shared their concerns about their positions, their effectiveness, and their impact on student proficiency. Coaches were asked to report about anything that happened at their school that may have affected overall reading results. The answers were mixed. Some undertakings were positive, and others were negative. Likewise, some coaches gave details about school-wide restructuring and initiatives that they believed could benefit overall reading results. Two consistent themes were interwoven throughout several of the questions asked of literacy coaches. Those issues were time and other responsibilities.

## Literacy Coach Case Studies

Interviews were used to construct case studies for the 10 central Florida middle schools and their literacy coaches who agreed to participate in personal interviews. The schools were grouped according to the percentage of sub groups who made AYP in 2010.

The purpose of the case studies was to describe the demographics and the past and current performance of each school and to provide a deeper understanding of literacy coaching as it relates to experience, coaching activities and other factors that affect student achievement. The interviews with literacy coaches were focused on four questions and led to the identification of four themes. Literacy coaches shared their perceptions as to: (a) their actions that influenced student achievement, (b) factors that contributed to their success, (c) factors that hindered their success, and (d) their relationship with administrators.

Comparison Group I: Schools with 90-100% of Subgroups Attaining Proficiency. Group I schools were those with 90-100% of Subgroups Attaining Proficiency. Interview data from three literacy coaches were used to develop case studies illustrating literacy coach behavior in Group I schools. Numbers were assigned to each of the coaches to preserve anonymity. The feminine gender was used throughout the discussion for consistency, although some coaches who were interviewed were male.

### Literacy Coach 35

Literacy Coach 35 was in her first year as a literacy coach, had been an English/Language Arts teacher for over 25 years and had an undergraduate major in English Education. Coach 35 had worked in the present school for four years.

In 2010 the school where Literacy Coach 35 worked earned an “A” grade for the first time since 2006. Proficiency levels did not fluctuate in the five years between 2006 and 2010 for overall student proficiency or in annual learning gains. However, the FRL population and minority students had both increased in that same time period despite a dramatic decline in the enrollment from 1810 to 1137 students. Both FRL and minority populations were well over 50%.

Literacy Coach 35 reported that the majority of the time spent in the first semester of the 2010 school year (20%) was in planning. A total of 15% of time was devoted to coach-teacher conferences but only 5% coaching, and 5% of time was in modeling lessons. She stated that she felt that in the first year she should spend time gaining the trust of the teachers as all of the reading teachers at the school had more experience as reading teachers than she did. She expressed that her role was to share best practices that she learned from the district with the reading teachers in her school. She reported that the activity that had the greatest impact on student achievement was time spent with the students. She had the opportunity to meet with every student in the school and review their reading data with them. Together, she and each student set individual goals to improve reading proficiency. Her greatest concern was that there was so much emphasis on a single test. She also reported that the greatest hindrance to success was dealing with

teachers who had a lack of immediacy, intensity, and were complacent about improving reading proficiency.

### Literacy Coach 25

Literacy Coach 25 had been a classroom teacher for 16-18 years. She received her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and also earned master's and doctoral degrees in education. She had been the literacy coach at her school for seven years.

The school had earned an "A" grade for all five of the years in this study. The FRL and minority populations were both under 30% and the enrollment was stable, around 1,150 students throughout the period of time. Percentage levels for student proficiency had been stable, ranging between 86% and 83%. Although learning gains for all students were relatively stable, ranging from 68% and 72%, the lowest quartile percentage proficiency had dropped from 78% in 2006 to 63% in 2010.

Literacy Coach 25 indicated that she spent a majority of her time in coach-teacher conferences (30%). She also indicated that 22% of her time was spent coaching and 5% of her time was spent modeling lessons. She believed that the most significant activity that contributed to increased student achievement came from the feedback that she gave to teachers after observing them in the classroom. The challenge that she had encountered came when a new principal was named at her school. She reported that the new principal praised her continually to the faculty. Although she appreciated the support, she indicated that this eroded the trust that she had built with the teachers at the school. She noted that she was perceived to be more of an administrator than a teacher

and that this had adversely affected her ability to work with teachers since they were wary of her intentions. In discussing her relationship with administration, she lamented that administrators did not understand the role of the literacy coach. She believed that she was being asked to “spy and report back” (TR 2, p. 2) on what she observed in the classroom instead of meeting with teachers and encouraging changes in their teaching.

### Literacy Coach 10

Literacy Coach 10 was in her second year as literacy coach but had over 35 years of experience teaching English and reading in both Puerto Rico and the United States. She had her reading endorsement, and she had also earned a master’s degree in Educational Leadership.

Literacy Coach 10’s school was “A” rated for the first time in 2010, and the school also made AYP. This was quite an accomplishment given that the school with a total population of 878 students had 85% of its students on free and reduced lunch and a minority rate of 93% in 2010.

As this was only her second year as coach, Literacy Coach 10 did not see herself as successful. She did express confidence in her work in structuring the reading program which she described as “solid.” She had designed bell work for all teachers that was aligned with the reading standards. She also based the reading intervention program on needs that were determined by testing, and she had identified that instruction must focus on fluency. She had teachers keep track of their Level 1 students as a part of RtI, and all of these students were given fluency tests every month. She reported that progress was

being made. She also reported that the lowest 30% of students were closely monitored and that these students received tutoring after school and on Saturdays. She explained that all of the students at her middle school were enrolled in reading classes. Even the Level 5 students had reading.

Time was mentioned as her greatest challenge. She said that she had to “wear a lot of hats” (TR 2, p. 3) and that she had many other administrative responsibilities such as Title I paperwork. She stated that “There isn’t enough time in the day to get to all the teachers and students and provide them with strategies.” (TR 2, p. 3) This coach reported that much of her time (45%) reported to PMRN was in professional development and in planning. For the first semester of 2010, she reported that only 15% of her time was spent modeling lessons, coaching, and in coach-teacher conferences. The coach described her relationship with administration as wonderful. She said that the principal was supportive and understood curriculum. She described the principal as “pro-student.”

Comparison Group II: Schools with 80- 89% of Subgroups Attaining Proficiency  
Group II schools were those with 80-89% of Subgroups Attaining Proficiency. Interview data from four literacy coaches were used to develop case studies illustrating literacy coach behavior in Group II schools. Numbers were assigned to each of the coaches to preserve anonymity. The feminine gender was used throughout the discussion for consistency, although some coaches who were interviewed were male.

## Literacy Coach 22

Literacy Coach 22 had been a literacy coach for over five years. She had been with the school for 10 years. Her undergraduate major was in Liberal Studies, and she was a geography teacher before becoming a literacy coach. She was asked to be the literacy coach after earning a master's degree in reading and the school's former literacy coach had retired. Additionally, she earned a doctoral degree in educational leadership after becoming the literacy coach.

Coach 22 worked at a school that had received a grade of "A" for all five of the years studied. There was some fluctuation in the enrollment, but in 2010 there were 1,442 students. Reading proficiency rose from 70% to 80% in the five years, although the lowest quartile saw a 10% drop in the percentage of students earning learning gains. The FRL and minority population hovered around the 50% mark all five years.

This literacy coach reported that what she did that most influenced student achievement was working with teachers to help them make good instructional decisions based on student reading data. She assisted teachers in differentiating their instruction. The reason that she decided to pull and analyze data for teachers was because there was so much data that teachers did not have time to decipher it all. She said that teachers suffer from "data paralysis instead of data analysis." (TR 2, p. 4)

Literacy Coach 22 spent the majority of her time in the first semester of 2010 attending meetings (25%). She reported that she spent 0% time modeling for teachers, 21% coaching, and 2% in coach-teacher conferences. She cited the greatest hindrance to her success as a literacy coach was time. She indicated that she did not have the time to

get into classrooms. She reported that she spent a significant amount of time in lunch duty, substitute teaching, completing the coaching log, responding to email and phone messages and other office related duties. She said that because of staff cuts that there were many responsibilities that had been shifted. Often she had to respond to administrative emergencies and that took her away from addressing the needs of teachers. She also reported that the amount of time that she had to spend on coordinating the progress monitoring assessments that were mandated by the state took up a majority of her time.

#### Literacy Coach 6

Literacy Coach 6 was in her first year of literacy coaching and had been a teacher at the school for three years before assuming the role. She had undergraduate and master's degrees in elementary education and had between seven and nine years teaching experience before becoming the school's literacy coach. She had recently earned another master's degree in reading education.

Literacy Coach 6 was from a Title I school with 53% FRL students, and 43% were minority students. The enrollment was relatively stable, at approximately 1,150 between 2006 and 2010. The school had received an "A" rating for the last five years but had never made AYP. In 2010, 82% of the school's subgroups achieved AYP. This was the highest percentage in several years.

Literacy Coach 6 reported that her greatest impact on student achievement came from her belief in the positive results of research based programs:

that any research based program used with consistency and fidelity shows positive results over time. A school-wide implementation of best practices in reading strategies and cooperative learning tied in with focused instruction based on data will influence student achievement the most. (TR 2, p. 5)

She cited that her participation in leadership meetings made her feel like an integral part of the team. She felt that her opinions and suggestions mattered and where possible were placed into action. She felt that her confidence in her knowledge and expertise helped her to be open to sharing with teachers. She also reported that she was one of two literacy coaches at the school and that her responsibilities were to work with professional learning communities in the math, science and elective departments. She worked with these teachers in building academic vocabulary, using graphic organizers and before-during-after reading strategies. Her biggest challenge was getting “buy in” (TR 2, p. 5) from the content area teachers and getting them to realize the potential of using reading strategies in their instruction. She reported that she spent 23% of her time coaching, 18% of her time in coach-teacher conferences and in meetings, and 10% of her time modeling lessons.

