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# Exploring Literacy Coaching as a Form of Staff Development

Kate Matthews Welborn  
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# Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Kate Welborn

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Walden University  
2016

Abstract

Exploring Literacy Coaching as a Form of Staff Development

by

Kate Matthews Welborn

MA, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, 2001

BS, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2016

## Abstract

Following a 2011 audit a school district in the south central United States clarified the role of the literacy coach. However, there were still differences among the literacy coaches as to how they were performing their duties. As a result, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the role of the literacy coach in the participating school district. The theoretical foundation of this study addressed adult learning and was based upon Kegan's constructive development theory and Knowles's theory of androgogy. A case study design was used to explore how 5 literacy coaches implemented literacy staff development with over 100 elementary school teachers and what aspects of literacy instruction were focused upon. Data were collected through interviews and daily coaching logs kept by the coaches. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through a system of coding based on repeated readings, from which themes, concepts, similarities, and differences became apparent. Similarities and differences were highlighted, and tables were created to track them. Coaching logs were collected and analyzed in the same manner. Two themes emerged from analysis of the data: identifying themselves as staff developers and needing more teacher collaboration. Based upon these themes, professional development training sessions were developed to strengthen the professional development already in place and the creation of professional learning communities was recommended. . Participation in these activities will strengthen individual literacy teacher's professional knowledge regarding the teaching of literacy. As a result literacy teachers' practices will improve, and in turn, positive social change will occur when the children they teach become more literate, increase their learning, and stay in school.

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## Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my children. Noa Grace, Ariana, and Ryder, I hope you grow up to love learning and bask in all its rewards. I want you to face difficult challenges head on and never give up until they are conquered. My sincere wish is that I lead by example and that you will face life with confidence, courage, compassion, and humility. Always have faith in yourselves and know that I love you and believe in you.

I also dedicate this doctoral study to my Gram. She instilled a passion for learning in me and a love for teaching that I will never forget. She believed in me and inspired me to go after my dreams. She once told me to “hitch my wagon to the stars and see where it would take me.” This was but one destination on my journey to live up to all she dreamt for me. Thank you Gram, I miss you and love you!

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Literacy coaching became the newest form of staff development in 2003 when elementary schools across the United States unveiled Reading First, a federal education program that requires Title I schools receiving funding to use programs that are founded upon scientifically based reading research (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2009 ). Literacy coaches were supposed to present teachers with onsite professional development in literacy with the hope that increasing teacher knowledge would increase student achievement. The problem, however, was that while schools hired literacy coaches in conjunction with Reading First, there was little guidance regarding the exact nature of their role. Several different descriptions exist in the education community regarding literacy coaching (Guiney, 2001; Hall, 2004; International Reading Association [IRA], 2000; Seitz, 2006). The IRA (2007) described literacy coaches as reading specialists who provide professional development to teachers. Toll (2005) described literacy coaches as those who help teachers “recognize what they know and can do” (p. 4). Walpole and McKenna (2004) offered yet another set of descriptors, categorizing literacy coaches as learners, grant writers, school-level planners, curriculum experts, researchers, and teachers. Educators are interested in this topic. They not only want to know what role literacy coaches should play but how to best prepare literacy coaches for their jobs. Administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches alike are struggling with how to best implement literacy coaching into the schools and maximize on its benefits.



Educators scrutinized the success of children acquiring and excelling in literacy as far back as Dewey (1938), suggesting that learning needed to be more hands-on. During the 1960s, many educators questioned student achievement in literacy and determined creating reading specialists was the answer (Dole, 2004). In the 1980s, Marie Clay responded to this crisis with the creation of Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993). President Clinton signed the Reading Excellence Act (1998) in hopes of ensuring that all children would be afforded the skills needed to become strong in literacy. President Bush created No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) in hopes of doing the same thing. However, despite all these efforts throughout the years, schools nation-wide still face the challenge of adequately preparing students to be proficient in reading and writing.

One aspect of NCLB (2001) that received wide acclaim was to hire literacy coaches in the schools. Literacy coaches, once equipped with a more defined role, may play a substantial role in helping decrease the greater than 8 million U.S. school children in fourth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are struggling readers by helping teachers build upon their library of effective teaching strategies for literacy and to become more reflective about their practices (Deussen & Buly, 2006). In this project study, I attempted to determine the tasks that encompass a literacy coach's day and what aspects of literacy instruction literacy coaches focus on.

Section 1 addresses the problem of the varying roles of literacy coaches. The guiding questions for the project study are presented and a rationale for studying the role of the literacy coach is provided through a discussion of how the problem was realized

and evidence of it at the local level. The significance of the problem is discussed. Finally, the implications of the project are discussed and a conclusion is provided.

### **Definition of the Problem**

Schools are implementing literacy coaching as a form of staff development that is ongoing and job embedded as the need for on-site, in-depth, and sustained professional development is recognized (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Kissel, Mraz, Algozzine, & Stover, 2011; McClean, Mallozzi, Hu, & Dailey, 2010; Rodriguez, Abrego, & Rubin, 2014). The literacy coach's role varies from school district to school district, and these varying roles have made the actual impact literacy coaches have on student achievement largely unknown (Allington, 2006; Dole, Liang, Watkins, & Wiggins 2006; Hall, 2004; Snow, Ippolito, & Schwartz, n. d.). Literacy coaching is an instance in education where practice has come ahead of research because schools are finding it difficult to attain the demands set forth by NCLB (2001) and to make adequate yearly progress (AYP; Askew & Carnell, 2011; Ferguson, 2014; Galluci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Shanklin & Moore, 2010; Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, & Dugan, 2014). These demands have given rise to the increase of literacy coaches in U.S. schools (Allington, 2006; Dole et al., 2006; Hall, 2004; Snow et al., n. d.). As the IRA, a nonprofit group dedicated to worldwide literacy, works to create a standard definition for literacy coaching, research is beginning to emerge that suggests when implemented properly, literacy coaching can positively impact student achievement in reading (Campbell & Malkus, 2011; Deussen & Buly, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Lyons &

Pinnell, 2001; National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Squires & Kranyik, 1996; Symonds, 2003).

A problem that exists in Emerald School District (ESD) is the lack of uniformity among educators regarding a definition of the literacy coach's role. ESD is a pseudonym that will be used throughout this doctoral study to ensure confidentiality of the site. Following an audit in 2011, it was discovered that the literacy coaching role needed to be more clearly defined within Emerald School District. ESD needed to better communicate their purpose to administrators, teachers, and parents. In some cases, educators were using the term mentor or consultant in place of coach (Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monseque-Bailey, 2009; Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008). Professional writings and conversations demonstrated that not everyone agreed on the role of the literacy coach. This project study will add to the information needed to ensure literacy coaches in ESD are delivering focused professional development by identifying the role five coaches play in their schools' literacy development.

### **Rationale for the Problem**

NCLB (2001) caused many changes with education and educational practices in the United States. NCLB directed states to adopt standards and to administer annual reading and math tests to students in Grades 3 through 8. The "culminating goal of NCLB was that by 2015, 95% of students will be proficient in passing their state tests. Schools are under extreme pressure to make AYP" (Department of Education, 2007, p. 2). The Department of Education (2007) also stated that "this pressure has caused schools to

analyze what they are currently doing to meet student needs and to consider options that may help them better meet those needs” (p. 3).

One of the tools school districts are using to assess performance gaps is statistics and information from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

According to NAEP (2003), which is where all of the following statistics were taken from, only 10% of fourth graders in Washington, D.C. were considered proficient in reading. While 10% was the lowest, 43% was the highest and occurred in the state of Connecticut. Breaking the performance gaps down even further and looking at the data according to race, Washington, D.C. exhibited the largest gap with 63 percentage points separating White and African American fourth graders, and 62 percentage points separating White and Hispanic students. The smallest gaps were seen in Tennessee, Missouri, and Indiana where the percentage difference was 5 to 10% between Whites and Hispanics. The smallest difference between Whites and African Americans was noted in Oregon with 14 percentage points.

School districts are analyzing student achievement and using the data to drive their instruction. They are also using standardized testing to guide instructional practices in hopes of attaining AYP (Shirley & Hargreaves, 2006). Furthermore, NCLB (2001) required districts to create and put in place a school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP was required to include professional development. The professional development must incorporate coaching and be provided consistently over time (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Kowal & Steiner, 2007; Onchwari & Keengwe, 2010). Due to these requirements, school districts nationwide have seen a significant rise in the number of literacy coaches

in the past few years (Toll, 2005; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). However, literacy coaching programs, while on the rise, vary greatly across the United States because they have been tailored to meet the unique needs of the districts to which they belong (Kowal & Steiner, 2007).

While attention was drawn to literacy coaching in 2001 with the beginning of NCLB (2001), it really gained attention in 2003 with Reading First (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). The creation of Reading First catapulted literacy coaching into the spotlight with over 5,000 literacy coaches being hired (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011). Several states in 2005 had fewer than 50% of the students meeting state proficiency standards, and the NAEP noted that not one state had at least half the students meet the NAEP proficiency standard in literacy (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, Darilek, & Magee, 2004). Schools hoped literacy coaches would help teachers increase student achievement while providing ongoing professional development. Furthermore, nearly every urban school district in the United States adopted professional development that included literacy coaching with the hope of English language learners, minority, and poor students increasing their reading achievement (Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & Bickel, 2010).

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

ESD hoped to see an increase in students' reading achievement through the use of literacy coaches. ESD serves roughly 37,000 students from varying ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. ESD uses literacy coaches as part of its ongoing embedded professional development. However, following an audit in 2011, it was discovered that ESD required revisions of job descriptions and needed more tightly focused professional

development and coaching. The intention of this study was to determine how literacy staff development is being implemented and what aspects of literacy instruction are focused upon.

The realities facing American education make change necessary. Dole et al. (2006) asserted that “research has shown that one of the most effective kinds of ongoing professional development is for master teachers to work directly with teachers in their daily workplace” (p. 194). Literacy coaches are an excellent resource for providing the ongoing, deeply embedded professional development that is critical today (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2008/2009; Guskey, 2000; Milburn et al., 2014; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Rush & Young, 2011; Sailors & Price, 2010).

### **Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature**

The IRA has identified some schools as having exemplary reading programs. The literacy coaches in these schools can serve as a resource for all teachers. Manzano (2005) pointed out that while there is an increase in the demand for and use of literacy coaches, many experts are worried that they do not possess the background or training needed to help teachers improve their reading instruction. This lack of knowledge is why “graduate reading/literacy programs seeking IRA national recognition are now required to add coaching initiatives to course assignments. Previous standards simply required graduate students to work with students” (Shaw, 2007, p. 8). Therefore graduate students now work directly with classroom teachers regarding “assessment, instructional grouping, choosing appropriate texts and materials, teaching reading and writing strategies, and conducting professional development” (Shaw, 2007, p. 8). Accordingly, this additional

experience should increase the knowledge base of the literacy coach and assist him or her in helping teachers improve their reading instruction.

There were many factors that contributed to school districts nationwide implementing literacy coaches at elementary, middle, and high school levels. In 2003, it was estimated that over 10,000 literacy coaches would be needed across the United States to support the professional development of teachers who work with struggling readers in Grades 4 to 12 (NCTE, 2008). This estimate did not take into account the number of literacy coaches needed in elementary schools nationwide. In 2006, there were over 8 million U.S. students in fourth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who were struggling readers (Deussen & Buly, 2006). The knowledge students are expected to gain academically from middle and high school has changed drastically, yet how these students are prepared to read, comprehend text, and write has not (Deussen & Buly, 2006; Snow et al., n. d.).

The literacy coaching role needs to be determined using the attributes known to contribute to the literacy coaches' success. Literacy coaches must keep current with research, possess content expertise, and have masterful interpersonal skills in order to be effective (Kowal & Steiner, 2007). Literacy coaches need to be well versed in how adults learn, since this is mainly who they will work with (Kowal & Steiner, 2007; Shaw, 2007). It has also been found, in districts that have established coaching programs, that literacy coaches receive professional development in order to increase their knowledge and skills (Kowal & Steiner, 2007; Mraz, Vacca, & Vintinner, 2008; Russo, 2004; Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011). The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the role of the literacy coach within ESD.

## Definition of Terms

*Coaching in education:* A coach in education provides teachers with support, in a specific area, in order to help them become more knowledgeable about new instructional strategies. The coach supports and promotes personal growth and reflection. The coach works closely with teachers, with the intent of improving classroom practice and impacting student achievement (Greene, 2004; Russo, 2004).

*Differentiated instruction:* Students are provided with varying degrees of support according to their individual needs across changing contexts (Dorn & Soffos, 2005).

*International Reading Association (IRA):* The IRA is a nonprofit group dedicated to worldwide literacy. Both individuals and institutions are members of this organization that has existed since 1956. The mission of the IRA is improving reading instruction quality worldwide by continuously expanding upon research regarding reading instruction and literacy (International Reading Association, 2010).

