An Evaluation of Middle School Literacy
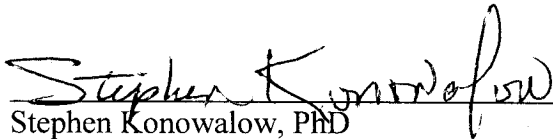Coaching in a Central Florida District

by
Brian C. Dorman

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Fischler School of Education and Human Services
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
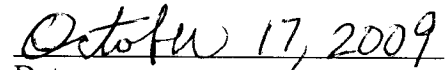for the Degree of Doctor of Education

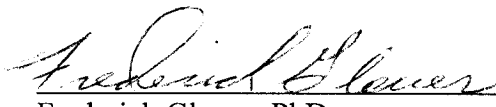Nova Southeastern University
2009

Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Brian C. Dorman under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.
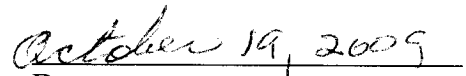
Stephen Konowalow, PhD
Committee Chair

October 17, 2009
Date

Frederick Glover, PhD
Committee Member

October 19, 2009
Date

Maryellen Maher, PhD
Executive Dean for Research and Evaluation

Date

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Abstract

An Evaluation of Middle School Literacy Coaching in a Central Florida District.
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School of Education and Human Services. Literacy/Coaching (Performance)/Professional
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This applied dissertation evaluated the effectiveness of literacy coaching in a central
Florida district as perceived by teachers working in the district's middle schools. The
study investigated teacher's perceptions of literacy coaches, the literacy coaches'
perceptions of their roles within the schools, and the literacy coaches' impact on student
proficiency data as measured by the Lexile assessment. As schools struggle to improve
instruction and learning, professional development provided by literacy coaches was
identified as a powerful model for improving instructional practices.

The mixed methods research study was designed to provide information about teachers'
perceptions of literacy coaches and to determine the impact coaching had on student
achievement data. The research design utilized surveys and a case study approach.
Qualitative data included school based observations and survey data from 112 middle
school teachers and 10 literacy coaches. Quantitative data included student proficiency
percentages as measured by the Lexile assessment for 12 teachers from the case study
sites.

The findings provided insight into the teachers' perceptions of literacy coaches, the
impact coaches had on changing or improving instruction as well as the coaches' views
of their responsibilities. The results confirmed that teachers believed literacy coaches
were influential in changing and improving instruction; literacy coaches also believed
their work providing professional development and modeling lessons were the most
important aspects of their jobs. The significance of the literacy coaches' impact on
student achievement showed that literacy coaches should place teachers and instructional
practices at the top of their priorities. This research should assist the district's
implementation of the literacy coaching model found in the middle schools.

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Appendixes

Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

The study evaluated the effectiveness of literacy coaching in a central Florida district (CFD) as perceived by teachers and literacy coaches working in the district's middle schools. Additionally, the study evaluated the effectiveness of literacy coaches improving instructional practices and determined the impact coaching had on student achievement.

Nature of the Problem

The problem faced by literacy coaches in the selected CFD was the inability to spend 70% of their time working with teachers as the district has requested. The problem is the need for them to do student assessments and attend administrative meetings instead of working with teachers in the classroom. Official communication from the district suggested that the limited time spent coaching has led to questions regarding the effectiveness of the literacy coaches by stakeholders in the district. This creates a problem of being divided in three directions.

The district goal was for literacy coaches to spend 70% of their time engaged in professional development and coaching activities. As seen in Appendix A, an analysis of the 2008-2009 district report indicated that the middle school literacy coaches reported 39% of their time was spent in professional development or coaching activities. This demonstrated an increase by 5% from 34% to 39% compared to 2007-2008 but coaches were still unable to meet the district's goal (Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network [PMRN] Reports, 2008, 2009).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy coaching in the CFD by middle school teachers. The district used a formal model of coaching that met criteria established by the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida!

initiative (Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004). In the formal coaching model, literacy coaches collaborated with teachers, worked in the classroom to model specific strategies, observed the teacher implement strategies, provided feedback, and facilitated reflective discussions (Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Because the primary responsibility of literacy coaches was to work with teachers through professional development or other coaching activities, district leadership questioned the effectiveness of the district's literacy coaching implementation as a method to improve instruction.

District Demographics

As shown in Table 1, the demographics of the larger Central Florida region were found to be diverse (Fact Sheet, 2006). The demographics of the county were found to be similar to the region but the students' demographics were quite different than the county and the region (State of the Schools, 2008). However, this was not true for the literacy coaches employed by the district. At the middle school level, the ethnicity of the literacy coaches was almost entirely Caucasian (92%).

Table 1

Percent Breakdown of Central Florida Demographics by Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	Region	County	School district	Middle school literacy coaches
White	77. 9	77. 6	58. 6	92.0
Black	16. 1	10. 5	13. 6	8.0
Hispanic	19. 4	14. 5	17. 9	0.0
Other	6.0	11. 9	9. 7	0.0

Source: Fact Sheet, 2006; State of the Schools, 2008.

Background and Significance

Education must ensure that all students learn (DuFour, 2004). Schools needed to focus on learning and provide the assistance necessary for all students to reach their full potential (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Literacy coaches have provided leadership for a school's literacy program and have been identified as key players in making effective

change in schools (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Sturtevant, 2003). To reach these goals, schools needed to provide meaningful and relevant professional development. The most powerful, job-embedded, and authentic application of professional development was coaching (Fogarty & Pete, 2007).

Coaching improved instruction and was recognized as an effective professional development model (International Reading Association [IRA], 2006). It met many of the standards established to offer guidelines for creating effective professional development (National Staff Development Council, 2001). A literacy coaches' primary role was to work with teachers in the classroom modeling how to teach, observe teachers, and provide feedback as they assisted and supported teachers at their school (Blamey, Mayer, & Walpole, 2008; Dole & Donaldson, 2006). Coaching also provided teachers with the assistance, follow up, and feedback necessary to change instructional practices (Deussen et al., 2007; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; IRA, 2004; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Sturtevant, 2003; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Finally, literacy coaches were responsible for the development and implementation of professional development and provided follow up assistance by coaching, modeling lessons, and facilitating reflective discussions with the teachers (Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004; IRA, 2004; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007).

It appeared that the CFD's goal of having the literacy coaches spend 70% of their time working with teachers was unobtainable. Research revealed elementary school literacy coaches working in the Northwestern states were spending less than 30% of their time working with teachers (Duessen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). Smith's (2007) research regarding middle school coaches also found literacy coaches spent 37% of their time working with teachers. Research conducted by Marsh et al. (2008) recently found that middle school literacy coaches in the state of Florida spent less than half of their time

working with teachers. The district's goals to have the literacy coaches spend 70% of their time coaching teachers to be unobtainable and unrealistic.

Despite the potential benefits of using literacy coaches to affect change (Puig & Froelich, 2007), there was limited research to support the idea that literacy coaching led to improvement in classroom instruction (Deussen & Buly, 2006; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; IRA, 2006). This area of research was now just emerging (Deussen & Buly, 2006; Dole & Donaldson, 2006).

The CFD where the study took place had identified 13 areas that occupied the literacy coaches' time. The CFD placed an emphasis on professional development activities of (a) whole faculty professional development, (b) small group professional development, (c) planning professional development, and (d) personal knowledge building. Additional emphasis was placed on coaching activities such as (a) modeling lessons, (b) coaching, and (c) coach-teacher conferences. Finally, the CFD placed the least amount of emphasis on activities as (a) student assessment, (b) data reporting, (c) data analysis, (d) meetings, and (e) managing reading materials (District Reading Plan, 2008). The District Reading Coordinator confirmed that the district believed providing professional development with the follow up offered by modeling lessons, coteaching, and coaching teachers had the greatest impact on improving classroom instruction. This belief was also supported by a statement from the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! initiative which stated literacy coaches were a valuable professional development resource that improved literacy instruction which also improved student learning (Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004). The coaching model also stated that modeling, coteaching, and coaching were the primary responsibilities of the coach and needed to occur often (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004).

Research Questions

The research study conducted provided answers to the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions about literacy coaching?

2. What are teacher's perceptions about literacy coaches' impact on their instructional practices?

3. What are literacy coaches' perceptions of their impact on instructional practices?

4. To what degree does literacy coaching have upon improving instructional practices?

Definition of Terms

Terminology and definitions are provided for the purpose of this study.

The CFD defined *coaching* as conducting literacy-related professional development, modeling lessons, coteaching in the classroom, supporting progress monitoring assessments, and conferencing with teachers to analyze student performance data (District Reading Plan, 2008).

Literacy coaches and *reading coaches* were used interchangeably throughout the research literature. Literacy coaches were school based teacher-leaders whose primary responsibility was to support reading teachers, intervention teachers, and content area teachers as they infused literacy strategies into their instruction (Blamey et al., 2008; IRA, 2004; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007).

Professional development was defined as ways to engage teachers in learning about instruction through modeling, coaching, mentoring, supporting teachers, and facilitating study groups (Blamey et al., 2008; District Reading Plan, 2008; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Feger, Woleck, & Hickman, 2004; Fogarty & Pete, 2007; Harp, 2002; IRA, 2004; Moxley & Taylor, 2006).

Personal knowledge building was defined as activities that allowed literacy coaches to increase their own knowledge of scientifically based research on reading instruction, interventions, and strategies (Puig & Froelich, 2007).

Chapter Summary

Coaching was accepted as an effective method of providing professional development to improve instructional practices. The CFD studied had employed literacy coaches in all of the middle schools. The district had taken steps to define goals regarding the activities that occupied the literacy coaches' time; however, data and research indicated coaches are not able to meet these goals. This had led to questions by district leadership into the effectiveness of the literacy coaches.

This research answered the questions about the effect literacy coaches had on improving instruction and if teachers perceived literacy coaches as being effective. This research also provided information that could determine future professional development for the middle school coaches. District leadership had indicated interest in the results of the study to make informed decisions regarding the future of coaching in the district.

The paper includes five chapters. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study that discussed the problem and the purpose for the study. It also stated the research questions and defined specific terms used throughout the study. Chapter 2 will present a review of the related literature. The chapter also includes a review of literature that supports the study's research design and methods. Chapter 3 will provide a description of the research design, the methodology for the study, and will explain the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review explored the historical development of coaching beginning in the late 1960s, examined the characteristics and duties of literacy coaches today, reviewed coaching as an effective professional development model through the activities coaches are engaged in today, and investigated the literacy coaches' impact on teaching.