#### Literacy Coach 17

Literacy Coach 17 had been a reading teacher between four and six years before she began her role as literacy coach in 2010 at a new school. Education was a second career for her, and she felt that her prior experience at the Naval Training Center and her educational background in psychology led her to a “sharing with teachers” as a literacy coach.

Over the past five years, Literacy Coach 17's school had fluctuated between grades of B, C, and A, earning one A over the five years of the study. The school had never made AYP, but 97% of its subgroups had achieved proficiency in 2008 when they earned the "A" grade. The school had always had high FRL and minority populations, but had experienced increases in both in 2010 to 75% FRL and 74% minority rate. The student enrollment was just over 900 students.

Literacy Coach 17 believed that it was her attitude and the positive rewards that she gave to students and teachers that had the greatest effect on student achievement. She reported that her background in counseling allowed her to listen to the concerns of teachers and students without being judgmental. She indicated that though she had a good relationship with administration, they were still in a "honeymoon" period. According to Coach 17, administrators were very positive and supportive and understood what they were asking of her and teachers when they had to put extra burdens on their time. Time was what this literacy coach reported was her greatest hindrance at success. She said that her other duties such as working in the media center, subbing for absent teachers and other administrative tasks took up much of her time. She also said that time was taken not just from school duties but also due to federal, state and district needs. She discussed the many reports that had to be filed and said "We answer to various masters, and the reports are so different. If they are asking for the same information, why can't we just fill out one report?" (TR 2, p. 6) When reporting her time in literacy coaching activities, she stated that she spent a majority of her time (60%) in coach-teacher

conferences. She reported 5% of her time was devoted to modeling and 2% in coaching activities.

### Literacy Coach 7

Literacy Coach 7 had been a classroom teacher for more than 20 years in language arts and had been the coach at her school for the last seven years. She had earned a master's degree in reading and was also a certified instructor for those seeking the reading endorsement.

The school in which Literacy Coach 7 had been working for the last seven years had earned an "A" school accountability grade every year since 2006. In 2010, the school had 87% of its subgroups attain proficiency levels. Over half of the students were FRL, and 48% of the students were minority students. There had been a sharp decline in enrollment from 1,688 to 1,331 students in 2010.

Literacy Coach 7 reported that her work developing teachers had the greatest impact on student achievement. She observed that she "sees teachers making really big strides with good lesson plans and strategies to use with kids." (TR 2, p. 7) She also stated that she believed that if modeling and co-teaching were happening on a regular basis she would be even more effective. This year the literacy coach was working with a new principal to the school. The literacy coach said she liked the principal as a person but that she didn't understand what a coach could do. She said that the relationship with her principal was not adversarial but that she was not using the coach as a professional to the maximum potential. She cited the many extra duties that she was assigned such as

lunch duty, proofreading, copying, counting things, and other secretarial tasks “crowd out the impactfulness of the job.” (TR 2, p. 7) She said that her greatest concern about being a middle school literacy coach was the “lack of time for follow up with in-service and lack of time for instructional coaching in general.” (TR 2, p. 7) Literacy Coach 7 reported that she spent the majority of her time in student assessment. She spent 1% of her time modeling, 2% in coaching and 15% in coach-teacher conferences.

Comparison Group III: Schools with under 80% of Subgroups Attaining Proficiency  
Group III schools were those with under 80% of subgroups attaining proficiency. Interview data from three literacy coaches were used to develop case studies of literacy coach behavior in Group III schools. Numbers were assigned to each of the coaches to preserve anonymity. The feminine gender was used throughout the discussion for consistency, although some coaches who were interviewed were male.

#### Literacy Coach 4

Literacy Coach 4 had a master’s degree in reading and an undergraduate degree in elementary education and English. She had between seven and nine years of teaching experience. She became the literacy coach after teaching intensive reading for six months.

Coach 4 worked at a school that had opened in 2006-2007. The school had earned an “A” each year that it had been open. In 2010, the school had a 35% population of FRL students and a 43% minority population. The enrollment in 2010 was 994

students. Over the four years between 2007 and 2010, the proficiency level had increased from 74% to 79%.

Coach 4 attributed her success to the time that she had in training with district reading specialists. Her impediments were her lack of confidence, ability to balance her time, and teacher resentment. She reported that some teachers said that they did not appreciate the fact that she was “over them” and did not like her telling them how to teach. She said that most teachers only had her come into their rooms because administrators had prepared them for her visits. Literacy Coach 4 reported that she spent 19% of her time in meetings. This was where she spent the majority of her time in the first semester of 2010. She reported spending 13% of her time coaching, 10% of her time in coach-teacher conferences and 4% of her time modeling strategies. She, too, reported that there was too much to be accomplished in a limited amount of time even though administrators rarely asked her to perform duties other than those of a literacy coach.

### Literacy Coach 2

Literacy Coach 2 had extensive experience and training before becoming the literacy coach at her present school. She had previously served as an elementary literacy coach and had also worked as a trainer for a company that packaged a research-based reading intervention program. She reported that she felt knowledgeable and comfortable with adult learning. This coach was reading endorsed, had a master’s degree in educational leadership and was also a certified instructor for reading endorsement classes.

Literacy Coach 2 had worked at her school for six years and had seen that school earn a school accountability grade of “A” in each of those years. Her school had made AYP in 2006 but had subsequently lost ground every year, with a disappointing 79% of subgroups attaining proficiency in 2010. Over this same period of time, the FRL percentage of students had risen from 27% to 44%. In 2010, the minority rate was 45%, a rise of 7% since 2006. This school had also seen a large decline in enrollment from 1,487 to 1,023 students during the five year period of time.

Literacy Coach 2 reported that she had a very good ability to connect with people and that the most important activity that she performed that impacted student achievement was to make sure that what was happening in the classroom was working. She reported that literacy strategy development, improving questioning techniques, data analysis, and proper student placement were all activities that were critical in improving student achievement. She expressed concern about impediments to success as a literacy coach. She cited differences between what she believed about how children learn and the parameters of the “program.” As a former reading trainer, she had not observed transference occurring in the classroom. She wished that she had more time to get into classrooms and that more people would invite her to do so. She reported reluctance on the part of many people “to be willing to change.” (TR 2, p. 9) Although she said that her relationship with administrators was very good, she stressed that teachers would not be willing to have her in their classrooms “if the administrator has not set forth expectations for quality instructional practice.” She expressed the belief that “Change will not take place if goals for instructional improvement are not in place.” (TR 2, p. 9)

### Literacy Coach 13

Literacy Coach 13 had been a language arts teacher at her school for 11 years before she began her role as literacy coach in 2010. She also served as the writing coach.

The school in which Literacy Coach 13 worked had been a “B” rated school for the last three years and earned a “C” in 2007. The FRL population in 2010 was 85%, and the minority percentage was 86%. Those percentages were consistent over the five year period of time from 2006 to 2010 despite a rise in enrollment from 1,045 to 1,219 students in 2010.

As a first year coach, she attributed her success to the fact that she understood reading and that she knew and understood the school and its teachers very well. She stated that the teachers at her school needed guidance because they did not know how to teach reading. She further reported that she had a great relationship with teachers and that they would seek her out for such things as finalizing reports and looking at strands so that they could better support their struggling readers.

Coach 13 believed that lack of time was the greatest hindrance to her being able to provide literacy coach services. She reported that she was assigned extra duties that were not related to her position as literacy coach. She stated her greatest concern:

Honestly, it’s hoping that all the teachers know how hard I am working for them. When I am coaching one-on-one with a teacher, I’m afraid that the other 21 teachers think I am neglecting them. When I’m standing in the cafeteria watching lunch line, I worry that my skills could be put to better use. I’m sure they know that I am there for them, but I wish I could be each of theirs 100%. (TR 2, p. 10)

She listed several duties that were not directly related to improving student literacy. She reported that she spent 4% of the first semester modeling lessons, 13% on coaching, and

another 5% on coach-teacher conferences. This was far below the state goal of 50% of a coach's time in those three activities. She stated that she did not visit classes enough and that when she did visit, she did not get to see the rest of the teacher's classes to observe the teacher's implementation of the new strategy. She reported that this was because she was constantly called upon to attend to other duties.

Literacy Coach 13 reported that a major event for the 2010 school year was that the principal was moved and that a large percentage of staff went with him. The new principal, therefore, arrived with a new staff. The new principal purchased several new reading programs, but their delivery was delayed and reading teachers began the year with Level 1 and 2 students and no materials. When asked about her relationship with administration, she indicated that it was good but not as good as she thought it should be. She said that administrators have a lot of meetings but they do not talk to her about literacy and that she does not "get to talk to them in the big meetings." (TR 2, p. 10) She said "No one has asked me about anything." (TR 2, p. 10) She had anticipated that she would be able to assist struggling teachers but had been told that she was not an evaluator and that working with struggling teachers was not her job. Her frustration and sincere desire to help teachers and students were made very clear in the personal interview.

### Themes Emerging from Case Study Analysis

The interviews with literacy coaches were focused around four areas: Literacy coaches shared their perceptions as to: (a) their actions that influenced student achievement, (b) factors that contributed to their success, (c) factors that hindered their

success, and (d) their relationship with administrators. The responses of literacy coaches elicited in interviews are summarized in thematic tables designed to further clarify the work of the interviewed literacy coaches for the three groups of schools.