*Literacy coach:* The IRA (2007) defined a literacy coach as a reading specialist that provides professional development to teachers and any additional support needed to implement instructional programs and practices. Literacy coaching is seen as a way to implement instructional programs and practices. It is also seen as a way to improve teacher's instructional practice and ultimately student learning. (Kowal & Steiner, 2007, p. 9)

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB):* NCLB (2001) was an education reform initiative that began in 2001. The law was designed to improve student achievement and close gaps



in education. President George W. Bush signed NCLB (2001) into law in January of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

*Ongoing, job embedded, professional development:* This type of professional development occurs on-the-job while administrators and teachers are actively involved in their normal daily routines. Teachers and administrators reflect upon what they are learning and share this with one another, in-turn learning from each other's insights (Dorn & Soffos, 2005).

*Professional learning communities:* These are colleagues who gather together to reach an established objective in the commitment to student learning (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2008). McLaughlin stated, "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community" (as cited in National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008, p. 77).

*Reading First:* Mandated under NCLB (2001), Reading First is a federal education program. Reading First requires Title I schools receiving funding to use programs that are founded upon scientifically based reading research. The schools are given grants to purchase such reading programs and to hire coaches (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

### **Significance of the Study**

Literacy coaches are expected to be instrumental in attaining the literacy goals set forth in NCLB (2001). Literacy coaches need a more focused role and stricter requirements in order to be able to conduct quality ongoing job embedded professional

development (IRA, 2004). By creating more rigorous requirements and a more rigid description of the literacy coach's role, literacy coaches will be able to maximize the impact on students' reading achievement and help them to build a solid literacy foundation (Clay, 2001). This study will help demonstrate how literacy coaches can best support teachers in acquiring the knowledge and instructional practices needed to provide the biggest impact on student achievement in literacy. Locally, the literacy coaches and teachers in ESD will gain a deeper insight into how they both can most effectively impact the improvement of academic performance of students in literacy. The students will undoubtedly experience gains in student achievement due to this professional development model that they will carry with them throughout the rest of their education. One of the most important milestones in a child's life is learning to read. Its impact will last a lifetime and impact many critical aspects of life (Konza, 2014; Konza & Main, 2015). The community will reap the benefits as well because students will be more prepared to meet the literacy demands in the world today.

### **Research Questions**

This project study was an attempt to discover the role literacy coaches play in staff development within one school district. The guiding questions for the proposed study were as follows:

1. How does the literacy coach implement staff development within the school?
2. What aspects of literacy instruction are focused upon by the literacy coaches while implementing staff development?

Much has been written advocating the implementation of literacy coaching to help boost student achievement in literacy (Kise, 2006; Mangin, 2014; Moxley & Taylor, 2006; Scanlon, Gelzheiser, Vellutino, Schatschneider, & Sweeney, 2008; Shaw, 2007; Swafford, 1998; Toll, 2006; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Educational researchers agree that literacy coaching must be deeply embedded into the staff development of a school or district in order to be successful (Kowal & Steiner, 2007). The introduction of this new staff development will take time to effect change. NCTE (2008) noted that in several studies when literacy coaches provided long-term, extensive professional development, both teacher knowledge and student achievement in literacy were positively impacted.

### **Review of Literature Addressing the Problem**

The review of literature is divided into two sections. The first describes theoretical research that is pertinent to literacy coaching. The second contains a critical review of the research pertaining to literacy coaching. Literature pertaining to literacy, more specifically literacy coaching, ranging from 2011 to the present is discussed.

A review of seminal works ensured the research-based need for literacy coaches. The Walden University electronic library, Patch Barracks Library, Edinboro University Library, and Benson Memorial Library were used to gather sources. Databases such as EBSCOhost, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Proquest Central, Teacher Reference Center, and Education: A SAGE full-text database were used to retrieve on-line journals and research studies. Some of the key words and key phrases that were used to search

were *literacy coaching, literacy coach, peer coaching, literacy coaching's impact on student achievement, and professional learning communities.*

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is rooted in Kegan's (1982) constructive development theory, as it pertains to adults and their ability to create and/or change meaning and Knowles's (1984) theory of androgogy, a theory specifically for adult learning. Drago-Severson (2004) stated that constructive development theory provides a new way of thinking about supporting teacher growth and that more is involved than giving information and developing skills. Kegan's theory is based on two key ideas: People construct their own reality, and people can change over time with the appropriate support and challenges. Knowles's theory is based on four main principles: Adults require being involved in their instruction and its evaluation, experience is the starting point for learning activities, subjects relevant to work and/or personal life are most interesting to adults, and adult learning is problem-centered (Giannoukos, Besas, Galiropoulos, & Hioctour, 2015; Kearsley, 2011). Literacy coaching is new to many teachers and will require a change in how many teachers think about and approach the teaching of reading (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011). Many times, professional development models within schools do not match the development levels of those they are trying to help (Drago-Severson, 2004). Professional development needs to challenge teachers' thinking and support them as they rise to new challenges (Akiba & Wilkinson, 2015; Milburn et al., 2014; Rush & Young, 2011; Woodland & Mazur, 2015). It can be difficult to offer the support necessary when faced with a new way of approaching a topic.

The lack of no standard definition for the term literacy coach requires attention if school districts are going to invest time and resources in them for professional development. Deussen (2007) described literacy coaches as expert teachers who aid teachers in becoming more reflective and effective regarding their instruction. Kise (2006) characterized literacy coaches in another way. Kise stated that literacy coaches develop the strengths that a teacher already possesses. Toll (2006) characterized literacy coaching in yet another way when she stated they support the growth of teachers. So many definitions for literacy coaching may contribute to the difficulty in properly determining the effects it has on increasing teacher knowledge regarding the teaching of literacy and its overall impact on student achievement. A combination of these definitions is used in this study.

The IRA (2004) attempted to unify states by publishing standards; however, many districts do not adhere to them and chose to adopt one of several definitions. The role of the coach is the focus of Walpole and McKenna's definition (2004), whereas the IRA (2004) focused on qualifications. In the many attempts to define literacy coaching, the focus is on a different aspect; a recent survey conducted by Dole et al. (2006) of 48 states highlighted the differences among literacy coaches. Only 20 have what they define as "reading coaches" and all 20 are states with Reading First (Dole et al., 2006). The coaches spend varying amounts of time with individual teachers. The coaches spent anywhere from 75% to 100% working directly with teachers (Dole et al., 2006). Dole et al. (2006) also reported that while some coaches coach at only one school, some are responsible for multiples schools. Furthermore, the survey indicated that the coaches

perform varying activities in their role to assist and support teachers. It is difficult to assess how literacy coaching is impacting students and teachers if so much of what literacy coaches do is inconsistent (Symonds, 2003).

### **The Many Roles of the Literacy Coach**

Literacy coaches have more than one role. Walpole and McKenna (2004) stated that envisioning a stack of caps helps to better understand the varying roles of a literacy coach: “While a literacy coach is not a teacher, reading specialist, assistant principal, or principal, he or she often wears one of these caps” (p. 1). Literacy coaches need to be strong leaders and adapt easily to changing roles. A literacy coach will need to enjoy learning, writing grants, creating school level plans, conducting research, and so much more. Deussen (2007) assigned several roles to the literacy coach, including “working side-by-side with teachers in the classroom, observing, modeling, providing feedback, and planning lessons” (p. 15). Guiney (2001) asserted that literacy coaches integrate teachers’ learning and practice and give ongoing feedback. While all of these roles are somewhat different, they all include the literacy coach working directly with teachers.

These varying roles may in part be because many different types of literacy coaches exist. In a recent study, Deussen (2007) found that coaches held many positions and had differing responsibilities. Deussen’s findings from the study suggested five coaching categories: student-oriented, managerial, teacher-oriented (group), teacher-oriented (individual), and data-oriented. Data-oriented coaches focus on data and assessment tasks. These tasks include administering and coordinating assessments, managing the data, and how to use and interpret the data. Student-oriented coaches

occupy much of their time working directly with students on intervention strategies. Managerial coaches dedicate much of their time to paperwork and facilitating meetings. Teacher-oriented coaches in both the individual and group roles devote the most time engaging teachers directly and providing them with professional development. The role that a literacy coach plays within a school depends on the district and school administration.

The many roles that a literacy coach can play present them with unique challenges. Classroom teachers are often reluctant for literacy coaches to enter their classroom and provide feedback because teachers often perceive it as another form of evaluation (IRA, 2007, Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson, 2008; Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle, 2012). Administration, on the other hand, may perceive the literacy coach as an ally of teachers, possibly in opposition to them (Snow et al., n. d.). Literacy coaches often have difficulty finding their role within the organizational structure of the school. Either of these views can undermine the role of a literacy coach as an instructional leader, impeding their ability to guide change (Snow et al., n. d.).

Literacy coaches are instructional leaders. Literacy coaches must ensure that efforts towards improving literacy instruction are focused on student learning, keeping specific areas of improvement in mind (Cobb, 2005; Kissel et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2014). They must have a clear plan and thorough knowledge of the data and their findings. Knowing the direction they need to go to effect change will help teachers stay focused as well.

Building relationships with teachers will take time. Literacy coaches must find ways to cultivate relationships with teachers who support change, as well as those teachers who resist it (Cobb, 2005). It is also imperative that literacy coaches motivate teachers to continue studying, practicing, and refining how they teach literacy and that teachers know their level of professional knowledge is honored (Cobb, 2005). The literacy coach will need to have knowledge regarding adult learning in order to accomplish these tasks. Teachers will need to view them as leaders.

The way that literacy coaches approach leading is important. Literacy coaches should play the role of the lead learner, rather than the expert (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2004). They need to grow in their knowledge of literacy alongside the teachers they are working with. There is much to learn regarding literacy. Over the last 2 decades, the scope of literacy has drastically changed and become multifaceted (Mackenzie, 2015). Literacy coaches need to present the opportunity to strengthen everyone's literacy knowledge.

When literacy coaches build the literacy foundation of the staff, students will benefit. The focus will be taken away from the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers, instead addressing the needs of the students (McCombs & Marsh, 2009). The intention to collaborate with the teacher, not evaluate, must be communicated (Casey, 2006; Toll, 2005). The literacy coach needs to create an atmosphere where teachers do not feel they are being evaluated, but instead feel like they are part of the process of creating change. This is just one example of the responsibilities of the literacy coach.



## **Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities**

Literacy coaches can fall into many categories; however, no matter which category a literacy coach may fall under, responsibilities still exist. Literacy coaches are tasked with improving student achievement and enhancing literacy instruction (Moxley & Taylor, 2006). In turn, literacy coaches are implementing professional development and/or creating professional learning communities as a means to help achieve these taskings (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010). Professional development is being tailored to fit the needs of the staff. When literacy coaches focus on ongoing, job-embedded professional development and building professional learning communities, their “main priority becomes the teachers and their growth and learning” (Snow et al., n. d., p. 35).

Guskey (2000) pointed out that the best professional development is locally focused, site specific, and ongoing. Literacy coaching can “aid in the improvement of teachers’ classroom practices, leading to improved student learning” (Kowal & Steiner, 2007, p.1). A focused, site specific approach to professional development will be more applicable than the one size fits all workshop approach of the past (Lane & Hayes, 2015). The professional development format will be able to vary based upon the literacy coach’s assessment of how the needs of the teachers and students will be best met (Girolametto, 2012). The coaches are responsible for carefully choosing the assessments that are used to generate the data. When serving as professional development leaders, the literacy coach may work one-on-one with teachers or with groups (Blamey, Albert, & Dorrell, 2008; Powell, 2010; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). Topics of focus may include research-

based best practices, assessment, literacy strategies, and curriculum (Toll, 2005; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). The coaches use data gathered from assessments and observations to steer their professional development choices. The coaches are also responsible for carefully choosing the assessments that are used to generate the data. The coaches, as staff developers, reserve the option to select the methods and topics that will be most impactful.

Joyce and Showers (2002) found evidence through their research showing that using coaching as a professional development model causes several results to occur with those being coached. Joyce and Shower reported those who were coached practiced new content/strategies more frequently, used the content/strategies to reach specific teaching/instructional objectives, and retained and employed the new content/strategy longer. Joyce and Showers also found they could explain the content/strategy to their students, enabling the students to understand why the strategy is being used and when/how to use it. Joyce and Showers further found those being coached also demonstrated a clear grasp on the uses of and reasons for the new strategies. The literacy coaches were able to impact teachers' expansion of their professional knowledge schema by being more intentional and deliberate in their staff development efforts (Joyce & Showers, 2002). These efforts are even more impactful if used in conjunction with professional learning communities.