Historical Development of Literacy Coaches

Literacy Coaching and in the area of reading was not new to the educational landscape. Vogt and Shearer (2007) found concerns about students not becoming proficient readers dating back to the late 1960s. These concerns caused an infusion of funding into public schools which resulted in a small number of classroom teachers being assigned the responsibility for assisting students to become more proficient in the area of reading. The teachers given this responsibility worked at both the school and district levels with a wide variety of titles such as reading specialists, reading resource teachers, or reading coordinators. They were given roles as resource teachers, staff developers, reading teachers, and evaluators. Reading specialists became common in most states. These early reading specialists could be found in schools across the country until the early 1990s, when budget cuts began to eliminate the position (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Many schools today have literacy coaches who can trace their origins back to the early specialists of the 1960s and 1970s (IRA, 2004).

As schools continued to struggle to close the achievement gap and meet the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which required teachers to be highly qualified and receive substantial professional development, literacy coaches experienced a comeback in the schools (Poglinco & Bach, 2004; Taylor, Moxley, Chanter & Boulware, 2007). Coaching was seen as a way to help teachers understand how they could develop content knowledge while simultaneously improving literacy

skills (Blamey et al., 2008; IRA, 2006). Furthermore, coaching provided the continuous supported needed by teachers as they attempted to master new instructional practices (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Characteristics and Duties of Literacy Coaches

With literacy coaches focused on classroom teachers and supporting their daily instruction, there were a number of desirable characteristics. Literacy coaches had (a) completed several years of high quality teaching (Deussen & Buly, 2006; IRA, 2004); (b) an extensive knowledge of reading instruction, either through graduate-level coursework or high-quality professional development; (c) experience as presenters and facilitators of adult learning; (d) experience modeling lessons in a classroom setting, observing teachers, and providing feedback to teachers (IRA, 2004; McEachin, Dorman, Reed, Gillmore, & Bray, 2006); and, (e) an understanding of adult learning (Blamey et al., 2008; Butler, Forbes, & Johnson, 2008; Fogarty & Pete, 2007, Tallerico, 2005) .

The literacy coaches' primary role was working with teachers in the classroom. Literacy coaches were modeling how to teach, observing teachers and providing feedback as they assisted and supported teachers in their classrooms (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Literacy coaches needed to support and guide classroom teachers while acting as mentors and assistants (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Finally, research showed that teachers were more willing to change their own instructional practices with the support of the coach (Fogarty & Pete, 2007; Marsh et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2006).

Coaching as a Professional Development Model

The use of coaching within the professional development plan of a school met many of the professional development standards established by the National Staff Development Council in 2001. Literacy coaches were used to assist all teachers to

overcome the challenges of improving student learning (Blamey et al., 2008; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson, 2008). Additionally, literacy coaches were able to help other teachers become more reflective and thoughtful in their teaching (Deussen et al., 2007). Moxley and Taylor (2006) described coaching as "a service that enhances curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, resources, intervention, and community engagement to improve reading, writing and content learning" (p. 9). Follow up contact with the teachers was one major benefit coaching brought to professional development (Moxley & Taylor, 2006). Taylor et al. (2007) found literacy coaches were "most effective when they support the implementation and monitoring of research-based literacy interventions that classroom teachers can infuse into their instruction" (p. 22). Taylor et al. further stated "to be truly effective… a literacy coach must become an expert in literacy learning, teacher leadership, and professional coaching" (p. 25).

Impact on Instruction and Learning

Many schools utilized literacy coaches to provide leadership for the literacy program. Sturtevant (2003) reported coaches helped create and supervise long-term staff development that promoted both the development and implementation of literacy strategies across the curriculum. Utilizing follow up observations and feedback, literacy coaches helped teachers infuse literacy strategies into the content area of the curriculum (Blamey et al., 2008). Literacy coaches also led literacy teams in data analysis and met with teachers to discuss data (Al Otiaba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008; Sturtevant, 2003).

Literacy coaches also facilitated and encouraged collaboration between teachers and administrators (Blamey et al., 2008; Mraz et al., 2008). This was one of the more difficult aspects of the literacy coaches' duties. Research by Zimmerman (2006) found teachers were resistant to change due to fear, failure to recognize the need for change,

and perceived threats to power. To overcome the resistance to change, it was important that literacy coaches spent a great amount of their time initially working to build trusting relationships (Deussen et al., 2007). Literacy coaches must have the respect of the content area teachers to facilitate the collaboration necessary to improve teaching (Blamey et al., 2008; Sturtevant, 2003). In order to work in truly collaborative teams, it was important that literacy coaches also work to change the culture of the school (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Working in a collaborative environment was a relatively new experience as it was a departure from the traditional culture of isolation (Johnson, Knight, & Miller, 2007).

According to the IRA (2006), literacy coaches provided professional development to improve teachers' instructional practices. Coaching utilized a cycle of instruction that allowed the coach to provide model lessons, observe the teacher implementing new instructional strategies, and offer feedback (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). The IRA has reported anecdotal evidence of literacy coaching improving students' learning and growth. Marsh et al. (2008) found mixed evidence of coaching improving students' achievement because there was "small but significant improvements" for some student cohorts, but "no significant associations" with other student cohorts (p. 177). Taylor et al. (2007) reported Boulware's research found literacy coaches reported modeling literacy strategies in the classroom affected learning the most, but it was the professional activity that literacy coaches had the least amount of time to do. According to district personnel this seems to defeat the purpose of using literacy coaches in the schools to improve instruction and learning. There was limited research; however, to support the idea that literacy coaching led to the most improvement in classroom instruction (Deussen & Buly, 2006; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; IRA, 2006).

The district utilized a formal coaching model (Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004). The goals for literacy coaches included collaborating with teachers, working in the

classroom to model specific strategies, observing the teacher implement strategies, providing feedback, and facilitating reflective discussions (Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). The district did not have enough information to determine if the limited amount of time made an impact on changing instructional practices. This question had been discussed with the district reading coordinator. The results of this research will be useful in determining professional development needs of the coaches as well as determining the effectiveness of literacy coaching in the middle schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology and research design were based on methods found in educational research as well as a mixed methods approach. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) stated that there were five broad rationales to using mixed methods research: (a) triangulation, (b) complementarity, (c) development, (d) initiation, and (e) expansion. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained that triangulation attempted to corroborate results from different methods studying the same problem. Complementarity attempted to elaborate and enhance the results from one method with the results of the other method. Development attempted to use the results from one method to inform the other method. Initiation attempted to discover contradictions that result in reframing or refocusing the research questions. Finally, expansion attempted to expand the range of the research by using different methods for different components (Johnson et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

This research design focused on triangulation as it answered the following two research questions: (a) To what degree does literacy coaching have upon improving instructional practices in a middle school setting as measured by student gains made on the SRI Lexile Assessment? and (b) What are teachers' perceptions about literacy coaching and its impact on their instructional practices? Triangulation was selected as the method of implementation because both quantitative and qualitative methods were used simultaneously and with equal weight (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The data was brought together during the analysis and interpretation phase of the research.

Research Design and Methodology

Quantitative. The quantitative design was best described as using descriptive statistics to determine the effect of literacy coaching on changing instructional practices to improve student learning. The variables would be whether the teacher worked closely

with the literacy coach and the percentage of students who scored at proficient levels on the first and last Lexile assessment.

This research was a quasi-experimental method due to the inability to utilize random assignments to create a control group and experimental group. Working in a school setting, literacy coaches potentially interact with all teachers. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) defined a quasi-experimental design as a nonequivalent control-group design where the participants would not be randomly assigned to a control and experimental group. According to Gall et al. (2007), this was the most common design in educational research.

Research participants responded to a questionnaire to determine the teachers' perceptions of the literacy coach at their school. Student learning was measured using a pretest and posttest approach by comparing student performance data from the Lexile assessment. The baseline pretest data was collected near the beginning of the academic school year. The posttest data was collected from the last administration of the Lexile assessment near the end of the school year.

Qualitative. The qualitative design was a case study approach. Case studies were defined as "(a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 447). The case study methodology was utilized with an equal weight to the quantitative methodology for this research. Case studies were ideal when the investigation required detail, was focused on how and why an action succeeded or failed, and when the environment or situational setting influenced the outcome (Keen & Packwood, 1995). Another benefit of utilizing case study research was when the problem was not well defined and not easily separated from other influencing factors (Keen & Packwood, 1995).

Ethical issues in case study research. Flinders indentified four types of ethics to consider when conducting case studies (as cited in Gall et al., 2007). Flinders further stated the four types were (a) utilitarian ethics, defined as judgments on the morality of decisions and actions in relation to the consequences; (b) deontological ethics, defined as judgments on the morality of decisions in relation to absolute values; (c) relational ethics, defined as judgments on the morality of decisions related to a caring attitude toward others; and (d) ecological ethics, defined as judgment on the morality of decisions in relation to the participants culture and other social systems (as cited in Gall et al., 2007).

Participants

Quantitative sampling procedures. The population studied were literacy coaches and teachers employed in middle schools in public school districts in the state of Florida. Teachers were identified as those who hold a valid teaching certificate from the State of Florida and were the teacher of record for any content area class. Literacy coaches were identified as those who hold a valid teaching certificate from the State of Florida and were identified as a Reading or Literacy Coach by the principal of their school. The sample chosen was a convenience sample of the coaches and a convenience sample of teachers in one central Florida district. These samples were chosen because the researcher was a part of the group and had access to important data already collected by the district. As a part of the group, the researcher had also previously developed a level of trust and camaraderie with the participants. This previous relationship with the group improved the response rate for the teachers and coaches participating in the survey. The sample of student performance data to be analyzed will be a random sample determined by selecting teachers who were observed working with the literacy coach.

Qualitative sampling procedures. Using a case study approach, two cases were selected by a purposeful sampling process of identifying an exemplary coach and a 1st-

year coach. These coaches were identified through a telephone conversation with the district Secondary Reading Coordinator. Additionally, the researcher is a part of the literacy coaching group for the district and personally knew both of the coaches. An exemplary coach and a 1st-year coach would be the focus of direct observations. An exemplary coach was defined as someone who has been recognized by their peers as the district middle school coach of the year. A 1st-year coach was defined as someone who did not have previous coaching experience in the middle school setting.