The literacy coaches in the case studies shared their perceptions as to their actions which had the greatest influence on reading achievement. These actions represented the themes emerging from the interviews and are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

*Literacy Coaches' Actions Influencing Student Achievement*

Theme	Literacy Coach	Subgroups Attaining AYP	Actions Influencing Student Achievement
Work with teachers	25	90-100%	Feedback to teachers after observations.
	10	90-100%	Provide intervention strategies to teachers.
	6	80-89%	Ensure that reading teachers use the set research-based program with fidelity; working with content area teachers on teaching reading strategies.
	17	80-89%	Positive rewards given to both students and teachers; backs up teachers and helps counsel students.
	7	80-89%	Working with teachers on modeling and coaching.
	4	Below 80%	Student motivation mixed with sound instructional strategies in both comprehension and decoding/fluency.
	2	Below 80%	Making sure that what happens in the classroom is working.
Work with students	35	90-100%	Working with students to set goals.
	17	80-89%	Positive rewards given to both students and teachers.
	4	Below 80%	Student motivation mixed with sound instructional strategies in both comprehension and decoding/fluency.
	13	Below 80%	Has established a relationship with students.
Use of data from assessments	10	90-100%	Continual testing of students to diagnose needs.
	22	80-89%	Using data to drive instruction.

*Note.* AYP = adequate yearly progress.

There was a distinction among coaches in their thinking. Some coaches believed that success could be attributed to their work with the students. Coach 35 reported that she sits with every student in the school to develop their goals for reading achievement. Rewards and incentives for positive progress in reading classes were made by both Coach 17 and Coach 13. Coach 10 continually tests students each month on their fluency so that she can report back to their teachers who will determine appropriate instruction. Other

coaches expressed the belief that it was their work with teachers that had the biggest impact on reading achievement. Coach 2 does classroom walk-throughs to ensure that what is happening in the classroom is working. Similarly, Coach 6 makes sure that the research-based programs that are used in her school's reading classes are being taught with fidelity to the program. Other coaches responded about which literacy coach activities had the greatest effect on reading achievement. Coach 7 indicated that working with teachers on coaching and the modeling of lessons was influential. Giving feedback to teachers after observations was reported by Coach 25. Coach 22 emphasized that assistance in data analysis to teachers aids them in making better instructional decisions with regard to their activities and assessments.

Themes emerging from the interviews related to factors contributing to literacy coaches' successes are presented in Table 23. Coaches shared their stories as to what has contributed to their success as a literacy coach. The responses to this question were varied. Some coaches did not necessarily see themselves as a success, primarily due to the short amount of time they had been a coach. Often, coaches' successes were mainly attributed to other people.

Coaches 6, 4, and 7 derived their success from school and district administration. Coaches 35, 25, 22, 17, and 2 expressed the belief that their success was attributable to a particular aspect of their experience or skill. Coaches 13 and 10 reported that it was the testing and data analysis that was provided to teachers that made them successful.

Table 23

*Factors Contributing to Literacy Coaches' Success*

Theme	Literacy Coach	Subgroups Attaining AYP	Actions Contributing to Literacy Coaches' Success
School/District Administration	6	80-89%	Feedback from administration and being a part of the leadership meetings.
	7	80-89%	District training and information.
	4	Below 80%	Time spent with a district administrator concentrated on reading.
Personal Experience/Skills	35	90-100%	Will do whatever is necessary to help out; never says this is not her job.
	25	90-100%	Keeps knowledge current and has a good rapport with faculty.
	22	80-89%	Was a content area teacher and understands the needs of teachers.
	17	80-89%	Diverse background in counseling; listens without being judgmental.
	2	Below 80%	Ability to connect with people and make them understand; she does not just talk the talk.
Testing and Data Analysis	10	90-100%	Monthly fluency tests of students.
	13	Below 80%	Teachers ask her for assistance, particularly in accessing data.

*Note.* AYP = adequate yearly progress.

Constituting the third theme of hindrances to success, there were many impediments reported to the literacy coaches' success. These hindrances are presented in Table 24.

The most common response was time. Coaches 10, 6, 17, 7, 4, and 13 all indicated that additional duties impeded their ability to work with teachers in classrooms. Reported time stealers were student supervision, administrative responsibilities, and paperwork.

Table 24

*Factors Hindering Literacy Coaches' Success*

Theme	Literacy Coach	Subgroups Attaining AYP	Factors Hindering Literacy Coaches' Success
Time	10	90-100%	Time spent on administrative responsibilities makes it more difficult to get into classrooms.
	22	80-89%	Time; other responsibilities which detract from literacy coaching duties.
	6	80-89%	Time.
	17	80-89%	Lack of time due to administrative duties and paperwork.
	4	Below 80%	Time.
	13	Below 80%	Insufficient time to get into classrooms.
Other duties	7	80-89%	Many other duties unrelated to literacy coaching.
	17	80-89%	Lack of time due to administrative duties and paperwork.
	22	80-89%	Other responsibilities which detract from literacy coaching duties.
	13	Below 80%	Extra duties are not the best use of time.
Lack of confidence/experience	35	90-100%	Lack of knowledge and experience.
	4	Below 80%	Lack of confidence in herself and from teachers.
Difficulties with administration	25	90-100%	Over-abundance of principal praise leading to teachers seeing her as an administrator, increasing distrust of her as a coach.
	7	80-89%	Administration does not understand the literacy coach job.
	4	Below 80%	Lack of follow-through on the part of administrators.
Difficulties with teachers	25	90-100%	Increasing distrust of her as a coach.
	22	80-89%	Unmotivated teachers.
	4	Below 80%	Lack of trust on the parts of teachers.
	2	Below 80%	Gaining access to teachers' classrooms.
	2	Below 80%	Does not see transference into the classroom.

*Note.* AYP = adequate yearly progress.

Two coaches shared that their lack of experience and knowledge made it difficult to be successful. Coach 35 indicated that she was new in her position and she was the coach for reading teachers whose experience exceeded hers. Coach 4 also reported that

her lack of experience caused her to lack confidence in herself. Difficulties with teachers and administration not understanding the job of the literacy coach were also reported by a few of the coaches. Coach 25 complained that her administration praised her so much in front of other teachers that the teachers were wary of her intentions. She felt that teachers thought she was not to be trusted and that she was spying on them. Coach 2 echoed that sentiment and explained that the mistrust is what made it difficult to get teachers to welcome her into their classrooms. Coach 4 said that there was a lack of follow through on the part of her administration to clarify her job to the teachers and that her teachers also mistrusted her. Several coaches believed that administration would not assign so many other literacy coach unrelated duties to them if they understood what their job responsibilities were supposed to be.

Themes identified in interviews with coaches were also related to the relationships that literacy coaches had with their administrators. These data are displayed in Table 25. In describing their relationships with administrators, most coaches thought they had a positive experience with their principals and assistant principals.

Table 25

*Literacy Coaches' Relationships with Administrators*

Theme	Literacy Coach	Subgroups Attaining AYP	Coaches' Relationships with Administrators
Positive relationship	35	90-100%	Excellent—principal is visionary, and assistant principal is a former reading teacher.
	22	80-89%	Excellent—assistant principal and coach were both on the same team (as teachers) and work well together.
	6	80-89%	Strong leadership team that is accessible provides much expertise that covers all content areas.
Understands literacy coach role/trust	35	90-100%	Principal appreciates her leadership and agrees with her reading goals.
	10	90-100%	Wonderful—principal understands curriculum and is pro-student.
	17	80-89%	New principal seems very positive and supportive and knows what he is asking of the literacy coach.
	22	80-89%	Excellent—principal trusts her to do her job.
	2	Below 80%	Lucky with administrators—has had 10 different ones and they have all had confidence in her ability and let her go her own way.
Developing or difficult relationship	25	90-100%	Not good with this principal, but it has been positive with past administrators.
	17	80-89%	Still in honeymoon with new principal.
	7	80-89%	Not adversarial, but principal does not use her to maximum potential.
	4	Below 80%	Adjusting to new principal—had a great relationship with prior principal who just retired and let her do her job.
	13	Below 80%	Good, but not as good as she thought it would be; administrators do not talk about literacy with her or anyone else; administrators do not let her work with struggling teachers, although she thinks she could help them.

*Note.* AYP = adequate yearly progress.

Coach 35 called her principal a visionary and was proud that her assistant principal was a former reading teacher. Coach 10 termed her relationship as wonderful because the principal understood curriculum and was pro-student. Coach 22 indicated

that her relationship with her principal was excellent and that the principal trusted her to do her job. Coach 2 reported working with 10 different administrators and that her experiences were all positive. She said they all trusted her and let her do her job. Coach 6 perceived her administrators to have experience covering a wide range of content areas and to be accessible and versatile. Other coaches reported that they were in the process of developing new relationships with their current administrators. Coach 17 was still in the honeymoon period and Coach 4 was adjusting to a brand new principal who began in the middle of the year. Coach 13 thought that her relationship would have been better with her new principal than it was turning out to be. She said that the principal was not using her to maximum potential. Finally Coach 25 said that her relationship with her current principal was not good, although the experience she had with past administrators was positive.

#### Summary of Themes Identified in Literacy Coach Case Studies

In summary, the literacy coaches believed that their work positively influences reading achievement. Some expressed the belief that it was their work with students that was most effective, but a majority believed that it was their work with teachers that was most successful in determining positive reading results. Beliefs were expressed that the success of a coach is dependent on administrative support and the experience and skills that literacy coaches have when they begin their positions as literacy coaches. Time was perceived as the greatest hindrance to their success along with administrators who did not understand the responsibilities of a literacy coach. It was evident that coaches did not

spend time in the activities that they believed to be most effective at impacting student reading achievement. For the most part, the relationship between coach and administrators was positive but seemed to rely on administrators' understanding the roles of the coach and the trust they put in a coach to do their job.