If the literacy coach forms a professional learning community (PLC) with the teachers being coached, an opportunity for continuous professional learning is created. Teachers will begin to “understand the linkage between learning with students in the

classroom and learning with colleagues” (Lambert, 2003, p. 21). It is crucial teachers understand that learning is ongoing. Creating PLCs is yet another way that literacy coaches can positively impact teaching quality (Hord, 2009). Blankstein (2004) claimed that “the relationships that will be cultivated through literacy coaching and the formation of a PLC will become the core of a successful learning community as well as student success” (p. 25).

Knowing how to implement a literacy coaching program may be difficult. Kise (2006), in following the ideas of Kegan’s theory, advised that the starting point for a literacy coaching program should ask four questions of the staff:

(a) What are the beliefs of the teachers about how students learn? (b) How do these beliefs tie to their own strengths as educators? (c) What do the teachers believe their role is in student success? (d) What keeps teachers from trying new practices? Once these questions can be answered the literacy coaching program can begin to take shape. (p.123)

### **Requirements for Literacy Coaches**

One of the mandates of NCLB (2001) was that all teachers must demonstrate they are highly qualified. NCLB defined highly qualified as having a bachelor’s degree, maintaining state certification or license, and being knowledgeable in the subject matter taught (Department of Education, 2004). However, literacy coaches only require the same reading certifications as elementary classroom teachers in almost all states (Allington, 2006). Literacy coaches need higher standards to successfully help students gain more solid strategic reading skills, preparing for the rigors of a post collegiate workforce

(Konza, 2014). At this time, the inconsistent job requirements for literacy coaches further suggest that they are not being properly trained for their jobs (Dole et al., 2006).

In order for literacy coaches to be better prepared, the expectations and requirements for the literacy coach need to be addressed by those preparing them and school districts that hire them. The IRA (2004) stated in their position statement that literacy coaches “must be reading specialists and provide the classroom teacher with support for reading instruction” (p. 3). The IRA (2004) identified five categories that all effective reading specialists possess: “foundational knowledge, knowledge of instructional strategies and curriculum materials, knowledge of assessment and evaluation, the ability to create a literate environment, and the ability to conduct professional development” (p. 6). The list of requirements for a literacy coach is quite extensive. Great attention should be paid to the qualifications of candidates school districts are considering for the position of literacy coach.

Literacy coaches have a duty to not only have an extensive knowledge about the diverse aspects of literacy but to also possess the skills necessary for working effectively with teachers (L’Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean 2010; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2012; Zoch, 2015). L’Allier et al. (2010) stated that the following adult learning principles need to be understood: “adults are most open to learning (a) when they are involved in planning instruction, (b) when experience is the basis for learning, (c) when learning has immediate job-related relevance, and (d) when learning is problem-centered” (p. 545). The teachers need to feel a connection and a purpose to what they are doing, and literacy coaches need to understand how to create those. It is individual states that set the

requirements for reading professionals; however, and not all of them adhere to IRA guidelines (Allington, 2006; Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, & Wallis, 2002; Bean et al., 2003; Dole, 2004, 2006; Hall, 2004).

The qualifications necessary are not the only thing that can be confusing when discussing literacy coaching. The name itself can imply different perceptions. Some schools refer to volunteers who help students with reading as literacy coaches and “most have no specific training in reading, while in other schools literacy coaches are school district employees with master’s degrees and reading specialist certifications, and in some schools literacy coaches are tutors who work with students” (IRA, 2000, p. 2). Creating a solid knowledge base regarding literacy coaching is difficult when the position is so varied. Allington (2006) pointed out that not being properly certified would never happen in special education.

Special education positions always indicate that an applicant must be certified in special education, while literacy coaching positions rarely require candidates to be certified in reading (Allington, 2006). In schools that have proven to have exemplary reading programs, such as Boston Public Schools, the literacy coaches and reading specialists are all appropriately credentialed (Hall 2004; Richardson, 2004). Bean et al. (2003) pointed out that it was the depth of knowledge of those providing the instruction that allowed for the caliber of reading instruction taking place. The position of the literacy coach needs to be viewed as a position with the possibility to create change and impact student achievement by more schools. Even though requirements may differ from state to state, if a literacy coach was awarded a graduate degree in literacy education, he

or she has demonstrated through specific coursework to have deep knowledge regarding literacy (L'Allier et al., 2010).

### **Training Literacy Coaches**

The role of literacy coach requires more than a teacher's desire to become one and then leaving the classroom to do it. Literacy coaches need a strong foundation regarding the many aspects of literacy education and how it applies to their coaching (Frost & Bean, 2006). This strong foundation will come with proper training and credentials. Literacy coaches also need an understanding of adult learning principles in order to work effectively with teachers. Literacy coaches should possess not only a solid knowledge base for effective literacy instruction but be grounded in adult learning principles as well (Gibson, 2005).

Literacy coaches navigate between classrooms and work with a different teacher (and different personality) in every room. Even experienced teachers encounter challenges and require deeper learning and growth when they take on the role of literacy coach (Gibson, 2005). Rainville and Jones (2008) stated that literacy coaches need to “figure out how to draw out the best in individual teachers and how to inspire them to make changes in their thinking and teaching” (p. 440). Teaching adults presents its own set of challenges in addition to those already in place with students. This is yet another fact pointing to the need of a more definite role for the literacy coach.

Literacy coaches need to possess a unique set of skills. According to The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007), an effective coach should possess: “(a) pedagogical knowledge, (b) content expertise, and (c) interpersonal skills”

(p. 2). Most often, a coaches' ability to interact positively with others is the difference between an effective coach and a coach who is not effective (Ertmer et al., 2005; Knight, 2004). Being knowledgeable in the literacy field is necessary to the success of the literacy coach, but it hinges on the point that they must be able to form meaningful relationships with those they are coaching. The ability to make meaningful connections with adults can be strengthened as literacy coaches expand upon their knowledge of adult learning.

Literacy coaches need ongoing professional development in order to expand their expertise and hone their skills (The Center, 2007). Universities and school districts are developing programs to meet this need as its importance is recognized (Berg, Bosch, Lessin-Joseph, & Souvanna, 2013; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). The IRA (2006) further suggested that literacy coaches need training in working with English language learners and students with disabilities, as well as the coaching strategies of questioning, co teaching, and fostering reflection. The kind of professional development literacy coaches need is vastly different than professional development offered to classroom teachers or even reading specialists. Literacy coach's professional development will have a particular focus unique to literacy coaching.

Minnesota Reading First coaches have devised a system for the training of their coaches. The coaches meet every 5 weeks to participate in professional development regarding the National Reading Panels report describing the five main areas of reading. These areas are "phonemic awareness, phonics and the application of word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p.1). The coaches work on their facilitation of coaching

conversations through reflection. They watch each other's teaching via video clips and then practice their coaching conversations together. They learn to use protocols designed to collect instructional data and in turn how to guide their conversations using these data (Peterson, Taylor, Burnham, & Schock, 2009). Their professional development is extremely focused and purposeful. They are not the only schools to create professional development specifically for their literacy coaches.

Boston Public Schools have been using literacy coaching for school improvement since 2001. They built professional development for the coaches into their program from the start. The coaches meet once a week for a training session. There are whole-group conversations dealing with recent challenges and success, as well as small-group conversations with the opportunity to share experiences (Neufeld & Roper, 2002). Their program uses current, authentic examples to guide their trainings. This contributes to the success of their program.

Several districts are coming to the forefront with successful literacy coaching programs. Toll (2004) made it clear that no matter what the approach is to a literacy-coaching program, the coaching must remain separate from any supervisory duties. Toll indicated that this separation is the only way it can be successful. Districts with successful literacy coaching programs have learned how to train their coaches effectively and maximize on student achievement efforts. The two go hand-in-hand in the effort to increase literacy among students.



## **Literacy Coaching and Student Achievement**

Given the demands placed on schools to make AYP and adhere to NCLB, it was not possible to wait for the research before committing to literacy coaching (Ewing, 2016; Mangin, 2014; Snow et al., n. d.). Snow et al. (n. d.) stated that “like many good ideas in education literacy coaching initiatives were carried out before research and evaluation were conducted based on the wisdom of practitioners and its roots in theory” (p. 36). Swartz (2003) reported that the Foundation for Comprehensive Literacy linked literacy coaching to gains in student achievement. Lapp, Fisher, Flood, and Frey (2003) noted that when reading specialists peer-coached for half of their time, there was an increase in student achievement in literacy. Even without a solid research base, positive results were being seen in places where literacy coaches were in place. This promising professional development now has many districts turning to literacy coaching in hopes of improving their schools and combating the millions of U.S. students in fourth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are struggling readers (Deussen & Buly, 2006).

Rainville and Jones (2008) pointed out that literacy coaching is complex, and the growing empirical research does not sufficiently explore these complexities. However, positive research regarding literacy coaching is emerging. The emerging research proposes that coaching is a compelling way to strengthen teacher instruction, in turn impacting student achievement (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2008; Campbell & Malkus, 2011; Deussen & Buly, 2006; Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2010; Ferguson, 2014; Sailors & Price 2010; Sailors & Shanklin, 2010 ). The National Council of Teachers of English (2008) included several studies in one of their reports that pointed to the effectiveness of

literacy coaching. The following examples are from that report. *The South Carolina Reading Initiative* (SCRI) concluded that by providing extensive, long-term professional development to coaches and teachers, SCRI schools achieved impressive gains in literacy achievement. Their struggling readers scored higher on tests and could read more difficult texts than struggling readers in non-SCRI schools. The study by *National Louis Model for Literacy Coaches* in Chicago Public Schools noted increases to students' achievement, as well as coaches demonstrating a deeper understanding of literacy due to professional development and changes to classroom teachers' practices. *The Ohio Teaching Learning Model* concluded that while no direct correlation between literacy coaching and student achievement was proved, the study did show positive differences for the same student at two points in time, one at the beginning of Reading First and the other a year later, after teacher learning experiences. Lastly, *A Three Year Journey- The Evolution in Coaches and Coaching in Reading First* found that overall, student achievement in the Reading First schools has increased. Aside from these studies, Lyons and Pinnell (2001) drew a likeness between student achievement improving in reading and writing and literacy coaching. There are also literacy coaching studies that are not included in that report that offer positive feedback in support of literacy coaching.

L'Allier and Elish-Piper (2006)

conducted a study in a low-income school district with a Reading First grant and found that the greatest gains in reading were found in classrooms supported by a literacy coach who held a Reading Teacher endorsement. They also found that lowest gains in reading occurred in classrooms supported by a literacy coach who did not

possess Reading Teacher endorsement. This research also indicated that the highest gains in reading were in classrooms supported by a literacy coach who engaged directly with the teachers. (p. 25)

The same results were found in a study of schools that received Reading First grants (Bean et al., 2008). Schools that had coaches that spent a significant amount of their time working directly with teachers had the greatest percentage of first and second graders scoring in the proficient range (Bean et al., 2008). The existing research seems to strongly suggest that the literacy coaches' direct interactions with the teachers have the most impact on both the teachers' knowledge regarding literacy and student improvement in literacy

It should also be noted that schools with literacy coaches that made significant gains in student achievement reported that the literacy coaches receive professional development of their own, as well as ongoing support at the school level (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011; NCTE, 2008). These literacy coaches are supported in a way that enables them to supply teachers with new tools and resources to add to their teaching toolkits. Teachers are changing how they teach and are learning to engage students more effectively (McCollum, Hemmeter & Hsieh, 2011; Symonds, 2003). Ultimately, student engagement is what impacts student achievement.

### **Administrator Buy-in**

In order for a literacy coaching program to flourish, literacy coaches need the support of their administrators. The support of the school administration is crucial to the success of literacy coaching (Bean et al., 2003). When principals show they are onboard

with literacy coaches, the literacy coaching program is much more likely to cause positive change in the school's literacy climate. Literacy coaches need flexible scheduling in order to perform many aspects of their job. This is one way that principals can lend their support. Principals of exemplary schools believe that much of the success of their reading program is owed to literacy coaches (Bean et al., 2003).

Administrators can also become part of their school's literacy team. Cobb (2005) stated that compelling changes in teacher and student performance can be credited to shared leadership. This involvement will help them become more in tune with the school's instructional program and be seen as a literacy leader, sharing the leadership role with the literacy coach and teachers on the literacy team. Most administrators acknowledge that while they themselves have an impact on student learning, it is indirect. Davis (1998) stated that an administrator's biggest influence is through setting academic expectations, promoting a school vision/mission, and establishing academic learning time. The support of administration means literacy coaches can plan and interact with those they are coaching, in turn creating a climate in which teachers work collaboratively and impact students' reading performance (Bean et al., 2003).