Instruments

 Lexile assessment. Student performance data was measured by a valid and reliable nation-wide assessment. Metametrics developed the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Lexile assessment. The Lexile assessment was a scientifically proven method of measuring text difficulty and reading ability (Lennon & Burdick, 2004). The CFD used the SRI Lexile assessment as a progress monitoring tool for all students in Grade 3 – 12.

 Teacher perception survey. Teacher perception of literacy coaches was measured using an instrument developed by Marsh and her colleagues to be used in their resent research study (See Appendix B). The constructs used in the Rand Corporation survey had high levels of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was used on items that have several possible answers (Gall et al., 2007). According to Garson (2008), alpha levels over 0.70 were acceptable as an indicator of internal reliability. The constructs used in this survey had alpha coefficient scores over 0.70 (Marsh et al., 2008). The expected response rate for the teacher's perception survey was approximately 60% (Gall et al., 2007; Hannen, 2007).

 Coach survey. Coaches were given a survey developed by researchers at the University of Central Florida (Wegmann & Bedenbaugh, 2008) to determine the coaches' perceptions of effectiveness (see Appendix C). The reliability of the coach survey was

not determined; however, the researchers followed Babbie's guidelines of asking only

relevant and clear questions that people are likely to know the answers to (L.

Bedenbaugh, personal communication, September 10, 2008). The validity of the coach

survey was determined by using a review process that submitted the various questions to

different area coordinators employed by the Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence

Center (FLaRE) as well as the Read First Professional Development (RFPD) initiative (L.

Bedenbaugh, personal communication, September 10, 2008). The response rate was

100% due to the limited sample size of district middle school coaches (n=12). The

researcher was also a member of this population and personally knew the other middle

school coaches for a number of years which contributed to the response rate.

  Observations. Finally, the observations for the case study used the coach's time

log required by the Florida Department of Education. This log was reported to the

Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) developed by the Florida Center

for Reading Research (FCRR). This online log was transcribed into an off-line document

(see Appendix D). The researcher scheduled biweekly observation sessions with the case

study participants. The observation sessions lasted no longer than 3 hours and did not

exceed seven observations over the course of the study. The observation instrument

provided a way to document the amount of time the coach spends in each of 13 categories

and allowed a deeper description of the activities conducted within the category.

Procedures

  Dialogue regarding the examination of literacy coaching practices, the teachers'

perceived impact on instruction and student achievement began with email

correspondence with the district's Secondary Reading Coordinator in August 2008. After

further dialogue regarding the research design, the Reading Coordinator agreed that the

district could benefit from the information gathered from this study. In 2007, this

researcher had participated in the field testing of the Rand Corporation's survey. In September 2008, this researcher contacted the Principal Investigator for permission to use the Teacher Perception Survey. In April 2007, this researcher had attended a local literacy conference where one of the sessions was the Role of the Reading Coach presented by the researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF). This researcher contacted the Principal Investigators at UCF in September 2008. They also allowed this researcher to use their survey in this research.

   Surveys. This researcher determined that the most efficient way to distribute the Teacher Perception Survey and the Coaches Survey would be through email. The teachers and literacy coaches at the middle schools were sent a precontact email alerting them of the arrival of the survey, which came through their email the next day. Gall et al. (2007) stated that precontacting participants increases the response rate. The participation letter emailed to the teachers and coaches included a direct link to the questionnaire. This letter was distributed to participants through their work email. The email was sent from the researcher's Nova Southeastern University email account. The survey completed by teachers and coaches did not ask for any information that could be potentially linked back to the individual responding. The survey was conducted through SurveyMonkey and no information that could potentially identify a participant was retrieved or retained. Survey Monkey offered the ability to create a password protected account that was used to gather the data. Additionally, there was no way to track people who responded. Only the person responding to the survey would know if they chose to participate or not. Participants who chose to complete the survey were given two weeks to complete the survey online. If teachers decided to participate, they completed a one-time survey that took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey was online which could be accessed through a link provided in an email. If literacy coaches decided to participate, they completed a one-

time survey that took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey was online which could be accessed through a link provided in an email. Participants who chose not to participate were not affected in their treatment by their school or the district in any way because that information was not available to anyone.

Student data. The student data analyzed was part of the performance data regularly collected by the district. As such, this data did not need assent or consent forms. There was no additional participant recruitment as all student data was de-identified and only reported as aggregate scores.

Case studies. The two case study participants completed a consent form that was personally delivered by the researcher at individually scheduled meetings. These meetings took place at the literacy coach's school in April 2009. They had an opportunity to review the consent form and ask any questions at that time. Furthermore, they were also provided contact information for the researcher and had the opportunity to ask questions at any time. The case study participants had one week to consider participating in the study, although each case study participant agreed to participate in the study at the meeting. The consent forms were returned to the researcher the day of the meeting. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms for the individuals, their schools, and the district. The district was referred to as the Central Florida District (CFD) while the two middle schools were referred to as Middle School A and Middle School B. The observations were scheduled in coordination of the participant's schedule to prevent observation sessions conflicting with meetings requiring the participant to be off campus or other events that prevent the participant from working with teachers in their school. The seven observation sessions lasted no longer than 3 hours.

The researcher maintained a researcher identity by taking the role of a participant-observer (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The observation instrument was a coding sheeting

developed from the literacy coaches log used by the State of Florida (see Appendix D).

Data Analysis

   Quantitative data analysis. The data generated by the surveys was analyzed

through a multiple regression model. This model was used to "determine the correlation

between a criterion variable and a combination of two or more predictor variables" (Gall

et al., 2007, p. 353). Additionally, the data was examined using a one-tailed *t*-test. This

test determined if the results were statistically significant.

   Another quantitative technique that was used was a multivariate correlational

method. According to Gall et al. (2007), this method allowed "one to describe and

explore the relationship between three or more variables at a time" (p. 137). The collected

data showed the relationship between the amount of time a coach spent with a teacher

and the student's performance on the Lexile assessment. Gall et al. further stated

"multivariate correlational methods enable researchers to study how these factors, both

singly and in combination, affect outcome variables such as academic achievement" (p.

137). An advantage to using correlational designs was the ability to provide information

about the "degree of the relationship between the variables" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 336). A

disadvantage to multivariate correlational methods was the tendency to try to measure too

many variables, known as the shotgun approach, which should be avoided (Gall et al.,

2007). Another disadvantage was the inability to determine cause-and-effect relationships

between the variables. In order to accurately determine this, further experiments must be

conducted because there could be a number of ways to achieve academic success (Gall et

al., 2007).

   Qualitative data analysis. The findings of the case study were analyzed using an

interpretational analysis approach. Gall et al. (2007) described the process of using

interpretational analysis as segmenting the data into smaller parts that contain one item of

information and then developing categories from the information collected. After categories were labeled, these were coded to allow further analysis.

The data gathered and analyzed through the case study should be "applicable to other cases or cases" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 477). The responsibility for determining applicability of the case study was on the reader, however. This research provided a "thick description of the participants and contexts that comprise the case" and "address the issue of whether the selected case is representative of the general phenomenon being investigated" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 478).

Anticipated Outcomes

It was anticipated that sites where the literacy coach was able to engage in coaching activities such as modeling lessons in teachers' classrooms more frequently would have a greater impact on instructional practices than literacy coaches who did not engage in coaching activities as often. This impact on instructional practices would result in a greater percentage of students who made gains on the SRI Lexile Assessment compared to those classes where the literacy coach was less active. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of literacy coaches would be favorable and the teachers would report that working with the literacy coach led to an impact on instructional practices. Furthermore, this study informed the various stakeholders in the district that the use of literacy coaches in the middle schools had a positive effect. As the district continued to look at data and engaged in the continuous improvement process, information revealed in the case study would identify weaknesses and inform professional development decisions for literacy coaches as they continued their professional growth.

Limitations

Gall et al. (2007) explained the main threat to a nonequivalent control-group design was the difference in results on the posttest would be due to something other than

the treatment being studied. An analysis of covariance was used to reduce this threat.

Another way to reduce this threat was through the qualitative data to determine if groups

of students who performed better on the Lexile were part of the teachers' classes where

the coach was able to work improving instruction.

Gall et al. (2007) explained that an advantage to using a case study approach was

the ability to help the reader compare the cases presented to their own situations. The

case study also allowed the reader to understand the researcher's perspective on the

situation to determine if it was similar to their own. Potential weaknesses to using a case

study approach were the difficulty of generalizing the findings to other situations and

potentially ethical problems if the identity of the organization or case study subjects can

not be shielded. Ethical problems were addressed through relational ethical standards.

Gall et al. explained that "relational ethics require, among other things, that the case

study researcher be a sensitive, fully engaged member of the participants' community"

(p. 460). As a respected member of the group of middle school coaches, the researcher

had an established bond to the community.

Chapter 4: Results

Coaching has been proven to be an effective method of improving instructional practices (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Deussen et al., 2007; Fogarty & Pete, 2007; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005; IRA, 2006; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Sturtevant, 2003; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). The CFD's coaching model required literacy coaches to spend 70% of their time working with teachers, yet research has demonstrated that this may not be possible (Deussen et al., 2007; Marsh et al., 2008; Smith, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy coaching in the CFD. The district model met the criteria established by the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! initiative by utilizing a formal model of coaching (Just Read Florida Coaching Model, 2004; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). In a formal coaching model, literacy coaches collaborated with teachers, worked in the classroom to model specific strategies, observed the teacher implement strategies, provided feedback, and facilitated reflective discussions (Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). The primary responsibility of literacy coaches was to work with teachers either through professional development or other coaching activities.

The researcher administered a survey developed by the Rand Corporation to examine teachers' perceptions of coaching. This survey was distributed to a random selection of middle school teachers across the district. The researcher also administered a survey developed by researchers at the University of Central Florida to examine literacy coaches' perceptions of their role as a coach. This survey was distributed to all the middle school literacy coaches across the district. Finally, this researcher conducted a case study of two literacy coaches in the district. The purpose of the case study research was to provide examples of two literacy coaches working to improve instruction in their schools (Gall et al., 2007).

This chapter presents the results of data analysis aimed at answering the following four research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions about literacy coaching?