Schools in this study were grouped mainly to ensure an even distribution of schools and coaches interviewed, and percentage of subgroups who attained AYP were used to differentiate among the three groups. No statistical comparison was made, and no appropriate comparisons emerged based on interview questions. In reviewing the thematic tables, it can be observed that Group I schools have increased the number of subgroups making AYP over the last five years. Group II schools have remained somewhat stable over the five-year period, and Group III has seen a decline in the number of subgroups making AYP over the last five years.

### Summary

The analysis of the data has been presented in this chapter. The presentation has been organized to respond to the three research questions. Tables and accompanying narratives have been used to provide clarity regarding the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Chapter 5 presents a summary and discussion of the findings, implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter has been organized to provide a brief review of the elements of the study. Presented are the purpose of the study, the population, and data collection and analysis processes used in the study. The chapter also includes a summary and discussion of the findings organized around the research questions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate several dimensions of literacy coaching. Explored were (a) the relationship between the background and experiences of middle school reading/literacy coaches, (b) the time literacy coaches engage in specific activities, (c) and changes in the percentage of students attaining proficiency as evidenced on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) of reading.

### Methodology

Descriptive data were gathered to report demographics, background and professional experiences of middle school literacy coaches in four central Florida school districts. These data provided a general representation of the teaching experience, education, and training coaches had prior to assuming their roles as literacy coaches. This information was also used to build multi-level case studies around a group of volunteer coaches who agreed to be interviewed regarding their roles as literacy coaches. Simple

descriptive statistics and regression analyses were used to determine the relationship between time spent on coaching activities and school reading proficiency as evidenced by the FCAT reading assessment from years 2006-2010. Qualitative data analysis strategies were also employed in the analyses associated with survey data, interview transcripts, and individual school performance data of the literacy coaches who participated in interviews leading to the construction of case studies.

### Population

The researcher invited the literacy coaches of the 61 middle schools in four central Florida school districts of Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia, to participate in the study. A total of 44 coaches agreed to participate in the study resulting in a useable return rate of 72.1%.

The literacy coaches who responded were a good representation of the population in Central Florida and provided a description of the work lives of middle school literacy coaches. A total of 10 coaches volunteered to be interviewed and provided a triangulation of data needed in the construction of multi-level case studies. The 10 coaches represented three different groups based on AYP achievement levels and the multi-level case studies created by describing individuals in each of the three groups enabled an improved understanding of middle school literacy coaching in central Florida.

### Instrumentation

The web-based survey facilitated the return of the information requested and also provided a viewable data base from which to access data. The survey also provided opportunities for literacy coaches to offer complete answers to open-ended questions. Literacy coaches reported their percentages of time spent in coaching activities. Coaches had to carefully consider their use of time because the survey system was set to total 100%. Because a majority of coaches were accustomed to the bi-weekly reporting of their time in the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) system, this information was easily accessed.

### Summary and Discussion of Findings

The intent of the study was to investigate the relationship between time spent on key coaching activities and their influence on student reading achievement. The resultant data have contributed to the existing knowledge about the background and professional experience of literacy coaches. Coaches' perceptions regarding which of their activities have the greatest impact on reading achievement have been presented. Also described were coaches' responses identifying activities that both supported and hindered their ability to deliver literacy coaching services and to be effective in their positions.

Following is a summary and discussion of the findings of the study. The discussion has been organized around the three research questions which were used to guide the study.

### Research Question 1

What demographic, professional, and academic background information describes middle school literacy coaches in selected Florida school districts in 2010?

A majority of literacy coaches in the study were former language arts/English or reading teachers. Most had 10 years or more of teaching experience before assuming their roles as literacy coaches. A total of 73% were prepared for their positions by district training. Two thirds of coaches were reading endorsed, and 93.8% had advanced degrees. The coaches in this study proved to be a group of well-trained and experienced individuals who were prepared for their positions as literacy coaches. The demographic information revealed in this study was consistent with that found in the review of literature. Prior researchers (Bean, 2004; Burkins, 2007; Knight, 2006; Poglinco et al., 2003) have observed that effective coaches have the academic background, are experts in subject knowledge, and have been experienced, successful teachers who have also been prepared to work with adults.

### Research Question 2

What relationship, if any, was there between the percentages of time spent in coaching activities by middle school literacy coaches and school level changes in FCAT reading proficiency percentages in years 2006-2010?

A statistical significance was apparent between modeling lessons and overall change in reading proficiency for all students. However, there was no clear statistical relationship between any other activities and change in reading proficiency, percentage of annual learning gains, or in annual learning gains of lowest quartile students. This reinforced the responses of numerous literacy coaches in the study indicating that

modeling was the activity that they believed most positively impacted student reading achievement.

Multiple regressions were run using the three key literacy coaching activities of modeling, coaching and coach-teacher conferencing and the three school performance metrics. A statistically significant relationship was found between the three key coaching activities with annual learning gains of lowest quartile students. However, there was not a clear relationship between the key coaching activities and overall student proficiency and annual learning gains.

In the Boulware (2007) study, high school coaches reported that a majority of their time was spent in other activities and that modeling lessons ranked near the bottom of the list. In his study, he also determined that there were no statistical relationships among coaching activities and increases in school performance in singular regression tests. He postulated that this could be due to the small sample size. He did, though, determine through multivariate regression analysis that the results improved when examining the combination of professional development, modeling, coaching, and coach-teacher conferences and change in overall proficiency and change in lower quartile gains. Although the sample size in this study was only slightly larger, five years have passed. Much has been learned regarding the roles and responsibilities both on the part of the literacy coach and school/district administration. However, the need for clarification and understanding still exists. This is apparent in the existing literature and the amount of time literacy coaches report that they spend in activities that are not shown to affect student reading proficiency. The average time reported is still well-below the Florida

state goal of 50%. Thus, the data reported regarding time spent in each activity was useful as was the information that so much time was spent in activities that do not support literacy coaching services.

Data from supporting questions also indicated a distinction of the time literacy coaches spend with teachers. Literacy coaches in this study indicated that they spent more time improving vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension with reading teachers than they did with non-reading teachers. This could explain, in part, the correlation between key coaching activities and improving the annual learning gains of students in the lowest quartile. The lowest quartile students are most often the students enrolled in reading intervention classes.

Data gathered in responding to this research question supported the findings of prior researchers. Taylor et al. (2007) and RAND (2008) indicated that coaches who spend a majority of their time with teachers in modeling, coaching and conferencing see gains in reading achievement.

### Research Question 3

What activities did middle school literacy coaches perceive as influential in increasing reading achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading in years 2006-2010?

The qualitative data for this research question were derived from survey questions 13, 14, 20-25 and through the personal interview questions asked of 10 volunteer literacy coaches whose schools were used to build multi-level case studies. The case study schools were grouped depending on each school's percentage of subgroups making

adequate yearly progress. School performance data between 2006 and 2010, school demographics, survey and interview data from each coach were used in arriving at comparative case studies. The qualitative data emerged as very helpful in providing a robust picture of literacy coaches' activities which may impact student achievement.

Using data obtained from survey question analysis, thematic analysis and case study comparison groups, literacy coaches were determined to have found their school districts to be their greatest source of support. This occurred through contacts, training, and monthly meetings.

Literacy coaches found time to be the most significant challenge to their ability to deliver literacy coach services. A majority of coaches' time was spent in supervising students and assessments and student scheduling. The activity that they felt was most valuable in improving student literacy was modeling lessons, but they reported that they spent very little time in that activity. This again, indicates a need for a clarification of coaching responsibilities on both the part of administration and coaches. It is the lack of clarity and misunderstanding that create obstacles which block the literacy coach from providing literacy coach services to teachers. The greatest obstacle is time. The descriptive data in this study indicated that little time was spent in coaching activities, such as modeling, coaching and conferencing, although they have been recognized as having the greatest impact on reading achievement. It also provides that literacy coaches spend a great deal of their time in the supervision of students and in conducting and coordinating state/district and student assessments. Time spent in activities that are

unrelated to improving instruction and reading proficiency interferes with the literacy coaches' time to work directly with teachers.

The beliefs of the literacy coaches in this study were comparable to those of experts such as Moxley & Taylor (2006), Poglinco et al., (2003) and Roller 2006. Time, or the lack thereof, has been a consistent theme in literature reviewed for this study and in the study itself.

In comparing the quantitative and qualitative data, it was clear that there was alignment particularly in the areas of how literacy coaches spent their time. The quantitative data indicated that time spent in key coaching activities had a positive impact on student achievement for lowest quartile students. Time spent in the modeling of lessons had an impact on overall student proficiency. The qualitative data provided support for the belief of literacy coaches that time spent with teachers has the greatest impact on student achievement.

Descriptive data indicated that the middle school literacy coaches in this study spend a significant amount of time in activities other than those that impact student achievement. Time spent in other duties ranked 7th of the 13 activity domains and occupied an average of 7.07% of the literacy coaches' time. The qualitative data indicated that lack of time hindered the literacy coaches' success. They reported that time spent in other activities, some of which were unrelated to the responsibilities of literacy coaching, hindered their ability to deliver coaching services. They often remarked that administrators did not have a clear understanding of their role and how it could impact student achievement. This was sometimes coupled by administration's lack

of communication to their faculties about the role of the literacy coach that created tension and misunderstanding on the part of the teacher

### Implications for Practice

A major implication for practice is related to time. Determining how coaches should spend their time and helping them reach their time management goals are critical to their success. School administrators must take the lead in this regard by providing clear definitions of the purpose and responsibilities of the literacy coach. Goals and priorities must be set in the allocation of time and both coaches and administrators must be held accountable for achieving them.