### **Implications**

There are no definitive answers at this time in education regarding the best way to implement a literacy coaching program. Therefore, a study of how literacy coaches implement staff development is important for several reasons. Literacy coaching, if implemented correctly, might have the potential to change how educators view professional development. Just as individualized instruction has proven to be effective

with students, individualized professional development that provides feedback regarding ones classroom has proven to be more effective than the one-stop workshop approach (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). This process could possibly ensure job-embedded professional development that will maximize on supporting the teachers (Toll, 2005). It is necessary to gauge the impact literacy coaching has on student achievement so that time and resources are not invested into an intervention that may not be working. If literacy coaching in ESD positively impacts instruction in reading, it may lead researchers to look at the impact other coaches (i.e., math and science) have on instruction in their specific academic areas.

The results could also be used to substantiate the role a literacy coach could play in helping increase literacy within ESD. Literacy coaching can be likened to differentiated instruction. Just as teachers are asked to meet the varying needs of their students through differentiated instruction, the professional development needs of teachers can be met through the differentiation allowed for through literacy coaching (Kise, 2006). As ESD continues to search for ways to reduce dropout rates and improve literacy scores on standardized tests, literacy coaching is a promising vehicle that warrants more attention and research.

There are two possible projects that could develop from this doctoral study, both dealing with professional development. The first possible project would be to tailor each teacher's professional development individually to meet their specific needs regarding literacy. The literacy coach and individual teachers could sit down and develop such plans together to ensure meeting the needs of each teacher. Another possible project that

could develop from this study is the implementation of PLCs as part of the teachers' staff development. This would take the focus off of teachers individually and allow them to grow collectively as a staff. PLCs would allow the teachers and literacy coaches to tailor the focus of staff development to topics that are important and relevant to their school at a particular moment in time. When the staff development is relevant to a teachers' current needs, they will be more likely to implement what is being learned. Training regarding how to implement PLCs could be conducted on site.

### **Summary**

As presented in Section 1, I sought to discover how one school district is using literacy coaching to strengthen its professional development initiatives. I am specifically seeking to answer the questions of how the literacy coach implements literacy staff development within the school and what aspects of literacy instruction the literacy coach focused upon during staff development. While research about literacy coaching is beginning to emerge, it is clear that this relatively new approach to staff development in education will need further exploration before more definitive conclusions can be drawn. Most schools nationwide now create SIPs annually as part of their requirements. Literacy coaches can play an integral role in helping teams think about which data to consider. Literacy coaches can also help create the professional development plan in SIP. This process can help ensure job-embedded professional development that will maximize on supporting the teachers (Toll, 2004). If implemented correctly, literacy coaching has the potential to change how educators view professional development. Hord (2009) stated that

the latest research upholds the thought that learning in a social context is most productive for both children and adults. By influencing and shaping the way literacy instruction is delivered, more students can be reached, maximizing the impact on student achievement. (p. 37)

Hord pointed out that teachers, like their students, routinely increase their effectiveness through continuous learning. Blankstein (2004) stated that “the relationships that will be cultivated through literacy coaching will become the core of a successful learning community as well as student success” (p. 58).

In Section 2, I describe the research design for the project study. I discuss data collection and analysis procedures, as well as assumptions and limitations. I also present an analysis of the results.

In Section 3, I describe the project study. I discuss the goals of the project as well as a scholarly rationale for how the project addresses the ways the literacy coaches typically spend their days and the aspects of literacy instruction they focus most upon. I also present a review of literature addressing the project.

Section 4 provides reflections pertaining to the project study and a conclusion. I address the projects strengths and limitations in addressing the problem. I offer recommendations for how the study could have been conducted differently, as well as a discussion regarding scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. I also offer insight into what I learned about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally, I present an overall reflection on the importance of the project study and what was learned from it.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

This project study was conducted to discover how literacy coaches are used for staff development within schools in one school district. I specifically sought to answer these questions: How do the coaches implement staff development in literacy within ESD, and what aspects of literacy instruction are focused upon? The theoretical framework was rooted in Kegan's (1982) constructive development theory and Knowles's (1984) theory of androgogy.

Section 2 addresses the research design and approach that was used. The participants are presented, along with a discussion regarding the protection of their rights. Data collection materials and methods are discussed. Finally, the methods for data analysis and a conclusion are provided.

### **Research Design**

Merriam (2002) stated that qualitative research uncovers or discovers the interpretation people construct about a particular topic. A qualitative case study research method was used for the study. Qualitative research begins with assumptions and delves into the meaning that individuals or groups of people assign to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). Once these assumptions have been made, it is necessary to define the qualitative approach that will guide the inquiry. Case study arose as the methodology of choice because I sought to explore the process of literacy coaching and "provide an in-depth understanding" of exactly what the role embodies (Creswell 2007, p. 74). In the



study, I explain how literacy coaching, as a form of staff development, is impacting the teaching of literacy.

ESD employs literacy coaching. I sought a deeper understanding of the literacy coaches' staff development role as it pertains to literacy instruction. Case study is an in-depth description and analysis of an issue or problem (Merriam, 2002). Case study was chosen because I sought to provide a rich, thick description of literacy coaching and what it encompasses. I was more specifically trying to gain a deeper understanding of what exactly it is that literacy coaches do as staff developers. Case study was also chosen because multiple sources of data were collected. Creswell (2014) stated that case study uses data collection from multiple sources. Two types of data collection were used in this study: interviews and coaching logs. Through the use of case study, a rich description of what literacy coaching embodies within ESD was established.

While the argument was made for why case study was the method chosen for this study, it is important to point out why a few other methods were not chosen. Two other qualitative approaches were considered for this project study: phenomenological research and grounded theory. Creswell (2014) described phenomenology as the study of the essence of a phenomenon experienced by several individuals. Merriam (2002) wrote that phenomenological methods can aid in the understanding of human experience and meaning. In this study, I did not seek to describe the experience of literacy coaching. Instead, I sought to define what literacy coaches do to provide staff development. Lastly, Creswell described phenomenological research as containing an interpretive process. It was not my intention to make interpretations regarding the data gathered.

The other method not chosen for this study was grounded theory. Creswell (2007) stated “that the purpose of grounded study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory” (p. 62-63). While both focus on understanding how something is experienced, they differ in that I was not trying to create a theory, but simply understand literacy coaching. Data analysis using grounded theory is systematic and directed towards the development of a theory. That also was not the intention of this project.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were five literacy coaches responsible for providing staff development in literacy to teachers within four schools in ESD. Their school district was initially selected for this project study because it uses the definition of a literacy coach introduced by the IRA. The participants were recruited on the basis that they were literacy coaches in ESD. All principals within ESD were informed of the possibility to participate in the research by the research coordinator in their district. The principals notified the research coordinator of an interest in possible participation and then I was passed the information by the research coordinator. After only two participants emerged through this process, the research coordinator gave me the individual names of all the current literacy coaches, along with their school contact information. The other three participants were contacted individually and agreed to participate. The number of participants was decided upon due to the time-frame of the study. The small number allowed for deeper inquiry to be conducted, in turn leading to deeper understanding.

I gained access to the participants after it was granted by the school district. Participation in the study was voluntary, and information regarding the study, time

commitment, and results was covered fully prior to the participants agreeing to be part of the study. Janesick (2004) suggested that participants need to be in an environment that will generate enthusiasm, energy, and activity. I created this environment when explaining the research project to the participants in an effort to establish a researcher-participant relationship. None of the participants were former colleagues of mine. At no time were the participants and I engaged in a supervisory role with one another.

The rights of the participants and stakeholders were respected and protected throughout every step of the research process, and steps were taken to guarantee confidentiality. Participants' rights were protected and confidentiality was ensured in the following ways: A letter of cooperation from the school district was obtained, the name of the school district has been changed, approval from Walden University was secured (approval number 12-13-13-0128426), and each proposed participant was asked to sign a consent to participate. Additionally, I transcribed all interview tapes personally, and each participant was assigned a number to be used in interview transcriptions. Data were treated with the highest moral and ethical standards. These were achieved by keeping all materials related to the study in a locked cabinet; this included external hard drives containing coaching logs and interview transcriptions and recording devices.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this qualitative study spanned 6 weeks and used two strategies. Prior to the collection of data, two of the coaches and I met to discuss the details of the research, the confidentiality and consent forms, the coaching logs, and the interviewing process. The other three participants and I discussed the details of the research, the

confidentiality and consent forms, and the interviewing process via telephone. Creswell (2014) explained that data collection includes setting the boundaries for the study, outlining data collection methods, specifying documents and materials, and explaining the protocol for how information will be recorded. Two types of data were collected and used for this study: in-depth interviews with the literacy coaches (Appendix B) and coaching logs that were kept during the school week by the literacy coaches documenting their daily routine (Appendix C).

Literacy coaching was explored through in-depth interviews and the use of coaching logs kept by the literacy coaches documenting staff development efforts. The in-depth interviews were conducted in three different ways. The first interview was obtained in person. All of the follow-up was also conducted in person. The second interview was conducted over the telephone and all follow-up was also via telephone. The third, fourth, and fifth interviews were conducted over the telephone with follow-up being conducted via email. Email correspondence was used for the follow-up clarification as the interviews were being transcribed due to the interviewees being on holiday during this phase. The interviews were conducted in this manner because I live a significant distance from the interview sites and had a limited amount of time to spend there. Each interview consisted of the same nine questions. The face-to-face interview and phone interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes each and were tape recorded. I used a tape recorder to aid in transcribing the interviews at another time. This method also allowed for more accuracy because I could listen to the interviews as many times as necessary. Microsoft Word was used to transcribe the interviews. Saturation was reached after three

interviews were conducted as comments began to be repeated during the last two interviews, and no new information was gleaned. The data collected from each interview were triangulated through follow up questions, member checking, and analysis of the coaching journals

Two literacy coaches, Participant 1 and Participant 2, kept logs documenting their daily routines for 5 weeks. They completed the coaching logs electronically each day during the school week. They completed them by typing the information into a table contained in a Microsoft Word document. The documents were then emailed to me on the last day of the school week. I then used the information contained in the logs to keep track of the activities that the literacy coaches were engaging in. Electronic coaching logs were chosen over handwritten ones in order to aid in timely transfers between the participants and myself. A way to differentiate the coaching activities was established by the two participants after discussing how they divided their time. It allowed the coaches to complete the logs efficiently. The coaching activities were divided into five categories: staff development, modeling/coaching, meetings attended, work with students, and other.

### **Data Analysis**

Erickson (1985) pointed out what a reader learns from one case can then be related to similar cases encountered later on. Data analysis for this study was ongoing. The data generated for this study were obtained from four elementary schools in ESD. The schools served approximately 2,500 students. The population of the students attending was roughly 30% Hispanic, 60% Caucasian, 9% African American, and less

than 2% Asian and American Indian. Slightly less than 20% of the student population was considered economically disadvantaged, and about 10% had limited English proficiency. There were over 150 teachers and five literacy coaches during the 2013-2014 school year. One literacy coach served pre-K through second grade, one coach served third grade through fifth grade, one coach served fourth through sixth and the other two coaches served pre-K through fifth grade.

Participant 1 and Participant 2 taught in the same school. There were three pre-K classrooms, one was bilingual; five kindergarten classrooms, two were bilingual; seven first grade classrooms, three were bilingual; five second grade classrooms, two were bilingual; six third grade classrooms, two were bilingual; five fourth grade classrooms, two were bilingual; and four fifth grade classrooms, one was bilingual. The literacy coach serving pre-K through second grade (Participant 1) is part-time and works Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The literacy coach serving third grade through fifth grade (Participant 2) is full time, working Monday through Friday.

Participant 3 had three pre-K classrooms, four kindergarten classrooms, five first grade classrooms, five second grade classrooms, five third grade classrooms, four fourth grade classrooms, and five fifth grade classrooms. None of the classrooms were bilingual. The literacy coach was full time and worked Monday through Friday.

Participant 4 had zero pre-K classrooms, four kindergarten classrooms, four first grade classrooms, four second grade classrooms, four third grade classrooms, five fourth grade classrooms, and five fifth grade classrooms. None of the classrooms were bilingual. The literacy coach was full time and worked Monday through Friday.

Participant 5 had zero pre-K classrooms, three kindergarten classrooms, four first grade classrooms, four second grade classrooms, five third grade classrooms, five fourth grade classrooms, five fifth grade classrooms and five sixth grade classrooms. None of the classrooms were bilingual. The literacy coach was full time and worked Monday through Friday

The in-depth interviews were transcribed by me using Microsoft Word. Each of the interviews was listened to several times prior to transcription in order to gain familiarity with the dialogue. After listening to the interviews several times, the transcription began. The interview being transcribed was listened to in short intervals and then stopped as the dialogue was typed into the Word document. After the dialogue was typed, the recording was then rewound and listened to again to make sure it was transcribed correctly. This process was used until each interview was fully transcribed. Following transcription, line numbers were assigned to each line of the interview. This was done to assist with locating and referring to information contained in the interviews.