2. What are teacher's perceptions about literacy coaches' impact on their instructional practices?

3. What are literacy coaches' perceptions of their impact on instructional practices?

4. To what degree does literacy coaching have upon improving instructional practices?

The findings from the data collection are presented from the teachers' perceptions of literacy coaches, the literacy coaches' perceptions of themselves, and as changes in student achievement from a random selection of teachers who were observed working with the literacy coach compared to changes in student achievement from another random selection of teachers who were not observed working with the literacy coach.

Teacher Perception Survey Results

The Teacher Perception Survey (see Appendix B) included 112 responses out of 166 surveys which was a 68% return rate. The teachers who responded were all employed by the district's middle schools and taught a variety of academic subjects in grade 6 (57%), grade 7 (68%), and grade 8 (61%). Additionally, Reading/Language Arts teachers responded overwhelmingly (47%) compared to other subject areas such as Mathematics (26%), Science (20%), Social Studies (14%), and other elective areas (28%). The other elective areas included ESE teachers, physical education teachers, art teachers, foreign language teachers as well as other elective areas. Additionally, the teachers had an average career length of just over 15 years and an average time spent at their current school of just less than 7 years. The majority of the teachers had attained a

master's degree (49%), while most held a bachelor's degree (43%) and the remainder

held either an Educational Specialist (4%) or doctorate degree (4%). Most of the teachers

did not hold the state's reading certification or the state's reading endorsement nor were

they actively pursuing either the certification or the endorsement (68%). Only 16% of the

teachers held either the state's reading certification or the state's reading endorsement but

18% of the teachers were working towards either the certification or the endorsement.

When asked about their classes, the teachers reported that their class size was

approximately 18 students with an almost equal number of students who were classified

as either ESE or those who scored a Level 1 or a Level 2 on the previous year's FCAT.

The teachers almost unanimously responded that they had access to assessment

information for their students (90%) and the majority of teachers indicated they referred

to the assessment results to help plan instruction (69%). A majority of teachers also

indicated that they received adequate support to interpret the assessment results (71%).

When asked about changes to their instruction, teachers reported the most changes

in the methods of teaching vocabulary (70%), the way they tailor instruction for different

student abilities (66%), and how they changed the way they considered students abilities

when developing assignments (65%). Despite the high percentage of teachers who used

more methods for teaching vocabulary, which was a result of the district-wide vocabulary

initiative, a large percentage did not change the introduction or review of vocabulary

(42%). Additionally, teachers reported a variety of people who influenced changes in

instruction, including other teachers (74%), the literacy coach (69%), school

administrators (54%), external consultants (45%), and district staff members (39%).

Despite other teachers influencing instruction more than literacy coaches, an

overwhelming majority of teachers had interacted with their literacy coach (90%).

When asked about activities the literacy coach has performed since the beginning

of school, a majority of teachers reported that the coach had never come to their classroom to model a lesson (59%). Teachers reported that the literacy coach engaged in the following activities only a few times a year: (a) provided information about reading instruction through professional development (56%), (b) observed instruction (49%), (c) provided feedback about instruction (43%), (d) reviewed student assessment with the teacher (47%), and (e) helped locate or create curricular resources (42%).

The teachers agreed that the literacy coach had a strong knowledge of the best practices in reading instruction (94%), understood their needs (73%), helped teachers adapt instruction based on an analysis of student performance data (53%), maintained confidentiality (72%), understood middle school culture (86%), was trusted (80%), provided feedback without feeling evaluative (77%), and explained the research or reasons behind different instructional strategies (73%). Furthermore, teachers disagreed that the literacy coach had a limited understanding of the needs of the students (59%) or that the literacy coach had limited time to support the teachers (48%).

Teachers agreed that as a result of working with the literacy coach, they felt more confident in their teaching abilities (54%), made improvements in their instructional practices (54%), and were better able to plan and organize their instruction (48%). However, the teachers did not feel the literacy coach improved their students' motivation to read (46%). When considering the extent of the literacy coach helping to make changes in instructional practices, teachers reported that the coach helped a great extent 21% of the time and either a small or moderate extent 51%. Fifteen percent of the teachers felt the literacy coach did not help make any instructional changes. When asked about other school or district leaders providing support, other teachers provided information at professional development sessions (56%), helped review students assessment data (44%), and helped create curricular materials (51%). School

administrators only observed instruction (69%) and provided feedback (60%). District staff did not have a significant role supporting teachers with the exception of visiting classes to observe instruction (22%). No other school or district leaders helped the teachers by modeling lessons (76%), assisted in lesson planning (58%), worked with individual students (74%), discussed opportunities to serve as a resource for other teachers (82%), helped with classroom management (68%), or helped administer student assessments such as fluency tests (68%).

The climate in the schools was favorable. Most of the teachers agreed that their colleagues shared a focus on student learning (96%), the school had a clear strategy for improving instruction (81%), there was a shared vision and mission (80%), the teachers were respected by their colleagues (92%), and were continually learning new ideas (77%). Despite the positive feelings reported by the teachers, 55% of the teachers disagreed that morale was high. Many teachers (55%) reported that student's lack of motivation was a great hindrance in the school's ability to improve student performance.

When asked about the school's principal, teachers agreed that the principal communicated a clear academic vision (86%), set high standards for teaching (93%), encouraged teachers to review and incorporate the Sunshine State Standards into their instruction (82%), helped teachers adapt curriculum based on an analysis of FCAT results (74%), expected all staff members to work with the literacy coach (77%), provided adequate time for professional development (77%), enforced student conduct policies and supported the teachers regarding discipline issues (82%), ensured the school ran smoothly (78%), and was someone who could be trusted (72%).

Literacy Coach Survey Results

The literacy coaches reported that the average number of students in the middle schools was 1150, with the largest schools over 1350 and the smallest just over 1050. The

district's charter school was approximately 125. The average percentage of students who received free or reduced lunch was 36%. The highest percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch was 52% and the lowest percentage was 20%. Again, the district's charter school had 55% of the student receiving free or reduced lunch.

The literacy coaches had an average of 5 years experience coaching. One coach had 15 years of coaching experience and five coaches had three years or less coaching experience. Six of the coaches had more than 10 years teaching experience prior to becoming a literacy coach. The average teaching experience was 15 years. The literacy coaches either earned their teaching certificate through a 4 year teacher education program or through an alternative certification program. The coaches employed by the CFD did not have much formal training prior to being hired as a literacy coach. As shown in Table 2, the coaches who received formal training had attended coaching workshops or conferences hosted by the Just Read, Florida office. Other coaches reported attending professional development sessions hosted by the district after they had been hired as a literacy coach.

Table 2

Literacy Coaches Education Leading to Certification and Training

Education prior to teaching certification	%
4 year teacher education program	78
Alternative certification program	22
Formal Literacy Coach Training	
Prior to coaching employment	30
Post coaching employment	30
No formal training	40

The literacy coaches reported that they spent approximately 10 hours a week in the classroom. The top three duties that coaches reported they spent the most time on during an average week were coaching, data analysis, and assessment. Professional

development was the next most time consuming duty, with many coaches listing this fourth. The coaches reported that the three most important duties that had the most impact on student's literacy development were coaching, professional development and modeling lessons in the classroom. The coaches further reported that the three least important duties were the responsibilities for coordinating assessments, data entry, and the management of reading materials.

Most of the coaches reported that they enjoyed their role in the school, but some of the coaches said they felt overwhelmed by the amount of assessments they have to conduct. Many of the coaches reported they would like more opportunities to work in the classroom with teachers and students. The coaches also would like to have more time to conduct professional development.

When asked what literacy coaches should do, the coaches in the CFD reported that all literacy coaches should spend more time coaching, have the systemic support provided by the CFD, be assigned a mentor coach in their 1st year, have a good understanding of adult learning, and develop a trusting relationship with the teachers. When asked what coaches should never do, the coaches reported that literacy coaches should never be an evaluator, be a data entry clerk, be used as a substitute, be forced to choose between coaching and assessment responsibilities, act as an expert, or be negative with teachers.

Case Study Results

Two coaches were selected to participate in the case study. The coaches represented an extremes sample because one coach had many years of teaching and coaching experience and had also been recognized as the district's Coach of the Year for 2007-2008. The other coach was new to the middle school setting and had less years of teaching experience and no experience in teaching at the middle school level.

Both coaches attended regular monthly meetings. One meeting was the first Tuesday of each month and lasted approximately 4 hours. This was the district literacy leadership team meeting. The second monthly meeting was typically the third Friday of each month and lasted approximately 6 hours. This was the middle school literacy coaches meeting.

District literacy leadership team meetings. This meeting was attended by the school principal, the assistant principal in charge of literacy, the literacy coach, the district Secondary Reading Coordinator, and the district Executive Director for Middle Schools. These meetings were facilitated by a consultant from the Center for Data Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) and based out of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. These meetings were commonly referred to as CDDRE meetings. The CDDRE meetings were also held at various schools around the district, but only lasted approximately 4 hours. Frequent topics of discussion were leadership skills, student performance data, and concerns with the implementation of the two reading programs used by the district.

At one observed CDDRE meeting, the topic of discussion for most of the morning was how leaders develop a common purpose through focusing on what is important and using a language of collaboration. The conversation also turned toward developing strategic thinking, defined as long term planning without sacrificing tactical thinking, defined as more immediate needs. At the end of the meeting, the conversation centered on how to plan for the future by improving personnel and structures within the schools.

Coaches meetings. These meetings were held at different schools around the district. These meetings lasted approximately 6 hours or 1 school day, with a variety of activities taking place in the day. Coaches would either leave campus for lunch, where the conversations started earlier in the day would continue informally, or they would stay

on campus have something delivered which enabled them to continue uninterrupted. The meetings followed a similar agenda where district-wide information was shared in the beginning of the meeting, coaches divided into smaller groups to conduct classroom walkthrough observations, then the coaches got back together to debrief the observations, and there was a professional development session designed to improve the coaching skills of the coaches. During the debriefing and professional development activities, the coaches had an opportunity to discuss coaching issues and concerns and other professional development needs for the teachers.

During one observed district meeting, the coaches met with an outside consultant from the Success For All Foundation. The Success For All Foundation provided one of the two intensive reading curriculums used by the district. The consultant accompanied the coaches as they visited reading classrooms to conduct observations of the implementation of a particular strategy as a way to focus the coaching conversation that followed the observations. The dialogue that ensued after the observation was one in which the coaches were able to share and discuss issues they were having with teachers, ideas about how to have discussions with teachers, the types of reflective questions to use when guiding teachers dialogue, and various ways to collect and utilize classroom data. The coaches frequently used each other as resources to discuss these kinds of concerns in between the monthly district meetings.