Administrators may need additional training on the use of literacy coaches. They should be encouraged to avoid assigning responsibilities to literacy coaches that are not proven to improve reading proficiency. The use of non-instructional personnel to assist with supervision and with testing would be beneficial.

Time management training for literacy coaches, once on-the-job, might benefit them in scheduling their time and activities. They need to learn how to schedule their time so that they can devote significant attention to coaching activities that are shown to improve student reading achievement (modeling, coaching, and conferencing). They need, also, to be held accountable for their time. This accountability can be aided by individual coaches documenting their activities and reflecting, with their supervisors, on the way in which their time has been used.

### Recommendations For Future Research

1. This study provided a platform upon which actual literacy coaches could report their background information, professional experiences and the time they spend in literacy coach activities. A larger sample size would give a more complete picture of the work lives of coaches and the impact their position has on improving instruction and reading proficiency.
2. In preparation for this study, it was revealed to the researcher that budget cuts forced several central Florida middle schools to make the decision to discontinue employing full-time literacy coaches. An interesting study would be to examine the school performance data of those schools pre- and post literacy coach use. Another study of interest might be focused on the use of school performance data to make a comparison between schools with and without literacy coaches.
3. The data in this study showed that on average literacy coaches spend less time with non-reading teachers. Specific data from schools where literacy coaches spend time with non-reading teachers would be of interest in determining improvements in overall reading proficiency and annual learning gains. Interview and survey data could enhance the understanding of how non-reading teachers use reading strategies and what impact they see on student reading achievement.
4. The interview and survey data hinted at a variance between districts in their expectations and the literacy intervention strategies they employed. It would

be of interest to compare district school performance data and time spent on coaching activities to determine the effectiveness of various district models.

5. Interview and survey data indicated that in many cases administrators were not clear as to the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches. A survey of principals to determine their levels of understanding and their expectations of a literacy coach could be useful in developing training so that they can better assist and develop the role of literacy coach.
6. Future research might include a concerted effort to survey 65-80% of the middle school literacy coaches in the state of Florida. This would make the use of regression more beneficial in predicting the effect that key coaching activities have on reading proficiency. It would be feasible to use a web-based survey to collect information from literacy coaches who submit their bi-weekly coaching log to the PMRN system.
7. The most useful data in this study came from personal interviews and the open-ended questions in the survey. A larger sample size of coaches who would participate in personal interviews in conjunction with their answers from open-ended questions would provide a more complete data set. NVivo 9 qualitative software could then be used to search for themes that might construct a more thorough view and understanding of the work experiences of literacy coaches.

### Summary

As the state of Florida and the nation continue to face drastic and severe budget cuts, the value of literacy coaching will be under intense scrutiny. Standardized testing will continue to force schools to be accountable and to raise the bar in an effort to produce proficient students in all sub groups. Although there has been clarification about the responsibilities of literacy coaches as the role has evolved, more demands are being put on their time. This research has been conducted in an effort to clarify further the roles and work lives of literacy coaches and to determine the extent to which their coaching positively affects student reading proficiency.

APPENDIX A  
PERMISSION TO USE/MODIFY SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Letter to Dr. Don Boulware

December 3, 2009

Dear Dr. Boulware:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida, and I am researching the subject of middle school literacy coaches. My intention is to replicate the study that you conducted about time, background of high school literacy coaches and these relationships to student achievement. I am anticipating that the benefits of this study would include establishing best practices for literacy coaches, enhancements in professional development for coaches and continuing contributions to research on this subject.

In replicating your study I am seeking permission to use and perhaps modify for middle school coaches your web-based survey, your interview questions and your reading coach log. If you are so inclined I would request that you respond to me by email indicating your permission to use and modify your survey for middle school literacy coaches.

Sincerely,

Patricia Bowman  
Patricia\_Bowman@scps.k12.fl.us  
UCF Doctoral Candidate Educational Leadership

Response from Dr. Don Boulware

December 3, 2009

Hi Trish,

Yes, you have permission to replicate the study—I look forward to reading your results. Let me know if you need anything.

I assume you are applying both quantitative and qualitative tools—the balance of both helped me with context. You may find some more sophisticated ways to analyze as well. Would be happy to chat with you...

Best wishes,

Don

APPENDIX B  
FLORIDA MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACH SURVEY

Florida Middle School Literacy Coach Survey  
Text Copy of the Web-Based Survey  
based on the 2006-2010 school years

Opening Page

Informed Consent Page

School Code Number Entry

**Part 1: Coaching Activities**

1. How often do you conduct literacy walkthroughs and provide teachers with feedback?

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

2. How often do you spend time conferring with reading teachers about improving vocabulary?

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

3. How often do you spend time conferring with reading teachers about improving fluency?

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

4. How often do you spend time conferring with reading teachers about improving reading comprehension?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

5. How often do you spend time conferring with non-reading class teachers about improving vocabulary?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

6. How often do you spend time conferring with non-reading class teachers about improving fluency?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

7. How often do you spend time conferring with non-reading class teachers about improving reading comprehension?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

8. How much time do you spend with teachers in lesson study?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

9. How much time do you spend with teachers in book study?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

10. How much time do you spend with teachers in action research?

Never  
Daily  
Weekly  
Monthly  
Yearly

11. How often 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

12. When does the coaching of teachers take place?

Before School  
After School  
During Planning Periods  
In-service Days  
Early Release Days  
Other

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

14. What hindrances and challenges have you encountered in providing literacy-coaching services? Please provide as much information as you believe will be helpful in understanding literacy coaching.

15. Do you have an office?

Yes  
No

16. Do you have a dedicated professional development room?

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

18. 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

19. List professional conferences have you attended in the last 12 months.

National?

State?

20. Which coaching activities seem to have the most effect on students' reading achievement in your school?

21. List duties as assigned to you which may be important, but not directly related to improving student literacy.

22. Successes:

Please describe some coaching successes you have had in the last 18 months, in terms of effect on teacher changes that will improve student achievement?

23. What is the greatest concern you have about being a middle school reading/literacy coach?

24. Did anything happen at your school last year (2009-2010) that may have affected the overall reading results? An example might be redistricting or loss of intervention teachers due to budget restraints.

Please describe.

25. Did your school undergo any major restructuring or school-wide reforms in 2009-2010 that may have benefitted the overall reading results?

If yes, then please describe.

**Part 2: 2010 Coaching Activities and Time**

26. In the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year, what have you spent your time doing in your role of reading/literacy coach?

Please indicate percentages (%) of time engaged in the activities listed below.

Whole Faculty Professional Development: Providing or facilitating professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designated to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals. _____ %
Small Group Professional Development: Providing or facilitating small group professional development sessions such as faculty seminars, action research, and/or study groups designed to increase the knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals. _____ %
Planning: Planning, developing, and/or preparing professional development, including: surveying teachers for PD needs; preparing content for PD for teachers, parents, and others; planning a schedule of PD delivery, gathering PD materials; preparing a lesson for modeling and planning a coaching session with a teacher. _____ %
Modeling Lessons: Demonstrating lessons while teachers observe or co-teaching lessons in classrooms. _____ %
Coaching: Coaching (initial conversations, observation, and reflecting conversation) teachers in classrooms which includes observing teachers, formulating feedback regarding lessons, discussing feedback with teachers, and reflecting with teachers relating to reading or content area lessons. _____ %
Coach-Teacher Conferences: Conferencing with teachers regarding lesson planning, grouping for instruction, intervention strategies, and other topics related to reading. Informally conversing with teachers in a variety of ways (phone, E-mail or fact-to-face) on topics concerning reading such as fluency building, organizing literacy centers, students in need of intervention, etc. _____ %
Student Assessment: Facilitating and coordinating student assessments, including scheduling the time and place for assessments, and notifying teachers of the assessment schedule. _____ %
Data Reporting. Entering assessment data into any data management system. _____ %

Data Analysis: Analyzing student data to assist teachers with informing instruction based on student needs. This includes personal study of data reports, principal/coach data sessions, and teacher/coach data sessions.	_____ %
Meetings: Attending meetings in my school, district or region regarding reading issues	_____ %
Knowledge-Building: Attending meetings in the school, district, or region regarding reading issues. Examples include meeting with school/district administrators or coaches, school/community groups, curriculum teams, Reading Leadership Teams, School Improvement Plan Teams, etc.	_____ %
Managing Reading Materials. Preparing the budget for reading materials, reviewing and/or purchasing the materials, maintaining inventory, and delivering reading materials. Also included are duties such as gathering teacher resources and organizing leveled books for classroom libraries in collaboration with school staff.	_____ %
Other: Time spent on other duties assigned: Please list.	_____ %

### **Part 3: Literacy Coach Demographics/Academic and Professional Background**

27. In what year did you begin the role of reading/literacy coach at your school?

Before 2006

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

28. What was your primary teaching or work assignment prior to taking on the role of literacy coach?

Reading intervention teacher

Reading teacher

ESE teacher

ESOL teacher

Elementary school teacher

English/language arts teacher

Social Studies teacher

Mathematics teacher

Science teacher

Elective teacher

Curriculum resource teacher

Other: please identify

29. How many years were you a classroom teacher?

0-3

4-6

7-9

10-12

13-15

16-18

19-21

22-24

25-30

More than 30 Years

30. How long have you worked at your present school?

31. What was your undergraduate major?

32. Please list degrees earned or in progress and subject focus.

33. What preparation have you experienced for the role of reading/literacy coach?

Select all that apply

Reading Endorsement

College Coursework

District Training

Graduate Coursework as part of non-reading degree

Master's, Ed. S., or doctorate degree in Reading

Online Training

School Site Training

Vendor Training

Independent Study

Other (please specify)

34. Would you mind if the researcher contacted you for a short interview? If so, please provide your name, email, and phone number where you can be reached. Participants for interview will be selected at random.