Following the suggestion of Rubin and Rubin (2005), each transcript was carefully read several times to help gain insight into any concepts or themes that were present. Through the course of reading and rereading themes, concepts, similarities, and differences became apparent. Rubin and Rubin referred to this as “recognition” (p. 207). A highlighting system was used to notate these. A concept that was present in all interviews was highlighted in yellow. A concept that was only present in Interview 1 was highlighted dark pink. A concept that was present only in Interview 2 was highlighted lime green. Interview 3 contained dark blue highlights, bright blue highlights were were

in Interview 4, and Interview 5 contained red highlights. Rubin and Rubin referred to this system as coding. Upon completion of the coding, the coded information was sorted using the creation of tables in Microsoft Word. A total of eight tables were created:

- Table 1 *Participants' Views Regarding the Role of the Literacy Coach in the School*
- Table 2 *Participants' Views Regarding the Role of the Literacy Coach in Individual Classrooms*
- Table 3 *Opinion Regarding Changes in Teaching of Reading*
- Table 4 *Opinion Regarding Literacy Focus*
- Table 5 *Opinion Regarding Perception of Literacy Coach*
- Table 6 *Opinion Regarding Impact on Teachers of Infusing Literacy Coach into Staff Development*
- Table 7 *Opinion Regarding Impact on Student Achievement of Infusing Literacy Coach into Staff Development*
- Table 8 *Opinion Regarding Beneficial Aspects of Working Directly With Teachers*

Tables allowed for similarities and differences to be further explored in relation to the overall concepts and/or themes.

Coaching logs were received and analyzed weekly. After the initial week of keeping the coaching logs, four categories for coding the logs were established based upon the data the logs contained. The four categories were as follows:

1. Grade level data (pre-K, Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, all primary, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, all third through fifth).



2. Reading, writing, literacy station, and data (collection and analysis).
3. Coaching, modeling, video/observation, and debriefing.
4. Other duties (staff duty, district duties, administrative duties, and clerical duties).

Within each category, different colors were used to highlight information. Each coaching log was copied four times within a document and coded four times according to the established categories. For example, all of the information pertaining to pre-K within the log was highlighted royal blue, kindergarten information was highlighted yellow, first grade information was highlighted lime green, second grade information was highlighted aqua blue, third grade information was highlighted red, fourth grade information was highlighted navy blue, fifth grade information was highlighted teal blue, information pertaining to all primary grades was highlighted pink, and information pertaining to third through fifth grades was highlighted purple. After all grade level information was highlighted, each grade level was tallied according to the number of hours being spent in a particular grade level. The information was then recorded at the bottom of the chart. This was then repeated individually for the remaining three categories. Once all of the information for a week was analyzed according to the highlighting system, the tally totals were transferred to a separate Microsoft Word document that contained a table with weekly totals for each individual participant.

At the end of the five weeks of data collection, all of the weekly totals were used to generate graphs. Microsoft Excel was chosen to create the graphs. Two types of graphs were utilized as a component of data analysis: pie charts and bar graphs. Five bar graphs were generated and seven pie charts. The bar graphs contain the number of hours each

participant spent in each category and the pie charts represent the percentage of time spent by both participants in each category.

### **Findings**

Procedures to assure quality and validity were in place. The data collected from the interviews was triangulated through multiple sources: coaching logs, follow-up questions, and member checking. Triangulation provided evidence of quality. One of the strategies employed in triangulation was member checking. Creswell (2014) described member checking as the participants being afforded the opportunity to share their views about the findings and interpretations. After I analyzed and compiled an interpretation of the data, the findings were presented in writing to all of the participants of the study. Once the participants had a chance to review the findings, they were able to share their views regarding the findings via email and/or telephone with me.

Another strategy that was applied was peer review. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained peer review as the person who will keep the researcher honest and ask the hard questions. A respected former supervisor and doctor of education served as the peer reviewer. The peer reviewer reviewed both the data and the findings. Clarification of researcher bias was used as well. Merriam (1998) stated that clarifying any possible researcher bias is important because it will help the reader in understanding the researcher's position. I provided comments on information that may have an impact on interpretations or approaches to the study. In the event of discrepant cases, participants would have been consulted. Consulting with participants would hopefully have led to the

reasons for the discrepancy and allow for further analysis. There were, however, none in this study.

This study was conducted to discover the role that literacy coaches play in staff development within ESD. It more specifically looked at the role of five literacy coaches within four schools in ESD. The guiding questions (how does the literacy coach implement staff development within the school and what aspects of literacy instruction are focused upon) not only set parameters for the study, but informed the findings. The two methods of data collection also proved useful in accentuating the literacy coaches' practices (evidenced in coaching logs) and their theories (evidenced in interviews).

**First guiding question.** In regards to the first guiding question (How does the literacy coach implement staff development within the school?), all of the coaches stated weekly grade level meetings as the way they conduct most of their staff development. The literacy coaches also mentioned conducting one-on-one staff development in individual classrooms. This evidence was supported every week in the staff development portion of the coaching logs, planning reading and writing each week as grade level teams was logged. The coaches spent 26% of their time conducting staff development as a whole and 20% of their time conducting one-on-one staff development (Appendix D).

Coaching, modeling, observation, and debriefing were the categories established for one-on-one staff development. The greatest percentage of time was spent conducting observations (34%). This was followed closely with coaching (32%). The least amount of time was spent debriefing (11%).

Participant 1, the literacy coach for grades pre-K through second spent the majority of her time working in second grade (29%) and kindergarten (27%). Pre-K received the least amount of her time (5%). Participant 2, the literacy coach for grades third through fifth, spent the majority of her time working in fifth grade (63%), followed by fourth grade (21%). She spent the least amount of time in third grade (16%). When looking at the amount of time spent overall by both participants in the grade levels, fifth grade received the greatest amount of attention at 45%. Pre-K received the least amount of attention with only 2% of the time being spent there. It should be noted that Participant 1 spent her 20% of her time working with fifth grade, a grade level not directly assigned to her, yet receiving her third highest amount of time.

**Second guiding question.** The second guiding question was looking to discover what the literacy coaches focus most upon while conducting staff development. Information gained from the both the interviews and coaching logs were analyzed to aid in answering this question. The interviews yielded that the coaches focus on different aspects of literacy. Writing, language arts, balanced literacy, and components of the TEKS were mentioned. After analyzing the interview data, pie charts and bar graphs were created and used in order to delve further into the data and gain deeper understanding. Guided reading, the writing process, literacy stations, and data (collection and analysis) emerged as the categories to track. The greatest amount of time was spent on data (47%). Guided reading logged the second highest amount of time (33%). Writing came in third with 18% of the coaches time being spent working in this category (Appendix D). When looked at together, the total time the literacy coaches spent

conducting staff development was 46 %. However, when looking overall at how they spend their time, there was a category that came in between whole staff development and one-on-one staff development. It was the category of other. This category was the second highest percentage with 24% of the time being spent here. To further explore how time was spent, this category was divided into four subcategories: staff duty, district, administrative, and clerical. These subcategories were decided upon after initially tracking the data and realizing that a significant amount of time was spent in the category of other. It became apparent that the category would need further clarification and after looking at the activities that were logged, the subcategories were adopted. Over half of the time in this category (60%) was spent on tasks designated district. The next category was clerical, with only 19% of the time dedicated to it. When going back through the coaching logs, I found that the majority of the time labeled as district was spent either on data or meetings.

The aforementioned findings were derived from the interviews and the coaching logs. The following findings are from the interviews. The interviews yielded areas of similarity and agreement, as well as differences in viewpoints. The discussion regarding the interviews will begin with areas the coaches find common ground. It will then provide evidence of their differences. Finally a comparison between practice and theory will be provided.

### **Interview Results**

The first question of the interview asked the coaches how they view their role as a literacy coach within the school. The coaches seem to view their role as one of a staff

developer, planner and modeler of lessons. Participant 1 stated, “one of our main goals is to plan the curriculum.” She also said that she views her role as, “going in and modeling lessons.” Participant 2 said, “We plan the curriculum” and “As a coach, I model lessons...” Participant 3 said, “...my main role on campus is assisting with instructional lesson planning ... and delivering staff development.” Participant 4 reiterated, “I am responsible for coordinating professional development in literacy, modeling evidence based instructional strategies, and I also facilitate English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) planning for all grade levels”. Participant 5 stated that literacy coaching is a “multi-tiered approach. At the first level, there is staff development”.

Four coaches also mentioned that one of their roles in individual classrooms is to observe/debrief. Participant 1 stated she videotapes the teachers, allowing them to self-reflect. Participant 2 says she conducts a weekly walk through in all of the teachers’ classrooms that she is responsible for. Participant 4 lists performing teacher observations as one of the elements encompassing her role as literacy coach. Participant 5 also identifies observation as one of the classroom roles. The teacher typically requests the observation, and areas of need are identified through a teacher/coach collaborative effort.

All of the literacy coaches feel they have noticed a change in the teaching of reading after working with the teachers. Collaboration among grade levels has been positive. For example, Participant 4 stated that the teachers “value the collaborative planning sessions and use the resources and instructional strategies that we share in PLC meetings or in planning”. However, it was also noted by the literacy coaches that in their experience new teachers have been more open to the coaching experience than seasoned

teachers. The new teachers are more willing to try new ideas and are open more to discussing problems they may be experiencing. Participant 2 stated, “The biggest changes occur when I am working with new teachers. Usually by October they realize that teaching is more difficult than they thought and are ready to be more open to hear ideas and discuss trouble spots in their job and not just planning lessons.” In contrast, the seasoned teachers have given the impression that they have already tried many of the suggestions being offered and are reluctant to try them again. Participant 1 shared the following regarding experienced teachers, “...sometimes more experienced teachers are like oh I’ve tried that before, it doesn’t work.” There were also differences between how primary grade teachers and intermediate grade teachers interact with the literacy coach. These attributes, both positive and not, suggest that deeper collaboration may be helpful in hopes that everyone can benefit equally.

When asked about the impact the infusion of literacy coaching with staff development has had on teaching all the coaches mentioned the same things. They feel their impact has been positive.. For example Participant 1 stated that she has seen that literacy coaching has had a huge impact across the whole school, even with teachers that only teach math and science. Participant 3 concurred, stating, “...teachers are requesting to meet with me, wanting support with lesson planning, understanding the curriculum, and with individual students”. Several coaches mentioned that they feel the infusion has helped the grade levels they work with function as professional learning communities. They also remarked about how the teachers are more willing to accept feedback, as well as share feedback regarding new strategies they have tried.

While the literacy coaches did share similar views on many points of the interview questions, there were differences. While there were similarities with how they view their role in the school and in classrooms, this was also an area where there were differences. Participants 2, 3, and 4 view their role as encompassing disaggregating data. Participant 1 and Participant 5 indicate that their roles are more individual based, either by the teachers themselves asking for help or by administration alerting them that something needs addressed. Both do mention looking at data, but it does not define the role.

Differences were also noted in their opinion regarding what their focus is as a literacy coach. The primary grades literacy coach is more content driven, mentioning reading and writing as the areas that she focuses upon. The coaches that also encompass intermediate literacy are more driven by data and testing, therefore drawing focus from these areas.

When comparing the theories versus the practices two coaches data were correlated and there are areas that match and areas that do not. These two coaches were used because they kept coaching logs for six weeks. The coaching logs have been used to triangulate the data. This triangulation of data proved to be extremely telling. The information provided in the interviews could be directly compared to the information provided in the coaching logs. The coaches' views and practices could be conveniently placed side by side for comparison. The information could be gone back and forth between, proving or disproving that their theories align with their practices. The comparisons will begin with those that align for each coach and end with the areas that are not aligned.



## Coaching Log Results

**Participant 1.** The description Participant 1 used to describe her role paralleled the evidence of how she practices that role. She described her role as focusing on individual needs through coaching and also conducting observations through the use of videotaping. She remarked that during her coaching she focuses “more on their (individual) needs.” These areas were also where she spent her greatest amount of time according to the coaching logs. 32% of the time was spent coaching and 34% was spent conducting observations. These are the two highest percentages in all of the categories.

She considered herself to be an integral part of the planning process for each of the grade levels and this was evident in her logs each week as well. She spent the majority of the 103 hours she logged working directly with the grade levels as a team. In regards to this she articulated, “One of our main goals is to plan the curriculum.... So we look at all aspects of reading and since I am pre-K to 2 we look at shared reading, and interactive read aloud, guided reading, independent reading, kinda every aspect of the day. And then also writing. And just uh our role would be to plan and just make sure they have the resources they need”

Participant 2 also in theory considered herself to be a significant resource, both for gathering information/materials and researching any answers to problems she may not know the answer to. This also proved to be true in her practice. All five weeks she kept the coaching log she spent time each day in this capacity.