An additional topic at this coaches meeting was a discussion about developing a placement protocol for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year, conducted by the district's Supervisor of Testing and Accountability. This placement protocol was developed out of a need to standardize the placement methodology for those students who were required to be enrolled in an intensive reading class. Prior to the placement protocol development, each school had slightly different criteria that was considered after obtaining the student's

FCAT score and fluency score. For students without FCAT scores, most schools only used fluency scores to make reading placement decisions. By the end of the day, the coaches had developed a placement protocol that looked at multiple measures to ensure the proper placement of students into the intensive reading classes. This placement protocol made it easier for the coaches to conduct data analysis sessions with the reading teachers and administrators at their school.

Coach A. Coach A was currently serving as the literacy coach for Middle School A and had been an educator for 8 years. She had taught a variety of subject areas in the high school setting. She had experience teaching low-level students, which is the group of students that the literacy coaches interact with most frequently. She had no formal training prior to becoming the school's literacy coach. She was selected to participate because it was her 1st year as a middle school coach.

During the site visits to Middle School A, the researcher observed Coach A engaged in a variety of activities throughout the course of the observation period. She was observed engaged in student assessment activities (41%), coaching activities (15%), planning for professional development (14%), teacher-coach conferences (10%), substituting for a reading teacher (10%), and relocating the book room (6%).

During the first site visit, she was facilitating a professional development session with the reading teachers. This professional development encouraged the teachers to share classroom experiences when the students were engaged in small group discussions. She also conducted a classroom observation in one of the intensive reading classes. The focus of the observation was to check on the implementation of the new district vocabulary initiative. The initiative was designed to improve vocabulary instruction by utilizing Marzano's Building Academic Vocabulary.

During the second site visit, she was observed moving books from the school's

current book room to a location in her office. After spending some time boxing books in preparation for the move, she was called to sub for a reading classroom. The researcher observed this class for one class period, which lasted 45 minutes. By the end of the class, the school had not yet found a substitute and the site visit was ended early.

During the third site visit, Coach A was engaged in planning for an upcoming professional development session with the reading teachers. One reading teacher came to visit her office for a teacher-coach conference during that teacher's plan period. The conversation centered on classroom assessment data and how the data could be used to improve instruction for the upcoming lessons. After the conference with the teacher, she went to conduct a classroom observation of another reading teacher. At the conclusion of the observation, she did not leave any written notes. When questioned by the research how she conducted follow up debriefings with the teachers, she stated that she wrote up the observation in summary form and sent it to the teachers via email. If teachers had questions or wanted to discuss anything, they would seek her out.

During the fourth and fifth site visits, Coach A was conducting Lexile testing in one of the school's computer labs. During the fourth visit, she was facilitating testing with the teacher in the computer lab. Her administration expected her to spend the entire day assisting the teachers and ensuring that the students were able to log in to the computer to take the test. During the fifth visit, she was conducting make up tests. This testing was for those students who were absent on their scheduled test day or did not take the test for some reason. She anticipated spending approximately 6 hours conducting make up tests.

Coach B. Coach B was currently serving as the literacy coach for Middle School B and had been an educator for over 30 years. She had taught in elementary schools and had experience teaching adults. She also had experience working in a variety of settings,

from inner city schools in a major city located in South Florida to rural schools in

Pennsylvania. Her coaching experience included 4 years of elementary coaching as a part

of the Reading First program, a federally funded reading program. The Reading First

program focused on "putting proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms"

(U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 155). Additionally, she had worked at Middle

School B as a literacy coach for 3 years prior to participating in the study. She was

selected to participate because she had been recognized as the district's Middle School

Coach of the Year for 2007-2008 and was also a regional finalist for the state's Coach of

the Year award. Furthermore, her experience working as a professional development

trainer for school level trainings, district level trainings and the state level trainings have

all helped her in role as a literacy coach. She further described her role as being a part of

the administrative team at her school where she regularly met with the principal and

assistant principals to increase all aspects of literacy. Her responsibilities included

serving as the team leader for the reading team, facilitating professional development

which included follow up observations and support, conducting and coordinating student

assessments for reading placement and ongoing progress monitoring, assisting the

guidance counselors with student scheduling, conducting data analysis on student

performance data including FCAT, fluency data, and Lexile data. Finally, one additional

responsibility was to be a point of contact for parents who had questions about the school,

instructional practices, and wanted more information about the reading programs.

 During the site visits to Middle School B, the researcher observed Coach B

engaged in a variety of activities throughout the course of the observation period. She

was observed engaged in coaching activities (45%); student assessment activities (21%);

other duties such as responding to email, data entry, and hall supervision (11%); planning

for professional development (9%); conducting data analysis (6%); attending meetings at

her school (5%); and, engaged in teacher-coach conferences (2%).

During the first site visit, she conducted student fluency assessment to gather data as the school began to anticipate potential regression in reading proficiency, she met with administrators regarding a student's placement in reading, she responded to email, and prepared for her next classroom observation. After a brief time spent responding to her email, she returned to a classroom to continue fluency assessments.

At the second site visit, she met with two reading teachers to discuss the analysis of a classroom assessment and she met with the students to discuss their assessment results. She spent time discussing what the students could do to improve their scores and asked the students how she could help them as well. After meeting with the teachers, she conducted a data analysis of fluency scores to create a projected number of students who may need to be enrolled in the intensive reading classes for the upcoming school year.

At the third site visit, she was planning an upcoming professional development session for science teachers. This session was focused on how to improve the implementation of Marzano's Building Academic Vocabulary, which was a district-wide and school-wide focus on improving vocabulary instruction. She also conducted classroom observations with two reading teachers. She left a brief note in each teacher's classroom providing a quick summary of positive remarks. These observations were followed up by a more detailed debrief later in the day, which were unobserved by the researcher.

At the fourth site visit, she was engaged in more miscellaneous responsibilities. She spent a short amount of time in a meeting that focused on an upcoming math initiative. An additional responsibility that she has accepted at her school was to be the chair for the school's behavior plan committee. As the leader of that committee, she was required to spend a short amount of time preparing for an upcoming meeting. After

finishing the agenda for the meeting, she returned to finish fluency testing for a reading class. During the fluency testing, she took the time to discuss the fluency scores with the students as well as ways to improve their reading. When she finished the fluency testing, the reading teacher initiated a brief discussion about the results, which was followed up by a more in-depth discussion at the end of the school day. This discussion was not observed by the researcher.

At the fifth site visit, she again was engaged in other responsibilities. One of the other responsibilities was to be the site coordinator for a reading incentive program, Reading Counts. As the site coordinator, she was responsible for printing award certificates for those students who met yearly goals. Additionally, with the completion of fluency testing, she was responsible for entering student performance data into an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was valuable to the administration because it contained students' demographic data as well most of their performance data. The administration, guidance department, and literacy coach used this information to assist in student placement decisions for the new school year. In addition to the data entry, she received a telephone call from the district's Secondary Reading Coordinator to discuss data collected from fifth-grade students in preparation for the transition to middle school in the upcoming school year. The main topic of conversation was the data reporting process and the type of data being collected. The district was attempting to streamline and improve the reporting process and improve the type of information being provided from the elementary schools.

In summary, the two literacy coaches engaged in similar activities during the observation period, yet the percentage of time spent in the different activities varied greatly. As Table 3 indicated, during the visits to the more experienced coach, coaching activities dominated the activities. The less experienced coach seemed to be

overwhelmed by the amount of assessment responsibilities and was not able to return much of the testing responsibilities to the teachers.

Table 3

Case Study Results

Activity Observed	Percent	
	Coach A	Coach B
Attending meetings at the school	-	5
Coaching	15	45
Data analysis	-	6
Managing Reading Material	6	-
Other duties are required	-	11
Professional Development Planning	14	9
Student Assessment	41	21
Substitute Teaching	10	-
Teacher-Coach Conference	10	2

Note: - indicated activity not observed.

Student Performance Data Results

Student performance data was collected from teachers who were observed working with their school's literacy coach. This data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to compare the percentage of students who scored at proficient levels on the first assessment in the fall to the last assessment in the spring. This data attempted to answer the research question regarding the impact of coaching on improving instruction measured by student performance. The student performance data can be found in Appendix E.

An analysis of student proficiency percentages was conducted comparing the group of teachers who worked with their literacy coach to a group of similar teachers who did not work with their literacy coach. A paired-samples *t*-test revealed significant differences in the Lexile proficiency scores before and after working with the literacy coach throughout the year, $t(5) = -5.98$, $p < 0.002$. Additionally, a paired-samples *t*-test revealed significant differences in the Lexile proficiency scores of those teachers who did

not work with the literacy coach, $t(5) = -10.00$, p < 0.00. Furthermore, the mean proficiency score after working with the literacy coach ($M = 65.83$) was significantly higher than the mean proficiency score before working with the literacy coach ($M = 52.83$). Finally, the mean proficiency score at the end of the year ($M = 66.83$) was significantly higher than the mean at the beginning of the year ($M = 63.5$).

As shown in Appendix F, the correlation tests between proficiency scores in the group of teachers who received coaching indicated that there was a strong correlation between the coaching and the student's scores. The group of teachers who had received coaching throughout the year had a correlation of 0.949. For the group of teachers who did not receive coaching, the correlation was smaller, yet still high at 0.933. The difference in scores between the groups of teachers showed that there may be a small, but significant difference in favor of coaching. A question that developed out of the analysis was if there was a significant difference between the two coaches in the case study. The results of a paired-sample *t*-test indicated that the coach at Middle School B had a stronger correlation and statistically significant difference between the proficiency scores of the teachers at her school compared to the coach at Middle School A.

Results Summary

This chapter presented the findings associated with this mixed-methods research study. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to address the research questions presented in chapter 1.

The qualitative results from the Teacher Perception Survey provided information that supported the district's position that literacy coaches had a positive impact on instructional practices. The qualitative results from the Role of the Literacy Coach Survey also supported the idea that coaches felt their most important duties were associated with helping teachers improve instructional practices in their classroom. The

case study results also supported these findings. However, in the case study findings, there appeared to be a difference in the amount of time the coach regularly spent working with teachers. The more experienced coach was able to spend more time coaching in the classrooms despite having the same assessment responsibilities. The less experienced coach tended to spend more time conducting assessments and was, unfortunately, required to act as a substitute teacher during one of the observation periods.