Yes

No

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND INFORMED CONSENT

## Interview Script

Good day:

I have contacted you for an interview to complete my study on reading/literacy 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 middle school reading/literacy coaches.

If you have questions about this research, please contact Patricia Bowman at (407) 276-5286 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.

By agreeing to participate in this interview you are providing your informed consent.

Do I have your permission to begin the interview?

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

APPENDIX D  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Patricia A. Bowman**

Date: **October 13, 2010**

Dear Researcher:

On 10/13/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACHES IN FLORIDA: A  
STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EXPERIENCE,  
COACHING ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER FACTORS  
RELATED TO READING ACHIEVEMENT  
Investigator: Patricia A Bowman  
IRB Number: SBE-10-07147  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 10/13/2010 12:13:52 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX E  
DISTRICT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

Submit this form and a copy of your proposal to:  
 Accountability, Research, and Assessment  
 P. O. Box 271  
 Orlando, FL 32802-0271

**Orange County Public Schools**  
**RESEARCH REQUEST FORM**

RECEIVED NOV 12 2010

Your research proposal should include:  
 • Project Title  
 • Purpose and Research Problem  
 • Instruments  
 • Procedures and Proposed Data Analysis

Requester's Name Patricia A. Bowman Date 10/20/10  
 E-mail patricia\_bowman@scps.k12.fl.us Phone 407-276-5286  
 Address 2274 Westminster Terrace Oviedo, FL 32765  
Street City, State Zip  
 Institutional Affiliation UCF  
 Project Director or Advisor Dr. Rosemary Taylor Phone 407-823-1469

Degree Sought: (check one)  Associate  Doctorate  Bachelor's  Not Applicable  Master's  Specialist

Project Title: MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACHES IN FLORIDA: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EXPERIENCE, COACHING ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER FACTORS RELATED TO READING ACHIEVEMENT

ESTIMATED INVOLVEMENT			
PERSONNEL/CENTERS	NUMBER	AMOUNT OF TIME (DAYS, HOURS, ETC.)	SPECIFY SCHOOLS BY NAME AND NUMBER OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, ETC.
Students	0	0	0
Teachers	0	0	0
Administrators	0	0	0
Schools/Centers	0	0	0
Others (specify)	30 MS Reading Coaches	20 minutes for on line survey. 30 minutes for personal interview if agreeable.	see attached

Specify possible benefits to students/school system: The study seeks to determine if there is a relationship among professional background, experience and reading proficiency as evidenced on the FCAT.

**ASSURANCE**

Using the proposed procedures and instrument, I hereby agree to conduct research in accordance with the policies of the Orange County Public Schools. Deviations from the approved procedures shall be cleared through the Senior Director of Accountability, Research, and Assessment. Reports and materials shall be supplied as specified.

Requester's Signature Patricia A. Bowman

Approval Granted:  Yes  No Date: 11-15-10  
 Signature of the Senior Director for Accountability, Research, and Assessment Lee Bolder

## THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OSCEOLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

817 Bill Beck Boulevard • Kissimmee • Florida 34744-4492  
Phone: 407-870-4600 • Fax: 407-870-4010 • [www.osceola.k12.fl.us](http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us)

### SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

District 1 – Jay Wheeler  
407-390-0505  
District 2 – Marjorie Guillen-Melendez, Vice Chair  
407-922-5113  
District 3 – Cindy Lou Hartig, Chair  
407-832-3999  
District 4 – Barbara Horn  
407-744-3009  
District 5 – Tom Long  
407-892-5836



Superintendent of School  
Michael A. Grego, Ed.C

December 13, 2010

Ms. Patricia Bowman  
2274 Westminster Terrace  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Dear Ms. Bowman:

This letter is to inform you that we have received your request to conduct research in our School District. Based on the description of the research you intend to conduct, I am pleased to inform you that you may proceed with your work as you have outlined.

I will remind you that all information obtained for the purpose of your research must be dealt with in the strictest of confidentiality. At no time is it acceptable to release any student or staff identifiable information.

I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela Marino".

Angela Marino  
Director  
Research Evaluation & Accountability



**SEMINOLE COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BILL VOGEL, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*

**Educational Support Center**  
400 E. Lake Mary Boulevard  
Sanford, Florida 32773-7127  
Phone: (407) 320-0000  
Fax: (407) 320-0281

**SCHOOL BOARD**

**SANDRA ROBINSON**  
*Chairman*

**JEANNE MORRIS**  
*Vice Chairman*

**DIANE BAUER**  
*Board Member*

**SYLVIA POND**  
*Board Member*

**DEDE SCHAFFNER**  
*Board Member*

October 29, 2010

Mrs. Patricia Bowman  
2274 Westminister Terrace  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Dear Mrs. Bowman,

I am in receipt of the proposal and supplemental information that you submitted for permission to conduct research in the Seminole County Public Schools. After review of these documents, it has been determined that you are granted permission to conduct the study described in these documents under the conditions described herein.

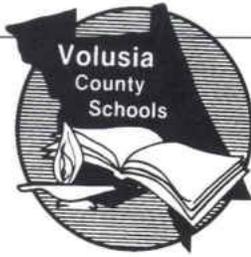
Each school principal has the authority to decide if he/she wishes to participate in your study. Teachers also have the option to choose to participate. Therefore, your first order of business is to contact the principals of the schools that you wish to involve in your research and explain your project and seek permission to conduct the research. You are expected to make appointments in advance to accommodate the administration and/or staff for research time. Please do not use SCPS email or courier mail to disseminate your research information.

Please forward a summary of your project to my office upon completion.  
Good Luck!

Sincerely,

Anna-Marie Cote, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent  
Instructional Excellence and Equity

AMC/jr  
cc: Robin Dehlinger



Dr. Margaret A. Smith  
Superintendent of Schools

P.O. Box 2118  
DeLand, Florida 32721

DeLand  
(386) 734-7190

Daytona Beach  
(386) 255-6475

200 N. Clara Avenue  
DeLand, Florida 32720

New Smyrna Beach  
(386) 427-5223

Osteen  
(386) 860-3322

School Board of Volusia County

Mr. Stan Schmidt, Chairman  
Dr. Al Williams, Vice-Chairman  
Mrs. Diane Smith  
Ms. Judy Conte  
Ms. Candace Lankford

November 17, 2010

Patricia Bowman  
2274 Westminister Terrace  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Dear Ms. Bowman:

I have received your request to conduct research within Volusia County Schools. I have approved your request to conduct research on the topic of "Middle School Literacy Coaches in Florida: A Study of the Relationships Among Experience, Coaching Activities, and Other Factors Related to Reading Achievement." As with all requests to do research; participation is at the sole discretion of the principals, teachers and parents of all students involved. Parent Consent Forms will be necessary for all data gathered from the students of Volusia County Schools.

By copy of this letter, you may contact the school principals who allow this research to be conducted with their faculty and students. We request that you conduct your survey with as little disruption to the instruction day as possible.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of your project at the completion of your study.

Sincerely,

Chris J. Colwell, Deputy Superintendent  
Instructional Services

CJC/mh

APPENDIX F  
PRINCIPAL AND PARTICIPANT INITIAL CONTACT AND INFORMED CONSENT

## Invitation to Literacy Coach via School Principal

Dear Principal:

I am the principal of South Seminole Middle School in Seminole County and also a graduate student at the University of Central Florida. I am researching the subject of middle school reading/literacy coaches and the effect of that position on FCAT reading achievement. I have attached your district's approval letter granting permission to conduct this research.

If you have questions about this research, please contact Patricia Bowman at (407) 276-5286 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.

If you would be so kind, please give this letter and the included website to your school's reading/literacy coach. The website will bring up a survey on how your coach spends work time and what they perceive to be helpful in improving reading proficiency. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Anticipated benefits of this study include development of literacy coaching best practices as well as scholarly contributions to research on this subject.

Sincerely,

Patricia Bowman  
Principal South Seminole Middle School  
Leadership and Global Connections Magnet  
UCF Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
[Patricia\\_bowman@scps.k12.fl.us](mailto:Patricia_bowman@scps.k12.fl.us) 407-276-5286

Dear Reading/Literacy Coach:

Thank you for your time and assistance with this important project. Please follow this link to the survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L27BSSN>.

Each school has been assigned a random code so that no school or reading/literacy coach can or will be identified in this study.

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

Sincerely,

Patricia Bowman  
Principal South Seminole Middle School  
UCF Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
Patricia\_bowman@scps.k12.fl.us  
407-276-5286

Dear Reading/Literacy Coach:

I am a principal of a middle school and also a graduate student at the University of Central Florida working on my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership (K-12). I have chosen 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 within middle schools in central Florida.

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

In this survey you will be asked some demographic information as well as some information about your experiences as a reading/literacy coach. In addition, you will be asked to report the time spent on particular coaching activities from the months of July 2010 to December 2010. If necessary, please use the data from your PMRN Reading Coach Activity Log bi-weekly reports to assist with an accurate report of the percentage of time you spend on each activity.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. 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 at random for follow-up telephone interviews.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me, Patricia Bowman at (407) 276-5286 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.

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. Please note that you are free to withdraw your consent to participate at anytime without consequence and you do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer.

APPENDIX G  
SECOND AND THIRD REQUESTS FOR PARTICIPATION

## SECOND REQUEST FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Thank you so much for taking the Literacy Coach Survey last month! If you would still like to participate in a short 5 question interview session with me by phone, please email me the times and dates that would be most convenient for you as well as a phone number where you can be reached. I would like to conduct these phone interviews by [May 1](#) if possible.