An area of practice that did not fully align with theory for Participant 1 was her literacy focus. Her job is that of the primary literacy coach and that is how she describes

herself when asked. During the interview she was asked, “In regards to literacy what is your focus?” Her response was, “Uhh, well my focus is definitely early childhood, so um pre-k to second grade, so, um just those beginning readers. That is something I am very passionate about. Um but so since my job, since my principal has given me that focus I really am able to mainly spend most of my time on that.” The coaching logs, however, revealed that she spent 20% of her time in the intermediate grade level of fifth. This was a greater percentage of time than she spent in two of the grade levels she is assigned. There is a possible explanation for this occurrence. The data collection took place during the spring, which is the time of year when state testing is being conducted. Many hours of time and preparation go into the testing and it is possible that if the data had been collected during a different time of the year that she may not have logged hours outside of her assigned grade levels.

Writing was an area that Participant 2 stressed as being an integral and important part of the staff development focus. Regarding writing Participant 1 communicated, “...writing has been a huge uh we have been really pushing that the last couple of years. Just at the early grade levels, daily writing and um just making sure it is taking place every day. Making sure they have lessons where they are modeling and the students are actually getting to participate in writing every day. When asked about how she feels the staff development efforts are carrying over to the students, she passionately spoke, “...writing keeps coming to mind for me but um we have had lots of professional development... even our math and science teachers, you know we have been trying to push writing for every subject”. She also included writing in a remark she made

regarding grade level planning. “We plan for the following week on all aspects of reading and writing...” While writing was felt to be a key focus within professional development, only a small amount of time was actually spent addressing writing. Both coaches collectively only spent 18% of their time working on writing.

**Participant 2.** The most apparent area of alignment between theory and practice regarding Participant 2 is related to her job description. Her job is that of the intermediate grade literacy coach and from her coaching logs this was apparent. The only hours she logged were in the intermediate grades. A strong example of alignment was found in the category of Data. Data is the category that through the coaching logs emerged as the area where the greatest amount of time was spent. This ties very closely with how Participant 2 responded to the interview questions. She mentioned data as a driving force in many of the answers she gave. An example of this was in her response to describing her role as a literacy coach. She said, “I compare district and campus data to get ready for the aforementioned disaggregation of data. I find trends in the data. Using this data we make campus goals of improvement.” In another response regarding her focus, she reiterated data being a driving force when she stated, “This year we were very data driven. Lead4ward is working closely with our district. Although they give teaching strategies they also have a way to disaggregate the data to find the focus for our particular campus.”

Another area also demonstrated a tie between theory and practice. Modeling was consistently logged on all five weeks of coaching journals. While the time spent modeling each week varied, the strategy was consistently applied. Modeling was also followed up by observing teachers applying what they were learning. Participant 2

mentioned observation of teachers when asked to describe her role as a literacy coach. The category of observation showed that her highest percentage of time was spent there during individual staff development, providing a strong connection between her theories and practices.

There were several areas where practice and theory did not align. Participant 2 mentioned on three separate occasions in her interview that weekly walkthroughs in teachers' classrooms played a strong part in her role as a literacy coach. She stated, "I am able to do weekly walkthroughs in the classrooms. During this time I am able to share information from PLCs. This also keeps up moral when teachers know they are being recognized to other teachers for their teaching". She also mentioned that walkthroughs are such a part of her job that some teachers feel that is all she does. During part of her response regarding the infusion of the literacy coach into the staff development she remarked that "I caught most teachers trying out those strategies in their classrooms while I did classroom walk-throughs". Weekly walkthroughs were only documented during Week 1 of the five weeks keeping coaching logs. They were documented on two consecutive days and lasted 45 minutes each day. This timeframe encompassed eight individual classroom visits.

Participant 2 also did not show strong alignment between practice and theory in the area of debriefing. It was a factor that she mentioned being important in her role as a coach. She remarked, "As a coach, I model lessons, do observations, debrief and plan with teachers." This was the area, however, where not only Participant 2, but both

coaches spent the least amount of their coaching time. Only 11% of the time was spent their collectively.

One last area that did not align in theory and practice for Participant 2 was that of time spent in PLCs. During the five weeks that the coaching logs were kept PLCs were only mentioned during the first two weeks. During her interview, however, she mentioned that she is “in charge of the Professional Learning Communities for grades 3-5” and that they meet “every week to discuss different topics”. The possible explanation for this discrepancy, however, is the same as one offered for Participant 1. The logs were kept during the time period when much time and preparation is going towards state testing. Had they been kept at another time this discrepancy may have been different.

Overall, two common themes arose through the participants interviews. One was that of identifying themselves as staff developers. This was also evidenced through the coaching logs as both coaches’ employ practices that tie strongly to their theories about how they should be practicing literacy coaching as a form of staff development. The other theme was that of there being a need for more teacher collaboration. There was a disconnect with how new and experienced, as well as primary grade level teachers and intermediate grade level teachers, interact with the literacy coach. While the delivery and content of staff development may differ among the coaches their role unites them. It was apparent through both the interviews and coaching logs that grade level teachers meet individually at least weekly to discuss literacy and plan together. This common practice led to a search for how collaboration among all grade levels could occur. Professional learning communities can achieve this. Research shows that professional learning

communities are not only positive for the continued learning of teachers, but they impact student achievement positively as well (Brownell, Griffin, Leko, & Stephens, 2011; Pella, 2011). Therefore, a project could be developed to maximize job-embedded staff development efforts when they meet to discuss literacy as a staff in the form of professional learning communities.

### **Summary**

The qualitative research design chosen for this proposed project study was case study. Merriam (2002) explained that a case study is a “bounded system with finite qualities” (p. 178). Using this method allowed for deeper understanding of the human experience regarding literacy coaching. The chosen participants worked directly within the bounded system. They are literacy coaches.

The focus of the case study was to capture the essence of what literacy coaching is within one particular school district. Two literacy coaches provided evidence of their coaching activities through coaching logs. They were also interviewed, along with three other literacy coaches, which allowed commonalities and themes to emerge. The findings will be used to provide future guidance pertaining to literacy coaching as a form of job-embedded staff development within this particular school.

In Section 3 I describe the project. I introduce the goals of the project, as well as a scholarly rationale for why the project was chosen. I present a review of literature addressing the project. I provide necessary resources, a proposal for implementation, a thorough description regarding the roles and responsibilities of the participants, and project evaluation. Lastly, I discuss the implications of the project. These include possible

implications for social change and the impact regarding stakeholders and the local community

In Section 4 I provide reflections pertaining to the project study. I address the projects strengths and limitations in addressing the problem. I offer recommendations for how the study could have been conducted differently, as well as a discussion regarding scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. I also offer insight into what I learned about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally, I present an overall reflection on the importance of the project study and what was learned from it.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

In this section, a description of the proposed project is presented. PLCs coupled with the literacy coaching already in place would provide additional job-embedded staff development. It would also be an opportunity to provide the staff with professional learning infused into their normal routines. The goals of the project are discussed, as well as a scholarly rationale for the choice of this project. A review of literature addressing the project as an appropriate choice is also presented.

#### **Description and Goals**

In this study, I examined the coaching activities and perceptions of five literacy coaches. They currently provide professional development by grade level and to individual teachers. The proposed project would take the current professional development a step further by including professional development across grade levels through the creation of a Literacy Learning Community (LLC), a form of PLC. This proposed project was created to provide a means of collaboration among teachers from all grade levels. Further collaboration being needed among the teachers was supported in the findings as all of the participants mentioned positive outcomes with grade level collaboration already in place but mixed results between new and experienced teachers, as well as primary and intermediate teachers. The LLC will encourage teachers to “engage in mutual collaboration as they establish shared goals designed to motivate and support student learning” (Clary, Styslinger, & Oglan, 2012, 32).



## **Rationale**

Through discussion with the literacy coaches involved in this study, it was clear that the impacts of literacy coaching on student achievement are not always readily visible. When describing the purpose of the collaborative efforts of teachers involved in a PLC, Dufour and Eaker (1998) were clear that a key focus is improving academic achievement. The teachers are already familiar with planning literacy in grade level teams and discussing literacy practices. The familiarity of working in a group to plan for and discussing literacy should therefore make the inclusion of cross grade level literacy learning communities, as a part of their professional development, less overwhelming than a completely new approach could be. The LLCs focuses would be data-driven. The data would come from a variety of sources, such as standardized tests, grade level assessments, and benchmark assessments.

An example of using district data to guide the focus of LLCs after they are implemented follows. The data from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills and the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness from the 2013-2014 school year show evidence that in order for all students to reach their academic potential, professional development efforts need to be improved. The testing data could be used to hone in on the weakest areas, maximizing professional development efforts.

## **Review of Literature**

The review of literature presented contains a critical review of research regarding professional development in literacy and PLCs. Literature pertaining to both, ranging from 1998 to the present, is discussed. A review of seminal works ensured the research-

based need for PLCs, more specifically LLCs. The Walden University electronic library, Goodfellow Air Force Base Library, and Tom Green County Stephens Central Library were used to gather sources. Databases such as EBSCOhost, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Proquest Central, Teacher Reference Center, Education: A SAGE full-text data base, and Google Scholar were used to retrieve on-line journals and research studies. Some of the key words and key phrases that were used to search were *literacy coaching*, *professional learning communities*, *literacy learning communities*, *literacy coaching as professional development*, *job-embedded professional development*, and *literacy professional development*.

Education, along with its theories and practices, is always undergoing change. The implementation of staff development is currently one of those practices experiencing changes, and it is a concern of many school districts today (Kennedy, 2016; Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, Rodriguez, 2005). The staff development efforts of educators need to remain fluid, and there is no guarantee that they will positively affect student achievement. Therefore, literacy coaching raises many questions when implemented.

There are existing professional development models to follow regarding literacy that include literacy coaches. A few of these models are Reading First (discussed in Section 1), a component of NCLB (2001), the Literacy Collaborative Model (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011), and Targeted Reading Intervention (Vernon-Feagons, Kainz, Amendum, Wood, & Bock, 2012). The models are different in their approach. However, both hope to

have an impact on increasing student achievement in literacy. The following paragraphs offer a description of the two programs.

The Literacy Collaborative Model was established in 1993 and rooted in the work of Clay, Fountas, and Pinnell. In order for a school to become a Literacy Collaborative school, it has to have Reading Recovery in place (Shanklin, 2009). Having Reading Recovery in place ensures that the underlying theories and approaches are already known. This approach entrusts that the literacy coach will be working one-on-one in “teachers’ classrooms—observing, modeling, and providing feedback to improve student learning over time” (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011, p. 357).

The literacy coach in a Literacy Collaborative school is a teacher who is selected by the principal. The literacy coach continues teaching in the school and simultaneously receives a full school year of training. The following school year, the literacy coach works half time teaching students and half time coordinating literacy professional development for kindergarten through second grade teachers. Teachers in a Literacy Collaborative school receive 40 hours of initial training and then begin one-on-one coaching with the literacy coach. The program ideal is for each teacher to have two individual coaching session per month. Literacy Collaborative coaches, however, have indicated that this is dependent upon several factors: a teacher’s openness to working with a literacy coach, faculty size, and time allocated for coaching (Atteberry & Byrk, 2011).

Targeted Reading Intervention focuses on students in kindergarten and first grade who are struggling in reading. Teachers receive 15 minute coaching sessions in the

regular classroom setting twice a week. The focus of the coaching sessions is aiding teachers with implementing diagnostic strategies with readers who are experiencing difficulty. Targeted Reading Intervention promotes individualized instruction as more and more research points to its effectiveness in children's reading gains (Morrison, Bachman, & Connor, 2003; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010).

Professional development that includes a literacy coach is as varied as the literacy coach's role in schools; no one model clearly outshines the others. Individual districts are also known to develop their own models. Learning communities, where literacy coaches, teachers, and their principals work together to change literacy knowledge, is one such model (Matsumara & Wang, 2014; May & Supovitz, 2011; Petti, 2010). PLCs allow those involved to steer the direction of the learning and affect change school wide rather than just in an individual classroom (Ippolito, 2010). PLCs are being seen more and more in schools today.

Adult learning communities are much like the learning communities teachers establish with their students (D'Ardenne et al. , 2013; Heineke, 2013; Johnston, 2004). PLCs aid in creating dialogue about literacy problems that may be occurring , lead to the sharing of resources, and possess the ability to influence instruction "beyond common planning and assessment" (Petti, 2010, p. 52). PLCs can transform the culture of a school. Through the use of PLCs, literacy coaches can ensure continued teacher learning becomes routine behavior (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2013; Learning Forward, 2011).