The quantitative results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between student proficiency scores but there was only a small correlation between those teachers who worked with a coach and those who did not. Despite the small difference, the group of teachers who worked with the coach had a higher mean gain in proficiency scores.

Examining all the data together, the results indicated that literacy coaches do have a positive impact on teachers feeling more confident in their instruction. Teachers felt that they experienced an improvement in their instructional practices was a result of working with the literacy coach. Literacy coaches also felt they had the greatest impact when working with teachers in their classrooms. Finally, the student achievement data supported the findings that coaching could improve student performance. The results revealed that the students who were in classes where their teachers worked with the literacy coach had greater overall gains in performance.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter consists of nine parts: (a) an introduction, (b) summary of the study, (c) discussion of the results, (d) conclusions, (e) implications of the findings, (f) recommendations, (g) limitations, (h) recommendations for future research, and (i) a final note from the author. The introduction frames the issues that led to this study. The summary includes the purpose of this study, problem statement, research questions, and methodology. Observations drawn from the data analysis are found in the discussion section. Based on the findings from the data analysis, conclusions are made regarding the impact literacy coaching has on instruction and the correlation to student achievement. Recommendations regarding the district's literacy coaching model and implications for future research are included as well.

Introduction

The CFD utilized a formal model of literacy coaching, where coaches were expected to collaborate with teachers; teach model lessons focused on specific strategies; observe instruction and provide timely, nonevaluative feedback; and, facilitate reflective discussions. Additionally, literacy coaches were expected to provide professional development and the necessary follow up to ensure long-lasting change in instructional practices. The literature review provided consistent findings regarding the roles and expectations for literacy coaches.

Literacy coaches were more successful if they were able to spend time focused on the coaching responsibilities such as conferencing with teachers, modeling lessons in the classroom, providing timely and relevant professional development, and assisting the teachers to make data-based decisions regarding instructional practices (IRA, 2004; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). The coaching process used a cycle of effective instruction that allowed literacy coaches to be the most effective when interacting with teachers (Taylor

et al., 2007; Vogt & Shearer, 2007).

Summary of the Study

This study was designed to be a mixed-method examination of literacy coaches employed in the middle school setting. Participants were middle school teachers and literacy coaches in a Southeastern United States school district. Qualitative data from the results of a survey sent to middle school teachers, a survey sent to middle school literacy coaches, and two literacy coaches who were case study participants was combined with quantitative data collected from teachers showing aggregate student proficiency scores. This data was compared to determine if literacy coaches had an impact on instruction and student achievement. The study served four purposes:

1. Determine the effectiveness of the coaching model utilized by the CFD in changing instructional practices as measured by teachers' perceptions.

2. Determine the effectiveness of the coaching model utilized by the CFD in changing instructional practices as measured by literacy coaches' perceptions.

3. Determine the effectiveness of literacy coaching on instructional practices as measured by student proficiency scores on the Lexile assessment.

4. Determine lessons learned in order to make recommendation for future development of the district's coaching model.

Chapter 4 presented the results of data analysis meant to answer the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions about literacy coaching?

2. What are teacher's perceptions about literacy coaches' impact on their instructional practices?

3. What are literacy coaches' perceptions of their impact on instructional practices?

4. To what degree does literacy coaching have upon improving instructional practices?

The research design utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to form a mixed-method design. The data contained within this study were collected from surveys, on-site observations, and student assessments administered throughout the district as an ongoing progress monitoring tool. Participants were 12 literacy coaches, two of whom were also case study participants, 112 middle school teachers who completed an online survey, and 12 unidentifiable teachers from two schools. The two schools were the sites of the case study and the 6 of the 12 teachers were a snowball sample generated from having worked with their literacy coach during the observation period. The other 6 of the 12 teachers were a random selection of teachers who were not observed working with their literacy coach. The quantitative data examined from those 12 teachers were aggregate student proficiency percentages from two Lexile assessments normally required by the district. The findings were presented from each survey, the case studies, and the proficiency data from each school.

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if the district's literacy coaching model had an impact on improving instructional practices and if there was an impact on student achievement. This study revealed the complexity of the role for literacy coaches. Overall, teachers and literacy coaches feel that they improve instructional practices and that there was some statistical evidence that literacy coaches improve student achievement.

Qualitative results. This study collected qualitative data to determine teacher's perceptions of literacy coaching and to determine literacy coaches' perceptions of their role within the school. The major findings from the teacher's perception survey were that

the majority of teachers (90%) had interacted with their literacy coach. Additionally, just over half of the teachers felt that their literacy coach had helped them improve instruction. Finally, a just over half of the teachers reported that as a result of interacting with their literacy coach, they felt more confident in their teaching abilities, instructional practices, planning, and instructional organization.

The major findings from the literacy coaches' survey were that literacy coaches reported spending approximately 10 hours each week in the classroom working with teachers in coaching activities, including modeling lessons, observing instruction, and conferencing with the teacher. Additionally, coaches reported their main activities were coaching, data analysis with teachers or administrators, and conducting student assessment. Coaches reported professional development activities were the next most frequently performed activity, but it was not reported as one of the top three most common activities.

The major findings from the case studies were that the most observed activity by the less experienced coach was student assessment. Student assessment was a dominant activity observed in both locations, but the more experienced coach spent less time overall engaged in assessment. The next most observed activity was coaching. The more experienced coach was able to engage in coaching three times more often than the less experienced coach.

Quantitative results. Results from the fall and spring Lexile assessment were collected from 6 teachers at the two case study sites who had been working with the literacy coach and from 6 teachers who were not working with the literacy coach. Statistical analysis using t-tests and Pearson's correlation coefficients were utilized to determine significance levels of change between proficiency percentages of the students in those teachers' classes and the correlation between literacy coaches and those changes.

The findings from a *t*-test were that changes in proficiency from the fall and spring Lexile assessment were statistically significant for both groups of teachers. An examination of the mean score change, however, revealed that the group of teachers who had worked with the literacy coach was greater than the group who had not worked with the literacy coach. Additionally, the findings from a bivariate correlation test revealed that there was a slightly greater correlation between coaching and improved proficiency scores. A bivariate correlation test measuring Pearson's correlational coefficient revealed that there was a strong correlation between the experienced coach and the improvement in proficiency percentages, but only a moderate correlation between the less experienced coach and the improvement in proficiency percentages.

Conclusions

The data collected by this study produced a number of significant findings and conclusions. Based on the findings, specific conclusions were drawn regarding the district's literacy coaching model.

Instructional improvement. The results of the data demonstrated that nearly every teacher had interacted with the literacy coach throughout the course of the school year. Just over half of those teachers reported improvement in their instructional practices and a sense of increased confidence as a result of working with the literacy coach.

A closer look at the Teacher Perception Survey revealed that teachers were working with other teachers as well, indicating a shift toward collaboration. Encouraging collaboration was one of the roles of the literacy coach (Zimmerman, 2006). Unfortunately, three out of every five teachers reported that literacy coaches had never come to their classroom to model a lesson. Using the cycle of effective coaching, modeling lessons in the classroom was an important part of the coaching process (Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Despite the limited amount of

modeling, nearly three out of every four teachers reported that the literacy coach had helped them make changes in their instructional practices.

The literacy coaches' survey revealed that coaches spend a great deal of time conducting student assessments. While assessments are a necessary part of their duties, coaches felt that their top three priorities should be on coaching activities, professional development, and modeling lessons. The coaches felt that assessment activities should have a much lower priority.

The case studies also confirmed the information found in the surveys. Student assessment activities dominated the coaches' time, but the more experienced coach was able to spend half the amount of time involved with assessment as the less experienced coach. When comparing coaching activities, which was another highly observed activity, the experienced coach was three times more likely to be coaching teachers as compared to the less experienced coach.

Student proficiency. Teachers who worked with the literacy coach were likely to produce gains in student proficiency four times as great as those teachers who did not work with the literacy coach. Although there may not be a tremendous difference in the correlation between the two groups of teachers, there were remarkable gains in proficiency from the group of teachers who worked with the coach. Additionally, there seemed to be a significant correlation between the coach's experience and the gains experienced by the teacher.

Implications of the Findings

The research described in this study was meant to examine the perceptions teachers had regarding literacy coaches, whether teachers felt that literacy coaches improved their instructional practices, the perceptions of literacy coaches about their roles, and if there was a greater impact on student achievement by teachers who worked

with the literacy coach. The results of this study are intended to be used in the planning of future professional development for literacy coaches and as lessons learned when reestablishing the literacy coaches' priorities and areas of focus.

Identifying the impact of this study on literacy coaches required a closer examination of the role of the literacy coach. The literature review revealed that when coaches are employed as school-based professional development facilitators, they utilize a cycle of effective coaching which included modeling, observation, and feedback (Deussen et al., 2007; Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Moxley & Taylor, 2007). Despite the knowledge by the coaches that they should be modeling more frequently, this is not occurring as much as it should. There were many possible reasons for this, including the amount of time coaches spend conducting or coordinating student assessment, time spent away from their schools in meetings, and the other responsibilities that literacy coaches have assigned by their administrators.

This study allowed the researcher to draw specific conclusions about literacy coaches in the district's middle schools. First, it appeared that most of the teachers had interacted with the literacy coach at their school. Many of the teachers felt that literacy coaches contributed to improvements and changes in their instruction as well as an increased feeling of confidence. Site visit observations as well as the result of the surveys suggested that literacy coaches needed to continue building rapport with their colleagues by spending more time in the classrooms.

Next, the site visit observations suggested that literacy coaches were valuable members of their school whom the administration called on to take on additional responsibilities. With the additional responsibilities, however, coaches must keep in mind their primary role. Administrations with less experienced literacy coaches need to have established clear priorities. The results revealed that literacy coaches were easily

overwhelmed with assessment responsibilities which took the coach away from professional development activities and other coaching activities that had a greater impact on instruction. Lastly, the study documented that literacy coaches contributed to improvement in student achievement but the data did not reveal overwhelming evidence.