As a middle school principal, I value the critical need for literacy coaches in our schools. I am in hopes that the result of my study will have a major impact on administrative decisions on the retention of literacy coaches in our middle schools.

You can reach me at this UCF email address or my school email:

[Patricia\\_Bowman@scps.k12.fl.us](mailto:Patricia_Bowman@scps.k12.fl.us)

My cell phone number is 407-276-5286 should you like to speak to me directly.

Thank you so much for your participation!

### THIRD REQUEST FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am wondering if I can have 15 minutes of your time for my literacy coach study. You completed the online portion and indicated that you might be up for a personal interview. After examining the amazing results at your school I would very much like to get your input. I believe that your opinions and your experience could be beneficial to improving the literacy coach position in Florida. If you have some time please contact me with a time and number that I could call you.

I hope that you will be able to participate.

I look forward to hearing about you and your school,

Sincerely,

407-276-5286 cell phone

Patricia Bowman  
Principal  
South Seminole Middle School  
SCPS Pre-IB Prep and Leadership and Global Connections Magnet

APPENDIX H  
LITERACY COACHES' RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS 22, 23, AND 24

LITERACY COACH RESPONSES to Item 22: Please describe some coaching successes you have had in the last 18 months, in terms of effect on teacher changes that will improve student achievement.

1.	The reading teachers have created a target list of students who may be at risk of falling from proficiency or who appear close to becoming proficient. This has created a heightened awareness of differentiated instruction. A PD day with reading and LA teachers to review the FCAT 2.0 Specs Benchmarks to be familiar with the NGSSS. Creating a relationship with teachers who trust my professional opinion and willing to use reading strategies within their classrooms.
2.	I have recently been successful in modeling and coaching teachers in both Science and the Elective classes in Building Academic Vocabulary.
3.	Recently a "hard" teacher--one that has resisted coaching and refused to be a part of any county-wide initiative--was won over by observing videos of other teachers having success with certain measures, and by having one-on-one time with me explaining a certain strategy and showing her how other teachers manage the strategy. I have also seen various teachers adopt methods I have coached other teachers on after seeing those teachers have success with them.
4.	More teachers are initiating coaching! Teachers are starting to learn from each other as well. One teacher just today told me that she was implementing a strategy that another teacher is using that she liked--a strategy that I had coached him on. So, coaching is starting to affect some teachers who were never open to it in the past.
5.	1. Positive results from BAV trainings and support. Teachers more comfortable with process and students demonstrating increased vocabulary knowledge. 2. The number of teachers that regularly come to me for ideas has increased from year to year. Once the discussion is open, we can address all aspects of learning, including schema development and mindset.
6.	Working with teachers to make small changes in instructional practices. These changes led to improved understanding by the students and greater success in the class. This improved confidence led to improved grades on teacher created tests.
7.	The higher level questions mentioned above, modeling for new teachers, observing academic vocabulary lessons and providing feedback.
8.	I was involved in the hiring process of five reading teachers this year. I have worked closely with the teachers to make sure they received more than adequate training, and are adhering to the guidelines of the program as I do weekly walk-thrus and have follow up conversations with the teachers.
9.	Using Kagan coaching I have helped improve student engagement time. Teachers can see the difference and increase use of these activities.
10.	Social studies teachers are using CRISS strategies, planning with both content and language goals in mind, and providing students with high interest reading material outside of the textbook.
11.	No response.
12.	Identifying misplaced students. Encouraging stagnant, unmotivated teachers of both high and low level students to try new things. Greater understanding of the needs of all students and a willingness to learn based on an open, warm non-threatening delivery. It has really been both challenging and rewarding gaining the trust of a very veteran staff.
13.	Working with reading teacher on implementation of supplemental books (Ravenscourt) that meet students' instructional reading level.
14.	Nurturing a group of brilliant teachers to respect each other and share their ideas Create focus calendars using data to drive instruction
15.	No response.
16.	We have been attempting to promote differentiated instruction in our classrooms. Almost all of our faculty members have had the FIN workshops on differentiated instruction.
17.	I was the Writing Coach for the last 8 months and then became the Reading and Writing coach a month ago. I have been at this school awhile so I can accurately say that providing the teachers with as many resources as possible and then seeing them actually use them is my highest success. Our school's students are not only at high mobility (47%), but also our staff. When teachers, new or

	experienced, begin at our school they need as many avenues as possible. One thing that might work for one class, may not always work for another. Seeing teachers using what is available and then making it their own is priceless. They know what's best for their students and their learning. Me walking through for 5-10 minutes will never accurately measure student needs. Another success that I have seen in language arts and reading, is the professional learning communities. Having teacher within a grade level with the same subject is proving to really benefit the teachers and the students. Common assessments are beginning to form and that helps teachers make long term decisions on success. Newer teachers are also getting a lot more support with day to day instruction and even discipline, which we know plays a huge part in learning.
18.	Our Professional Development this year has focused heavily on critical thinking through the avenues of reading, writing, listening and speaking. These sessions have mirrored various content area lessons from start to finish that have engaged students in critical thinking through active reading. The teachers have been able to go back to their classrooms and implement these strategies using their content resources.
19.	Training teachers to use data to make instruction decisions. The use of small group rotations.
20.	Getting teachers involved with their own professional development and encouraging them to "think outside the box."
21.	No response.
22.	No response.
23.	Increasing rigor in the classroom Changing some instructional practices
24.	CAR-PD as mentioned above.
25.	I spent time at the beginning of the year looking at the new FCAT item specs and provided valuable information to all teachers at my school so that we could make the necessary educational changes. This positively affected students achievement because our teachers new and understood the new Florida benchmark. They also knew how to look at data to focus their instruction on the skills that were the weakest. I also spent some time co-teaching with a first year teacher who was struggling. My being in his classroom on a regular basis and modeling different teaching methods I feel I have helped him positively improve student achievement.
26.	The teachers are progress monitoring student learning by using common assessments.
27.	Implementation of model classrooms. Teachers see scientifically based research strategies at work,
28.	Many teachers have commented on the language and substantiation with which I present the material. I'm able to tell students how and why they are able to comprehend and what factors contribute to their difficulties in trying to do so.
29.	My lang. arts. teachers are more proficient at pulling their own data. Teachers from all content areas have come requesting support: tech, data, IPDP, etc. I have been able to build a good working relationship with the staff & administration
30.	No response.
31.	Transitioned all intensive reading classes to one core program. ESOL less than one yr uses a different program, however. Motivated students to read through reward program and book talks
32.	Training and implementing DI into our school; it has been a three year process and we are Orange County's demonstration school.
33.	Teachers are trying more things out of their comfort zone like rotations (small group instruction)
34.	on-site professional development with staff
35.	Challenging the teachers to increase the rigor and student accountability
36.	My biggest success has been to develop bellwork aligned to the Sunshine State Standards. The students are tested on a monthly basis and teachers use the data to modify lessons.
37.	cross curriculum activities / text sets
38.	I have been working with two new teachers. Both of them just needed some tricks of the trade.
39.	I have worked very hard to help teachers understand and analyze FAIR data to drive differentiated instruction. The reading teachers work in PLC's and plan and discuss reading instruction. Teachers work very well together.

40.	I have worked with a number of new teachers and helping them in their classrooms with the structure of the room, lessons, modeling technique, and watching them begin to stand and teach independently. I have had new teachers tell me that without me they do not know how they would have been able to figure out what to do. One of my tenured teachers was struggling, and i had been told by the IST not to waste my time because that teacher never try any of the suggestions she had been given in the past. I am proud to say that the AP commented to me this past week that this teacher had improved so much this past year she couldn't believe it.
41.	grants won for purchase of materials
42.	Our school has been an A school now for three years. As a department, we have built the reading department into a cohesive group of teachers who collaborate lessons and analyze data through the development of a PLC.
43.	I have worked with several non tenured, first year teachers on technology, strategies & classroom assessments. I have no doubt these successes with the classroom teachers helped in improving student achievement.
44.	Professional Learning Community implementation- instructional calendars, data analysis

LITERACY COACH RESPONSES to Survey Item 23: What is the greatest concern you have about being a middle school reading/literacy coach?

1.	Content area teachers recognizing the need for differentiated instruction and daily use of reading strategies to improve literacy skills for their teachers and students.
2.	My greatest concern is that it takes time for teachers to change their attitude about how important literacy instruction is in the content areas and our students are going on to high school in the meantime.
3.	Not sure I am having much effect. Discouragement sets in. Teachers are hard "clients". Teachers are not sure what my credentials are. Coaches are often seen as "pseudo-admin" which hurts us. Also, content teachers continue to fight incorporating literacy strategies in their classrooms. This is especially true of science and social studies teachers.
4.	Being pulled more and more from actual coaching into other tasks--testing, research, rewriting curriculum, meetings, etc.
5.	My greatest concern is that our limited training regarding coaching and the parameters placed on us by addressing cognitive coaching vs instructional coaching, depending on who the county leadership is, minimizes what we do and how we perform. The coaches are all over the continuum as a group, and job performances vary greatly at all the schools. Perhaps SCPS could develop a coaching "cddre" such as Hillsborough County has that requires all coaches to go through in depth training to truly understand the job.
6.	Funding for the reading programs/department. We need more reading teachers to keep classes small.
7.	The administrators do not understand the role of the coach. I'm asked to be a spy and report (written) back what I see going on in the classroom. Instead I should be meeting with the teachers and encouraging changes in their teaching.
8.	Budget cuts and that the position will be cut next year.
9.	My greatest concern is always that content areas teachers continue to be a model of POOR, negative reading practices for their content area. Some of them won't open a book much less their textbook. How can they call themselves a teacher?
10.	Too much time spent managing databases for assessment.
11.	No response.
12.	Administrators have to support teachers through change and allow for struggle. Time is always a constant challenge. Students continue to fall through the cracks in classrooms where teachers are unwilling to differentiate or see beyond a student's reputation or behavior. Good coaches, like good teachers, will burn out and become disillusioned due to pay and emotional demands of the job.
13.	Meeting the needs of teachers in the content areas and providing appropriate reading strategies and seeing strategies implemented.
14.	They are not used as mandated and their time is not protected. They should be devoted entirely to providing professional development to teachers. They should not be used as resource teachers.
15.	No response.
16.	Lack of time for follow up with inservice, and lack of time for instructional coaching in general.
17.	Honestly, it's hoping that all the teachers know how hard I am working for them. When I am coaching one on one with a teacher, I'm afraid that the other 21 teachers think I am neglecting them. When I'm standing in the cafeteria watching lunch line, I worry that my skills could be put to better use. I'm sure they all know that I'm there for them, but I wish I could be each of theirs 100%.
18.	My greatest concern is making sure that all students become active readers in order to ensure success in wherever their future path might lead them.
19.	Motivating students to want to read.