When staff development is long term and infused into day-to-day routines, teachers can discuss what they are implementing with colleagues and their literacy coach. Dialogue and reflection have been noted as keys to teacher development (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015; Ross & Bruce, 2007). The infusion also allows for more time and opportunity to reflect upon their teaching. Traditional staff development efforts provide teachers with information in a workshop or lecture approach requiring little time. No follow-up is usually conducted, therefore making it almost impossible to know if teachers are applying what they have learned.

The introduction of school-based staff development means that teachers need to accept help, even when it is not being sought out. Literacy coaches need training regarding how to implement professional development (Blackstone et al., 2009). Literacy coaches benefit being well versed in not only how children learn, but also in how adults learn. Critical to the role of staff developer is the ability to “work collaboratively with the school’s formal leadership to plan, implement, and assess school change initiatives” (Blackstone et al., 2009, p. 231).

Hallum, Smith, Hite, Hite, and Wilcox (2015) contended that the role of formal leadership (i.e., principals) can be helpful to the success of PLCs. PLCs are only as strong as the trust that is present among its members. Principals can be pivotal in influencing trust factors within a school (Hallum et al., 2015). Hallum et al. stated that “school administrators, team leaders, and teachers who understand how PLC team trust develops and affects collaboration are better prepared to recognize and reinforce trust” (p. 194). When trust is present, change can be fostered.

Change needs to occur not only with the knowledge teachers possess regarding literacy, but with their teaching practices. While studies have shown that professional development concentrated on reading does increase teacher knowledge regarding literacy, it does not guarantee improved teaching methods or student achievement gains (Brady et al., 2009; Garet et al., 2008; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders 2009). Just because teachers know more about the topic of literacy does not guarantee a change in their teaching practices. Collaboration amongst teachers has been linked to improved teacher connectedness, but it does not always lead to improved teacher instruction either (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011).

A literacy coach may be able to affect both teacher knowledge and their teaching practices. Nielsen, Barry, and Staab (2008), Cantrell and Hughes (2008), and Mangin and Dunsmore (2015) have found evidence to suggest that a literacy coaches' infusion into staff development can yield improved reading instruction and more positive teacher attitudes when the coaching is paired with teacher collaboration (i.e., LLCs). Coaches have the ability to draw teachers' attention to what they already know and can assist them in effectively implementing sound teaching strategies (Toll, 2004). LLCs help teachers feel more confident in their practices as their knowledge surrounding literacy grows. Improvement in instruction occurs only when a gain in knowledge has occurred, and this ultimately effects student achievement (Chingos & Peterson, 2011; Harris & Sass, 2011).

LLCs will help literacy knowledge increase. The on-site learning communities are hyperaware of the culture, needs, and specifics of their particular school's needs (Adams & Vescio, 2015; Bayar, 2014; Easton, 2012; Gray, 2011; Gray, Mitchell, & Tartar, 2014;

Murphy, 2015). LLCs allow professional development to be school specific, accommodating the areas of weakness for both teachers and students. Literacy coaches can add in the support that is necessary for the success of learning communities (Shagrir, 2012).

An example of literacy coaches adding to the success of learning communities is evident in the findings of Vanderburg and Stephens's (2010) study. The teachers indicated that the learning communities led them from "feeling a sense of isolation to having a sense of community" (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010, p. 149). The coaches created "opportunities for teachers to make changes in their beliefs and practices" (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010, p. 154). The literacy coach led study groups afforded teachers a window into what is occurring in other teachers' classrooms and provided cross-grade level collaboration that had not been present before. Adams and Forsyth (2013), Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) and Gray, Kruse, and Tarter (2015) contended that PLCs cultivate collegial trust, and when focused on academics, the combination fosters positive change.

Change in practice is necessary to achieve sustainable gains in student achievement. Hadar and Brody's (2013) findings suggest that a powerful way to affect student achievement is to focus PLCs on student learning. Literacy coaches and teachers know where their particular students are struggling and can hone in on those specific areas of need. Feeling the connection between the PLC and their classroom is important. Teachers want to know that what they are learning is applicable to their students.

PLCs provide teachers a connectedness not only to other teachers, but to students as well. PLCs encourage teachers to access the data that are generated by their current students and use them to drive improvement efforts (Harris & Jones, 2010; Schneider, Huss-Lederman, & Sherlock (2012); Thessin & Starr, 2011; Woodland & Mazur, 2015). By using current data collected from testing, student work, and observations, improvement efforts can be tailored to fit the students (Talbert, 2010). Current best practices can be employed to guide improvement efforts. Literacy coaches will be able interject them into the improvement efforts to help ensure teachers are up-to-date with the current research.

Teachers often lack the knowledge of scientific based best practices in literacy. The perfect opportunity to ensure teachers are being connected to the latest research is during PLCs (Artman-Meeker, Fetig, Barton, Penney, & Zeng, 2015). Commeyras and DeGroff (1998) found that 60% of teachers never read research journals. Teachers are not finding the time to read academic research journals regarding best practices in literacy. Literacy coaches and the formation LLCs could provide this necessary component of change with such a high percentage of teachers never reading about how literacy should be taught. The more knowledge teachers have regarding how to best teach literacy, the larger the potential impact on student achievement.

### **Project Description**

The proposed project offers professional development in the form of LLCs infused with literacy coaching. The integration of LLCs into this school's professional development will require training. Student learning and standardized test scores are



impacted by professional development. By ensuring high quality, job-embedded professional development, researchers agree that the aforementioned points can be improved upon (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Training the teachers to begin participating in LLCs will be conducted over 3 days. The first day will be an introduction to PLCs. The second day of training will pertain to literacy and how all teachers, no matter their grade level or subject area, are responsible for literacy instruction. The third day will provide an overview of LLCs and how they will be implemented in the school. The full professional development training can be found in Appendix A; brief descriptions and examples are included below.

The introduction to PLCs will begin with an explanation of what PLCs are and why they are important. Dufour (2004) stressed the importance of creating sustainable PLCs that become “deeply embedded in the culture of the school” (p. 8). DuFour believed that a pivotal factor of PLCs is the switch from the belief that the mission of educators is only to teach. He stressed that educators need to ensure that students learn. During this introduction the teachers will work together to answer the three questions DuFour stated as being crucial in driving the work of PLCs. They will answer them in reference to literacy. The questions are as follows:

1. “What do we want each student to learn?”
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?”

(DuFour, 2004, p. 8)

It is the answer to the third question that DuFour believed separates schools functioning as learning communities from those that are not.

The second training will focus on the teaching of literacy being the responsibility of all teachers, not just classroom teachers. The teaching of literacy should not only be focused upon during a literacy block, but in all aspects of the curriculum. Content area reading strategies, as well as research-based reading and writing strategies will be focused upon. All teachers will be implored to make “content literacy a visible part of their instructional routines without sacrificing high standards for content learning”, Vaca & Vaca (2005, xviii).

Finally, the third component will tie the two previous trainings together and provide the information needed to begin the LLCs. Areas in literacy that students are struggling with will be identified using school data. Goals related to the areas of need will be set and LLCs will be formed. Research-based methods will be used to inform instruction (Hanson, 2011). Every teacher will be part of an LLC and a literacy coach will be a member of all LLCs.

### **Potential Resources**

Many of the resources necessary for this proposed project are available from the school. The LLCs would require a meeting place, technology in the form of a computer or laptop, a projector, and possibly books. Literacy data from standardized tests, benchmark testing, and any other testing would need to be available. A list of the assessments each grade level uses to assess literacy learning would also be needed. Each LLC will also need a facilitator.

The meeting place can be any classroom or available conference room in the school. This eliminates the need for an outside meeting place. The school has computers and laptops available for use at all times. Projectors are also readily available, as well as spare light bulbs for the projector in case one should be needed. The literacy coach can provide any district or school data regarding literacy that will be needed and classroom teachers can provide individual classroom data. One member from each group can serve as the LLC facilitator. The only potential cost would be if a group needed a book to use in their LLC. In this case, the principal would be approached first for funding and then the district.

### **Potential Barriers**

One of the potential barriers to this project could be the teachers themselves. The teachers are used to working together in grade level teams and have grown accustomed to doing so. The introduction of working in cross-grade level teams could present some challenges. The teachers may be reluctant to share ideas with teachers they are not used to working with. They may fear judgment from members of other grade levels.

Another potential barrier is that of consistent participation. Often times unforeseen events and circumstances prohibit participation in meetings. The LLCs meetings being held on a set schedule can help alleviate this problem. Members can schedule other meetings and tasks outside of the meeting time of their LLC.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The proposed project infuses the current job-embedded professional development of literacy coaching with the formation of literacy learning communities, a form of

professional learning community. The introduction, formation, and incorporation of the LLCs will initially require three days of training sessions. The three training sessions will be held during three consecutive staff training days. Staff training days were chosen due to the fact that all proposed members of the LLCs are present during them. I will utilize a PowerPoint presentation to introduce PLCs and outline their definition, purpose, and potential within ESD. I will make use of cooperative learning strategies while conducting the second training pertaining to responsibility regarding content literacy instruction. The third and final component will employ the use of PowerPoint once again in order to provide a thorough overview of LLCs and their proposed implementation in the school.

Following the introductory trainings, the LLCs will begin meeting. Initially they will meet bimonthly and if the need arises additional meetings can be scheduled. Each LLC will decide upon their meeting place and time. They will also decide who will serve as the group facilitator for each meeting. The facilitator will be responsible for securing any necessary materials before the meeting, providing an outline of what will be discussed during the meeting, taking notes from the meeting they are facilitating and disseminating the notes to all group members. The facilitator will also be responsible for turning in an attendance sheet to the administrator.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The success of LLCs in ESD hinges on the roles and responsibilities of the participants in this proposed project. I will serve as the facilitator during the three initial trainings that introduce LLCs and their purpose. I will coordinate with the literacy coaches and administrators to ensure there are no conflicts with training times and that

any necessary data/information is accurate and available. Teachers, coaches, and administrators will need to be present at the trainings, as well as a member of the technology staff in case there any technical issues arise.

After the initial trainings, all of the teachers, coaches, and administrators will serve as members of LLCs. The members will need to be active participants in the LLC they are a part of if the school is to become a true professional learning community. In addition to active participation, members will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project and its components.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

The overall goals for this project are:

1. Combine LLCs with the current job-embedded professional development of literacy coaching at ESD.
2. Provide collaboration among teachers of all grade levels, in turn forming a cohesive community of educators.

In order to ensure that the proposed staff development efforts are affecting change and accomplishing the two stated goals, a goal-based evaluation will be employed. NCTE (2010) reported

according to recent research, what distinguishes professional learning communities from other staff development models is their scope beyond the individual and a deep coherence that includes: a connection to something larger; coordinated perspectives, discourse and actions; shared resources to address

recurring problems of practice; and making visible tacit knowledge of learning.

(NCTE, 2010, p. 15–16).

An anonymous questionnaire will be utilized in determining if the proposed project has met its goals. The questionnaire will be available online from SEDL. It is the Professional Learning Communities Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) Online (Oliver, D. & Kiefer Hipp, K., 2015) (Appendix A).

The key stakeholders of this proposed project are the teachers, administrators, and students of ESD. Additional stakeholders are the teachers, administrators, students, and parents at other schools these students may attend. If the students of ESD have been provided with a solid foundation in which to build upon, it will ultimately mean less remediation in the future. The community as a whole is also a stakeholder. They would reap the benefits of higher literacy rates for years to come.

### **Project Implications**

Strengthening the professional development of the teachers of ESD has many positive implications. The creation of LLCs will not only strengthen individual teacher's professional knowledge regarding their teaching of literacy, but it will collectively strengthen the entire faculty. This in turn means stronger, more effective teaching methods will be employed and student achievement will be positively impacted as a result. Desmoine (2009) stated that recent research regarding professional development indicates that effective professional development possesses the following characteristics: "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation". These

are all characteristics that PLCs should possess and characteristics that the LLC at ESD will uphold.

Implementing literacy learning communities at ESD impacts not only the above mentioned stakeholders, but the community as a whole. When the teachers ban together to forge a strong community of practice, they will employ effective teaching strategies, positively impacting student achievement. When the students are consistently provided with the tools necessary to build a strong literacy foundation, ESD will experience higher test scores, greater student achievement levels, and an overall positive school culture, but the local community will also experience the benefits. Students will be more prepared to join the local workforce and meet the literacy demands of today. Those students choosing higher education will be better equipped to be successful scholars with the capability to return to the local community and share the skills attained.

### **Conclusion**

In Section 3 I outlined the proposed project. I introduced the goals of the proposed project and provided a scholarly rationale for project selection. I presented a review of literature addressing the proposed project. I also included necessary resources, an implementation timetable, participant roles and responsibilities, and a project evaluation. Finally I discussed the implications of this project not only for the stakeholders, but for the local community as well.