Both principals of the case study coaches stated the importance of having the coach build a strong rapport with the teachers and model lessons of good instruction. They both agreed that one of the primary roles of the literacy coach should be facilitating professional development. Utilizing the literacy coach's ability to interpret data, both principals stated the coach played an important part in building the data-driven decision making skills of the teachers. They agreed that the key to improving student performance was the ability to make data-driven decisions.

Recommendations

The research results documented several areas of improvement to increase the effectiveness of the literacy coaching model used by the district. Four recommendations are offered as a result of the conclusions derived.

There was evidence of a need to provide additional support for student assessments in order to alleviate most of the responsibility falling on the literacy coach. The collective data from the literacy coaches' survey as well as the case studies revealed that this was a major responsibility for the literacy coach.

There was a need to establish clear priorities for both the coaches and the administrators to ensure that coaches were provided opportunities to model lessons in the classrooms. In addition, there was a need to communicate the expectations that coaches will engage in the coaching cycle by facilitating professional development along with modeling lessons in the classrooms followed up by a cycle of observations and feedback.

Finally, there was a need to offer professional development for the coaches as

they learn how to effectively use the coaching cycle, improve their observation abilities, and their ability to provide effective feedback.

Limitations of the Study

Gall et al. (2007) explained the main threat to a nonequivalent control-group design was the difference in results on the post-test would be due to something other than the treatment being studied. Potential weaknesses to using a case study approach were the difficulty of generalizing the findings to other situations and potentially ethical problems if the identity of the organization or case study subjects can not be shielded.

The researcher was the principal investigator and the primary observer in the case studies. In addition to the case study observations, the researcher was the data analyst for the survey results and the student performance data. Although multiple methods were used, the potential for bias remains a limitation of the study. Knowledge of the purpose of the study might have caused misleading activities during the site visits due to the relationships between the researcher and the participants.

The data collection methods may have skewed the results for the following reasons: The Lexile assessment data may not be reliable due to the fidelity of the test administration, the surveys may have elicited personal perceptions rather than factual responses, and the site visits may not have reflected daily activities by the literacy coaches. Since all the middle school teachers did not respond to the survey, the results may not accurately reflect teacher's perceptions about their literacy coach and changes in their instructional practices. Additionally, the timing and the length of the study prevented the observation of the literacy coaches from September to February. Such variables may cause a threat to the internal validity of this study.

The study represented a small sample of the teachers working in the middle school setting in the district. Generalizing the findings from this study to the larger

population of middle school teachers may not be appropriate, due to the sample size, the manner in which literacy coaches work in each school, and the research design.

Recommendations for Future Research

Researchers have a tremendous number of options when examining the effect literacy coaching. Most research has examined the role and responsibilities of literacy coaches, but few studies have attempted to link literacy coaching to student assessment.

Future research would benefit from using an experimental design. Since literacy coaching was implemented in all the middle schools in the district being studied, this research design was not possible. Future research in other districts may provide an opportunity to use an experimental design. This research would benefit the field.

Additionally, future research should consider longitudinal studies. This type of research may provide data that reveals a relationship between specific coaching activities and documented changes in instructional practices. Research with an emphasis on classroom observation and a process to collect artifacts that document changes in instruction may add to the understanding of how literacy coaches influence instructional practices. Finally, future research could use different student assessments used as progress monitor assessments.

Personal Reflection on This Study

The researcher's interest in this topic stems from his work as a middle school literacy coach. This study not only afforded the opportunity to examine the most current research about literacy coaching, but also an opportunity to improve the professional growth of the district's literacy coaches. Even though the CFD continues to be a high-performing district, the district's leadership continues to strive to be better. In their efforts to reach their goals, literacy coaches across the district are seen as the keys to greatness. As such, the literacy coaches must fully understand the shared vision.

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Appendix A

Percent of Time Spent by District Coaches in Assigned Areas of Responsibility

Table A1

Percent of Time Spent by District Coaches in Assigned Areas of Responsibility

Assigned Area of Responsibility	District Goals	Middle Schools		District-wide	
	08-09	07-08	08-09	07-08	08-09
Professional development [a]	20	3	3	4	3
Planning	10	7	8	9	8
Modeling lessons	15	6	6	4	3
Coaching	15	9	11	6	5
Coach-teacher conferences	10	9	11	9	9
Student assessment	5	22	21	19	19
Data reporting	5	4	3	4	3
Data analysis	5	7	5	7	6
Meetings	3	11	11	9	10
Knowledge building	10	8	7	8	6
Managing reading material	2	5	4	7	8
Other	0	8	9	16	19

Source: PMRN Reports, 2008; PMRN Reports, 2009;
Note: [a] Whole faculty and small group professional development was reported as a single category in the PMRN reports for 2007 – 2008.

Appendix B

Teacher Perception Survey

Section I: Background

1. **What grade(s) do you currently teach?**

   (Select All that Apply)

   ρ1   Grade 6

   ρ2   Grade 7

   ρ3   Grade 8

2. **What subject(s) do you currently teach?**

   (Select All that Apply)

   ρ1   Reading

   ρ2   English Language Arts

   ρ3   Social Studies/History/Civics/Geography

   ρ4   Science

   ρ5   Mathematics

   ρ6   Other _____

3. **Are you an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teacher?**

   (Select One)

   ρ1   No, I am not an ESE teacher

   ρ2   Yes, I am an ESE teacher in a self-contained classroom in which the majority of my students are severely disabled and <u>do not take the FCAT</u>

   ρ3   Yes, I am an ESE teacher in a self-contained classroom in which the majority of my students take the FCAT

   ρ4   Yes, I support ESE students in mainstreamed, regular classrooms

   ρ5   Yes, other: _____

4. **For how many years (including this year as one) have you …?**

(Fill in Each Space with Zero or Another Number)

a. Been a teacher (total)	_____years
b. Taught reading	_____years
c. Taught at this school	_____years

5. **What is the highest degree that you have earned?**

(Select One)

ρ_1 Bachelor's Degree

ρ_2 Master's Degree in reading

ρ_3 Master's Degree in another subject

ρ_4 Doctorate Degree

6. **Do you have or are you working toward a <u>reading certification or endorsement</u>?**

(Select All that Apply)

ρ_1 I have the Reading <u>Certification</u> (Kindergarten-12th grade)

ρ_2 I am working toward/have partially completed requirements for the Reading Certification

ρ_3 I have the Reading <u>Endorsement (all six competencies completed)</u>

ρ_4 I am working toward/have partially completed requirements for the Reading Endorsement

ρ_5 I do not have nor am I working toward a reading certification or endorsement

7. **Do you have any of the following other endorsements?**

(Select One on Each Line)

	Yes	No
a. The state's ESOL Endorsement (300 inservice hours/points, 15 graduate credits, or combination)	ρ_1	ρ_2
b. The REESOL Endorsement	ρ_1	ρ_2

Section II: Your Instruction

8. **What is the grade level(s) of the students in this target reading class?**
   (Select All that Apply)

   ρ_1 Grade 6

   ρ_2 Grade 7

   ρ_3 Grade 8

9. **How many students are in this target reading class (class with the largest number of low-performing students)?** (Fill in Number)

   _____ students in total

10. **Approximately how many of the students in this target reading class have the following characteristics?** (Write your best estimate in each row, or write "DK" if you don't know.)

    a. Classified as English Language Learners (Limited English Proficient students)

    _____ students

    b. Classified as Special Education students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

    _____ students

    c. Scored Level 1 on last year's FCAT in reading
    _____ students

    d. Scored Level 2 on last year's FCAT in reading
    _____ students

11. Do you receive or have access to assessment information (e.g., results from the FCAT, fluency checks, MAZE, or other district/school assessments) on the skills of your students in this target reading class in the following areas?

(Select One on Each Line)

	Yes	No
a. Decoding proficiency	ρ_1	ρ_2
b. Reading fluency	ρ_1	ρ_2
c. Reading vocabulary	ρ_1	ρ_2
d. Reading comprehension	ρ_1	ρ_2
e. Oral language proficiency	ρ_1	ρ_2
f. Oral vocabulary	ρ_1	ρ_2

ρ I do not have access to assessment
   information on any of the above skills ➔ go to Question 13

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about student reading skills assessment results for the students in your target class?

(Select One on Each Line)

Over the past year ….	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I have referred to these assessment results to help plan my instruction	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
b. I have received adequate support to help me interpret and use these assessment results	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4

13. Several factors contribute to reading difficulties. At the beginning of this course, approximately how many of the struggling readers (i.e., scoring Level 1 or 2 on the FCAT) in your target reading class experienced the following difficulties?

(Select One on Each Line)

	None	Some	Many	Don't Know
a. Lack of prior knowledge about various subjects	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
b. Lack of motivation to read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
c. Difficulty expressing thoughts in writing	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
d. Problems decoding words	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
e. Difficulty understanding what they have read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
f. Inability to read texts with appropriate speed and accuracy	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
g. Limited vocabulary	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9
h. Limited English language proficiency	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_9

14. In a _typical week_ of your target reading class, approximately what percentage of the time are students working on computers? (Select One)

ρ_1 0%

ρ_2 1 – 25%

ρ_3 26 – 50%

ρ_4 More than 50%

15. Thinking about this target reading class, how often do you do each of the following activities during your instruction (including the time students spend with reading software and computer programs)?

(Select One on Each Line)

	Never	A Few Times a Year	Once or Twice a Month	Once or Twice a Week	Almost Every Day
a. Introduce and review vocabulary	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
b. Listen to student read aloud	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
c. Read text out loud to students	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
d. Ask students to write a response about what they have read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
e. Give students the opportunity to work with diverse instructional materials that match students' ability levels, backgrounds, and interests	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
f. Provide students the key terms and purpose of what they are about to read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
g. Gauge student comprehension <u>while</u> they are reading (e.g., Think Alouds)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
h. Confirm students understood key concepts and main ideas <u>after</u> they have read (e.g., ask students to paraphrase the main idea)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
j. Ask students to create graphic organizers (e.g., Venn diagrams, KWL charts)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
k. Introduce new ideas by relating them to students' background and prior knowledge	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
l. Allow students to select reading materials to increase their motivation to read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
m. Review basic decoding skills (e.g., going over phonics and phonemic awareness)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5
n. Have students read and discuss texts in pairs or small groups	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_5

The next questions refer to your <u>teaching in general</u> (not just your target class).

16. Think about the ways in which your teaching in general is different now than it was at the beginning of the year. To what extent do the following statements describe changes you have made to your teaching over the course of the year?