20.	My efforts tend to be splintered with other requirements leaving less time to work with teachers and/or students.
21.	District driven administrative changes; the length of time that the current, very supportive, administration will be in place so that we can build an instructional culture that will sustain itself.
22.	No response.
23.	Teachers are not innovative or motivated to improve and research reading instructional practices
24.	The lack of progress of many students with persistent reading difficulties. I find it hard to believe that we are really doing this "wrong" yet despite our best and very intensive efforts we do have students who make no progress. Teachers are blamed and in some cases, scolded for this. This concerns me greatly as intensive reading is a specialized area with a high burnout rate. I do not want to lose any teachers because of a lack of progress on the part of many very impaired students. We help them in many ways but our current measures do not always reflect this. More people need to understand that many students will need continuous support and stop the blame game. Obviously a very sensitive issue with me.
25.	That the position will be cut.
26.	Teachers are often resistant about working with a coach, especially when they have been teaching for many years.
27.	The major concern that I have is that a large number of our students are coming to us much older, indicative of retention, and are reading significantly below grade level.
28.	By middle school many of the developmental gaps with which students may have begun their school career have widened creating difficulties for both the teacher and student. Some kids unfortunately will always be a "level 2" because developmentally they will always be behind. I have encountered students time and again who are intelligent, thoughtful, and have an adequate vocabulary. Yet, you can tell that certain concepts are just beyond their reach and if only they had another 6 months or waited another year to start kindergarten they would be right on target with grade level readers.
29.	Being effective - making the best use of my time & resources. I tend to find the positive when offering feedback, which is good, but I know there are times when I need to be more pointed and direct - I shy away from that & I fear I may miss some opportunities to enable teachers & students to grow.
30.	No response.
31.	Continued funding to support our full time positions. I have been a coach who teaches too, and neither job can be done as well when the time is divided.
32.	The position will be eliminated; I feel strongly in a low achieving school the coach is necessary to ensure success for all students in all content areas.
33.	Reaching all students and having all teachers understand their part of literacy as it relates to their subject matter.
34.	Curriculum for intensive reading classes
35.	Building student motivation and confidence for success as a student
36.	Middle schoolers are a unique set of people. Academics, sometime is not on the top of the list, so motivating students is a great concern. Teachers as well have to be motivated so they can pass it on to their students.
37.	Teachers with reading endorsements
38.	That our county will eliminate core reading classes in order to save money.
39.	My greatest concern is that there is so much emphasis on a "one shot" test.
40.	Not having the right teacher in the classroom and the students not getting what they need to be successful.
41.	Students from elementary school not being adequately prepared and well behind before they get to us.

42.	The class sizes of our infused (ESE & Gen Ed) intensive reading classes. There are many behavioral issues and the teachers cannot differentiate instruction as needed. I struggle to find ways to help them but it seems to be an uphill battle for us all. Another concern is that trying to impress upon non-reading teachers the importance of using effective reading strategies with fidelity falls on deaf ears at times.
43.	My greatest concern is that coaches are being stretched and that there simply is not enough time to do true coaching & meet the demands of the district & state data requirements.

LITERACY COACH RESPONSES to Survey Item 24: Did anything happen at your school last year (2009-2010 that may have affected the overall reading results?)

1.	Class size amendment put restraints staffing and available sections. Therefore increasing the amount of students within each section of intensive reading. The most effective class size for intensive reading is less than 15.
2.	I think that there may be a decline in reading results due to the amount of Level 3 students we were not able to schedule reading classes for due to the numbers and class size amendment.
3.	Huge turn-around of students mid year due to housing changes in the area.
4.	Large turn-around of students mid-year due to a large housing project closing nearby. Also, we lost one of our best reading teachers mid-year and the replacement was a brand-new, struggling teacher. On the positive side, after a review of FCAT results, teachers who actively sought coaching and then implemented BAV saw far greater percentages of students score proficient on FCAT than those that did not.
5.	Reading placement must be fluid in order to place students where they will perform best. Due to the constraints of minimizing teaching units and limiting the master schedule, we were not, nor are we able, to meet the changing needs of many of our students.
6.	We hired two new teachers to take over reading classes. These teachers were hired straight out of college with no experience other than student internships.
7.	I am not sure - I cannot pinpoint a specific reason for dropage. Although 8th grade students appear to not care as much as to how they do.
8.	Looking at the data, one teacher that filled a prime reading position was not the correct fit. Much assistance was provided to this teacher without much change happening. This teacher no longer teaches at the school.
9.	We increased the number of classes and reading teachers. This strengthened our program and overall student reading results.
10.	We have been requiring all students to take both reading and language arts with the same teacher scheduled back-to-back. Last year, due to budget cuts and the need to hire an AVID elective teacher, one 8th grade team had reading only for the level 1 and 2 students. Many of the students who did not take reading saw drops in their FCAT scores. We have also had an increase in ESOL enrollments, many are NES. The economy in our district is very depressed. The number of free and reduced lunch students has increased, and we have more homeless students.
11.	No response.
12.	Last year was my first year, but there were many teachers in subjects in which they were not confident (or in some cases, even familiar).
13.	We went from 6 to 5 reading teachers this school year, although the need for an additional teacher is still there.
14.	No.
15.	No response.
16.	Budget cuts have reduced the amount of support personnel available for noninstructional/literacy building activities such as copying, student supervision, and data entry. That requires that the "slack" be taken up by those of us who could and should be providing instructional support. We have lost our technology coordinator and our media specialist has been cut to half time, with the void being filled quite inadequately, in my opinion, with a single clerk. We have lost two of our intensive reading teachers, resulting in intensive classes that are, in many cases, larger than our core subject classes, and requiring that students who should rightly be receiving intensive reading instruction, being released into the general population without the appropriate level of support.
17.	We had a pretty good staff turnover due to our principal moving on to a different school. A huge percent of people went with him and a new principal came in along with new staff. With that, the new principal purchased several new reading programs. These materials were delayed in getting to our school and were delayed in being implemented. Although our reading teachers did an amazing

	job starting off with nothing to teach our level 1's and 2's, I am concerned that it may impact this year's reading results.
18.	N/A
19.	Budget cuts led to a reduction in the number of reading teachers.
20.	None known. School improved grade (but I was not coach during that year).
21.	No response.
22.	No response.
23.	This is my first year at this school.
24.	Despite budget issues, we were able to maintain our intervention staff and relatively low class sizes. This can only happen when reading intervention is a priority on the part of the people (Principal) making the budget decisions.
25.	Not last year but this year. Explained below.
26.	I don't know.
27.	I have only been the reading coach for the school year 2010-2011.
28.	Progressively for the past 7 years our school population has changed with an increased percentage of students receiving free-reduced lunch. Our economically-disadvantaged students continue to score lower than their counterparts. Certainly, I believe ALL students can learn and that socio-economic status shouldn't be a hindrance, however, it does invite a myriad of influences. In addition, we are now on our third principal within four years.
29.	Our scores went up. We grew from a C to a B. I was assigned as the reading coach! (LOL) We had a new CRT, Math coach, reading coach, an additional new dean and AP. It was a combination of many things. We began a school wide reading program called "BRAVE" - with the exception of students in reading class; all students were in a 30 minute reading class, reading a novel by grade level. That has continued this year.
30.	No response.
31.	New Principal, CRT, Reading and Science Coach started during the 2009-10 school year. Took a while to analyze school needs. We have a high mobility rate (50%+?). Our school started a reconstruction program during the 2009-10 school year. This has been somewhat disruptive due to noise, "portable land" being a far distance from the rest of the school, etc. This school year we lost most of our higher achieving students to a new charter school.
32.	We have a 50% mobility rate; we did raise our reading school by 4% overall. This year we picked up additional ESOL students due to the dissolution of Haitian Creole Center.
33.	There are always Budget cuts. My principal tries not to cut teachers however the cuts hit both teachers and materials.
34.	Went from 80 minute periods to 47 minute periods - intensive teachers were double blocked, but doubled blocked Reading AND Lang. Arts, not double blocked for Reading
35.	We always have a turnover in intervention teachers. Our high poverty and transient population of students are challenging and not all teachers are capable of meeting the challenge.
36.	Actually, the school increased their FCAT scores and the school went from a B to an A and we made AYP.
37.	No response.
38.	having the wrong teacher in the wrong place
39.	I was in the language arts department last year, so I am not sure.
40.	I was not the reading coach at this school last year.
41.	No.
42.	No.
43.	Budget - loss of paraprofessionals in Tier 1 Single intensive classrooms.

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