(Select One on Each Line)

Compared to the beginning of the year...

	No Change	Changed a Small Amount	Changed a Moderate Amount	Changed a Great Deal
a. I assign more homework that involves reading	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
b. I assign more homework that involves writing	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
c. I take into account students' reading abilities/levels more often when designing tasks and assigning work	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
d. I ask students to read texts out loud in class more frequently	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
e. I introduce and review vocabulary more frequently	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
f. I tailor my instruction to account for different student abilities (e.g., groups, assigning different assignments or texts)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
g. I reorganize my classroom to better promote reading	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
h. I introduce texts more thoroughly, providing students background knowledge about the text we will read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
i. I have students use graphic organizers more often to help them sort out their ideas about texts	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
j. I work to connect the readings to students' existing knowledge and lives more often	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
k. I use more methods of teaching vocabulary that go beyond looking up a word in the dictionary or the back of the book	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
l. I ask for students to answer or generate more questions about the readings	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
m. I allow students to select more of what they read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4

Section III: Support for Instruction and Professional Development

We are interested in the frequency with which leaders in your school have performed actions to support your instruction and professional development since the beginning of the school year.

18. How often has your school's <u>reading/literacy coach(es)</u> performed the following actions?

(Select One on Each Line)

<u>Since the beginning of the school year</u>, my school's reading/literacy coach(es) has…	Never	A Few Times This Year	Once or Twice a Month	Once or Twice a Week or More
a. Provided information about reading instruction at a professional development session or meeting that I attended	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
b. Come to my classroom to co-teach or model a lesson or reading strategy	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
c. Assisted me with planning a lesson or curricular unit	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
d. Visited my classroom to observe my instruction	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
e. Given me feedback on my teaching or facilitated reflection on my practice	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
f. Reviewed student assessment data with me (individually or in a group)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
g. Helped me locate or create classroom resources or curricular material (e.g., books, software)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
h. Come to my classroom to instruct individual students	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
i. Discussed with me how I could serve as a resource on reading instruction to less experienced teachers	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
j. Helped me with classroom management and organization	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
k. Helped me administer student assessments (e.g., fluency checks)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4

ρ I have not interacted with the coach in any of the ways listed above ➜ go to Question 21

19. Think about all the interactions you have had with your school's current reading/literacy coach(es). For schools with multiple coaches, think about the one coach with whom you have had the most contact. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your reading/literacy coach.

(Select One on Each Line)

The reading/literacy coach(es) at my school...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know/ NA
a. Has strong knowledge of best practices in reading instruction	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
b. Has a limited understanding of the particular needs of students that I teach	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
c. Has a strong understanding of my needs as a teacher	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
d. Helps me adapt my teaching practices according to analysis of student achievement data (e.g., test results)	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
e. Maintains confidentiality of what we discuss or work on together	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
f. Understands the middle school culture and student	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
g. Has little time to regularly support teachers	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
h. Is someone I trust to help me and provide support	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
i. Provides feedback in a non-evaluative way	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9
j. Explains the research, theory, or reasons underpinning the strategies (s)/he suggests or the feedback (s)/he provides	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4	ρ_9

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school's reading/literacy coach(es)?

(Select One on Each Line)

As a result of my work with our school's reading/literacy coach(es) this year …

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I feel more confident in my ability to teach reading to students	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
b. I have made important improvements in my practice	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
c. My students are more motivated to read	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
d. I am better able to plan and organize instruction	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$

21. Prior to this school year, to what extent did the reading/literacy coach(es) help you make important changes to your instruction?

(Select One)

$\rho 1$ Not Applicable – I did not work with the coach(es) in previous years

$\rho 2$ Not at all

$\rho 3$ To a small extent

$\rho 4$ To a moderate extent

$\rho 5$ To a great extent

22. Have any <u>other school or district leaders</u> *regularly* led or assisted in the following activities to support your instruction and professional development since the beginnin of the school year?

(Select All that Apply on Each Line)

	Other Teachers (e.g., dept chair, lead teachers, instructional coaches)	School administrators	District staff	No other leaders have helped me in this area
a. Provided information about reading instruction at a professional development session or meeting that I attended	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
b. Come to my classroom to co-teach or model a lesson or reading strategy	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
c. Assisted me with planning a lesson or curricular unit	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
d. Visited my classroom to observe my instruction	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
e. Given me feedback on my teaching or facilitated reflection on my practice	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
f. Reviewed student assessment data with me (individually or in a group)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
g. Helped me locate or create classroom resources or curricular material (e.g., books, software)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
h. Come to my classroom to instruct individual students	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
i. Discussed with me how I could serve as a resource on reading instruction to less experienced teachers	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
j. Helped me with classroom management and organization	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4
k. Helped me administer student assessments (e.g., fluency checks)	ρ1	ρ2	ρ3	ρ4

Section IV: School Context

We would like you to think more generally about your school and its climate for supporting learning.

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the climate in your school?

(Select One on Each Line)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Most of my colleagues share a focus on student learning	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
b. Our school has clear strategies for improving instruction	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
c. Teacher morale is high	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
d. Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
e. I feel accepted and respected as a colleague by most staff members	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
f. There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
g. Teachers in this school are continually learning and seeking new ideas	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4

24. **To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to overall efforts in the school to improve the reading performance of students?**

(Select One on Each Line)

	Not a Hindrance	A Slight Hindrance	A Moderate Hindrance	A Great Hindrance
a. Large class size	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
b. Scheduling problems that prevent students from proper placement in reading courses	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
c. Lack of time to devote to literacy instruction in content area courses	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
d. Lack of sufficient knowledge/expertise of reading instruction among many content area teachers	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
e. Lack of support from parents	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
f. Frequent changes in school priorities or leadership	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
g. Lack of school resources to provide the extra help for students who need it	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
h. Lack of student motivation to read	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
i. Lack of coherent or consistent strategies to support reading	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4
j. Students' inadequate basic skills or prior preparation	ρ_1	ρ_2	ρ_3	ρ_4

25. Think about the leadership your head principal provides at your school. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your head principal's leadership?

(Select One on Each Line)

The <u>head principal</u> at my school…

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Communicates a clear academic vision for my school	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
b. Sets high standards for teaching	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
c. Encourages teachers to review the Sunshine State standards and incorporate them into our teaching	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
d. Helps teachers adapt our curriculum based on an analysis of FCAT test results	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
e. Expects all staff to work with the reading coach to reflect on and improve their teaching	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
f. Ensures that teachers have sufficient time for professional development	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
g. Enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when needed	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
h. Makes the school run smoothly	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$
i. Is someone I trust at his/her word	$\rho 1$	$\rho 2$	$\rho 3$	$\rho 4$

THANK YOU!

Appendix C

Role of the Reading/Literacy Coach Survey

The Role of the Reading/Literacy Coach

School Demographics

What grade levels does your school encompass? _____

What is the approximate total student population of your school? _____

What is the approximate percentage of students on free/reduced lunch at your school? _____

Personal Demographics

How many years have you been a reading/literacy coach? _____

How many years, if any, did you teach prior to becoming a reading/literacy coach? _____

How did you earn your Florida teaching certificate? (*circle one*)

    Graduate of a 4-year Teacher Education Program

    Alternative Certification Program

    Other (*please describe*) _____

Please list/describe any formal training you have had to be a reading/literacy coach

_____

_____

Coaching Demographics

How many hours do you spend in classrooms during a typical week? _____

Please list the top ten duties you spend the most time on during an average week. If possible, please give a general number of hours you spend on each activity. (*#1 being the most amount of time, #10 being the least amount of time.*)

  1. _____

  2. _____

  3. _____

  4. _____

  5. _____

  6. _____

  7. _____

  8. _____

  9. _____

 10. _____

For the above top ten:

    Please circle **the number** of the three duties you feel most impact students' literacy development.

    Please "**X**" (cross out) the number of the three duties you feel are most removed from helping students read.

How do you feel about your weekly duties?

_____

_____

Please list two things (not on your original list) that you would like to have time to do each week, month, or year.

_____

_____

Please complete the following two statements:

  1. I think all reading coaches should _____

_____

  2. I think reading coaches should never _____

Appendix D

Coaches Observation Log

Coaches Observation Log

Activity Codes

*** MUST ENTER*
TEACHERS IN PMRN
1   Whole Group PD
2   Small Group PD **
3   Planning
4   Modeling Lessons **

5   Coaching **
6   Coach-teacher conferences **
7   Student Assessment
8   Data Analysis
9   Meetings

10   Knowledge Building
11   Managing Reading Material
12   Other
      a. Bus duty
      b. Lunch duty
      c. Teaching
      d. Substitute
      e. Misc.

Date: _____

Code	Detailed Description	Time

Appendix E

Student Performance Data Analysis Tables

Table E1

Student Performance Data

Teacher	Site	Coaching	% Proficient, Fall 2008	% Proficient, Spring 2009	Change +/-
1	A	Yes	58	64	6
2	A	Yes	75	86	11
3	A	Yes	55	74	19
4	B	Yes	30	49	19
5	B	Yes	36	45	9
6	B	Yes	63	77	14
7	A	No	66	69	3
8	A	No	64	68	4
9	A	No	61	65	4
10	B	No	66	69	3
11	B	No	61	65	4
12	B	No	63	65	2

Table E2

Paired Samples Test Results

Pair	Coaching Received	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	Yes	-13.00	5.33	2.18	-18.59	-7.41	-5.98	5	0.002*
	No	-3.33	0.82	0.33	-4.19	-2.48	-10.00	5	0.000*

Note: * Indicates statistical significance at the 0.05 level

Table E3

Teachers Receiving Coaching

Coaching Received		% Proficient Sep 2008	% Proficient May 2009
Yes	N	6	6
	Mean	52.83	65.83
	SD	16.92	16.24
No	N	6	6
	Mean	63.5	66.83
	SD	2.26	2.04

Appendix F

Correlation Test Results

Table F1

Percent Proficient Correlation Results

Pair	Coaching Received	N	Correlation	Sig.
Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	Yes	6	0.949	0.004*
	No	6	0.933	0.007*

Note: * p < .05.

Table F2

Paired Correlation between Literacy Coaches

Pair	School	N	Correlation	Sig.
Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	A	6	0.678	0.139
	B	6	0.912	0.011*

Note: *p < .05.