In Section 4 I discuss the projects strengths and limitations in addressing the problem. I offer recommendations for how the project could have been conducted differently, as well as a discussion regarding scholarship, project development and

evaluation, and leadership and change. I will also offer insight into what I learned about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally I present an overall reflection on the importance of the project study and what I learned from it .



## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusion

### **Introduction**

Presented in this section are my reflections and conclusions regarding the project. The project is discussed in terms of its overall strengths and limitations. Also offered are an analysis of myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. The section concludes with an overall reflection and a discussion of implications, applications, and directions for future research.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The strength of this proposed project is that it is grounded in research. The findings of the study suggest the literacy coaches within ESD view themselves as staff developers already. However, while collaboration among grade levels is strong, collaboration across grade levels is somewhat lacking. This project will strengthen the cross grade level collaboration allowing for deeper understanding of how each of the schools' literacy programs functions.

Information gained from the interviews and coaching logs was used in its creation, as well as existing research found in peer-reviewed journals and professional literature. Rose (2009) reported that teachers can drastically impact student achievement depending on their professional development. Increased student achievement in literacy is a goal of ESD, therefore making it necessary to introduce a professional development initiative that compliments what is already in place and can also produce the desired results. Literacy coaching and the formation of PLCs can foster an atmosphere where professional development is differentiated, yet possesses the collaboration that many

researchers feel is crucial, yet lacking, in many professional development initiatives (Burchinal, Diamond, Koehler, & Powell, 2010; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Porche, Pallante, & Snow, 2012; Rose, 2009).

A limitation of this proposed project is that the trainer is not a member of the teaching staff at this school. Having a staff member as the trainer may aid in shaping a sense of community and make teachers more comfortable and eager to participate. Knowing the trainer and having a relationship already in place may have proven beneficial. Another limitation to consider is the time of year the LLCs would be introduced. The LLCs will be introduced as the school year comes to a close. Teacher turnover due to retirements or teachers leaving the school for other reasons could affect membership of each LLC and the overall dynamic of the group. It may be beneficial to introduce the LLCs at the beginning of the school year when everyone is returning and no changes to staff are foreseen.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Based upon the findings of the study, the literacy coach could introduce more cross-grade level collaboration without the formation of PLCs. There could be regularly scheduled meetings where the teachers meet as a whole and study/discuss various aspects of literacy. Cross-grade level peer coaching could also be introduced to support the coaching already in place with the literacy coach. Another approach to solving the problem of the role of literacy coaching would be to adopt one of the definitions already created by another school district. Adopting a literacy coaching program that is already in use and proven to be effective in another district could be an alternative. For example,

Targeted Reading Intervention or the Literacy Collaborative Model could be chosen as the staff development model in ESD.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

Scholarship has taken on additional meanings to me throughout my doctoral journey. I used to view scholarship as learning with a group of people about a particular subject in academia. All of my views pertained to learning together, in person. After going through the doctoral process, I no longer view scholarship as necessarily occurring in person. Many of my learning successes occurred via my online classroom through postings or phone conversations with colleagues and contacts. I also no longer view scholarship to include only those enrolled in my class or my professors. I now view family, friends, and contacts along this journey to be part of my scholarship. Some contributed to my scholarly journey through academic discourse and knowledge, and others simply listened and acted as my sounding board for ideas and frustrations; however, all were equally important to my overall journey. Scholarship embodies an on-going process of learning, where the participants and contributors are ever changing, but the end goal of knowledge gain remains constant.

This project was developed based upon the findings of the study after careful consideration of the data collected. After reading and rereading the interview dialogue and revisiting the coaching logs, it became apparent that further collaboration among teachers would be beneficial. Grade levels were already successfully collaborating together regarding grade level literacy. After reading research and articles regarding

components of successful professional development programs, PLCs seemed to be the best fit for the teachers at this school.

A successful leader does not act alone. Successful leadership comes from knowing the strengths of those being led and drawing upon them. Sergiovanni (2005) stated that a wise leader tries hard to “rely on others and to build up the leadership capacity in others” (p. 22). A leader needs to continuously learn with those he or she is leading and recognize that when learning together, a deeper, more sustainable change can take place. Each member of the school community needs to feel that they play an integral part, and it will be up to the administrators in ESD to make sure this happens. When people have a vested interest in something, they care more about the positive changes that take place and push harder to make sure they happen.

To reflect upon this journey and analyze myself as a scholar is enlightening. I began this journey not fully realizing I had the tools necessary to be a self-motivator and scholar in the higher education arena. As my journey unfolded and is coming to a close in terms of this project, I am keenly aware of the drive and passion within myself to be a dedicated, life-long learner. I became resourceful in seeking out necessary information and was able to network successfully far beyond what I had imagined possible. The research process, from my initial literature review to gathering data and finally analyzing that data, made me realize that what I once perceived to be a problem in the school I taught in was actually occurring in schools not only in the United States, but abroad as well. My professors, colleagues, friends, and family were paramount in my successes no matter how big or small.

As a self-practitioner, I have experienced growth as an educator as well as a researcher. In order to successfully complete my research, I had to become adept in areas in which I had previously been only slightly familiar. I had to become a researcher and possess all of the skills necessary to carry out that role. I learned how to ethically gather information and manage that information objectively. I learned to be able to sift through information and draw conclusions based upon the evidence at hand, even if at times that meant changing my initial beliefs.

As a practitioner, I have learned that in order to effectively promote change, I need to reflect on all of my past experiences and collaborate with other educators to produce sustainable change. As I reflect upon how I have learned best in the past, I realize that it always involves working collaboratively with others. This realization makes it seem fitting to be inspired to be a part of building PLCs. Sharing and discussing ideas that have been successful, as well as not so successful, promote an atmosphere of community, spark ideas for future collaboration, and plant the seeds necessary for change.

As a project developer, I found that allowing the results of the research to guide the development of the project was essential if I wanted the project to have relevance and be successful. I needed to be in-tune with the key concepts and aware of the variety of possible professional development methods. I have learned as the project developer that I will need to gain the support of the administrators and teachers in order to successfully implement the project. Without the necessary support, staff development efforts,

especially those that are new and unfamiliar, will meet opposition and be ineffective before they have ever had a chance to be implemented.

### **Reflection on the Importance of the Work**

Hindsight would be a wonderful gift in many difficult and challenging situations, and this experience would prove to be no different. With that being said, I also recognize that we learn the most about ourselves during these times. There were times during my doctoral journey that were especially difficult, and barriers seemed almost impossible to push beyond. I have learned that doctoral research and scholarly writing do not coexist well with procrastination. It is best to read and/or write a little each day. This helped me remain fresh and focused instead of pressured and frustrated. I also learned that knowledge can be gained from many people and places and never to discount when that may happen. My communication skills were sharpened as a result of this experience. Not just in spoken language, but in written language as well. Being able to communicate effectively was crucial in my interactions with participants, classmates, professors, and family members alike.

I am leaving this journey a much different scholar than when I began. I have a deeper understanding of my own learning and what motivates me to keep learning. I have a desire to lead and evoke change differently than what I imagined at the beginning of this undertaking. One thing has remained the same, however. I still strongly value education and feel it is essential in my life.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Just as it is expected, students are provided with the best opportunity for success, and the same needs to be provided for teachers. Teachers need to be afforded the opportunity to expand on their knowledge with colleagues and to create not only PLCs, but school communities where everyone plays an integral role in the success of the learning environment. With the creation of literacy learning teams, teachers, students, parents, and administrators of ESD will experience positive learning gains in literacy and academic achievement. Society will benefit as well. When students are equipped with a stronger literacy foundation, they will be able to contribute to their local communities in ways they were unable to before. Job and volunteer positions that were unattainable before may now be within reach.

Secondary education would be an area to consider for future research. Coupling literacy coaches with LLCs in secondary education where many teachers are content driven with little knowledge regarding literacy acquisition could prove to be beneficial. ESD stated that its professional development mission encompasses professional development that is “results oriented, on-going, job-embedded, data-driven, and designed to advance students learning” (Humble ISD, 2014-2015). Literacy learning teams embody their mission statement and could prove to be a worthwhile professional development method at both the elementary and secondary levels.

### **Conclusion**

This research and proposed project were but one step in helping ESD reach their literacy goals. Literacy coaching can be a powerful approach to addressing the issue of

the need for today's students to gain stronger literacy skills. Literacy coaching has the potential to effect student achievement and teacher performance when implemented appropriately. The success of literacy coaching can be increased when implemented with strong leadership. Coaches and principals need to work together to be excellent instructional leaders. This will strengthen the foundation of the communities of practice being built through literacy coaching and sow the seeds for continued success.



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## Appendix A: The Project

### Training Schedule

#### Day 1

- Participants will sit in groups of 4-6. At each table have a discussion with a tablemate regarding your idea of what a professional learning community is and how it could benefit ESD. After you share with one person, share as a table.  
(Allow 10 minutes)
- Present PowerPoint regarding PLCs
- Each grade level chair will take a piece of paper that is a chart to be filled out as a grade level at the next grade level meeting. The chart pertains to how they think LLCs will benefit their school, what challenges they think may occur, and what expectations they have.

The introduction to PLCs will begin with an explanation of what PLCs are and why they are important. Dufour (2004) stresses the importance of creating sustainable PLCs that become “deeply embedded in the culture of the school” (p. 8). DuFour (2004) believes that a pivotal factor of PLCs is the switch from the belief that the mission of educators is only to teach. He stresses that educators need to ensure that students learn. During this introduction the teachers will work together to answer the three questions DuFour (2004) states as being crucial in driving the work of PLCs. They will answer them in reference to literacy. The questions are:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?

3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? (p. 8)

It is the answer to the third question that DuFour (2004) believes separates schools functioning as learning communities from those that are not.

## **Day 2**

- Recap what was gone over at the last training session and have each grade level present their chart. After they are presented they can be hung on the wall to refer to later in the training.
- Tables will have a discussion about who is responsible for teaching literacy. Each table will share what they decided. (5 minutes to discuss at tables before sharing)
- Find a partner at your table and discuss what you perceive to be your strengths and weaknesses in regards to teaching literacy. (5 minutes)
- PowerPoint presentation regarding teaching literacy

The second training will focus on the teaching of literacy being the responsibility of all teachers, not just classroom teachers. The teaching of literacy should not only be focused upon during a literacy block, but in all aspects of the curriculum. Content area reading strategies, as well as research-based reading and writing strategies will be focused upon. All teachers will be implored to make “content literacy a visible part of their instructional routines without sacrificing high standards for content learning”, Vaca & Vaca (2005, xviii).

## **Day 3**

- Recap first two training sessions



- PowerPoint presentation addressing areas in literacy in which students are struggling
- Set goals related to the areas of need
- Form LLCs

Finally, the third component will tie the two previous trainings together and provide the information needed to begin the LLCs. Areas in literacy that students are struggling with will be identified. Goals related to the areas of need will be set and LLCs will be formed. Research-based methods will be used to inform instruction (Hanson, 2011). Every teacher will be part of an LLC and a literacy coach will be a member of all LLCs.

Slide 1

## Literacy Learning Communities

Created by: Kate Matthews Welborn

Slide 2

Day 1

Slide 3

**What is a professional learning community?**

- Describe to a table mate what you believe a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is. Do you think there is any benefit to ESD adopting the use of them?
- Share as a table what you discussed as partners.

## Slide 4

## Definitions of Professional Learning Communities

- An ongoing process through which teachers and administrators work collaboratively to seek and share learning and to act on their learning, their goal being to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for students' benefit (Hord, 1997)
- Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006)
- A strategy to increase student achievement by creating a collaborative school culture focused on learning (Feger & Arruda, 2008)

The information on this slide and the following 9 slides was obtained from The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

Professional Learning Communities. (2009, January 1). Retrieved February 15, 2015, from <http://www.centerforcsri.org/plc/elements.html>

## Slide 5

## Common Characteristics of PLC's

- Shared values and vision (Bolam et al., 2005; DuFour, 2004; Feger & Arruda, 2008; Hord, 1997; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994)
- Collaborative culture (Bolam et al., 2005; Feger & Arruda, 2008; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994)
- Focus on examining outcomes to improve student learning (DuFour, 2004; Feger & Arruda, 2008; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Louis, 2006)
- Supportive and shared leadership (Feger & Arruda, 2008; Hord, 1997; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006)
- Shared personal practice (Hord, 1997; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004)

## Slide 6

### Shared Values and Vision

- Teachers and administrators share a vision focused on student learning and a commitment to improvement (Reichstetter, 2006)
- The vision is used as a context for decision making about instructional practice and collaborative learning efforts (Leo & Cowen, 2000; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Stoll et al., 2006)
- The vision statement should result in a collective responsibility for and an unwavering focus on student learning (Leo & Cowen, 2000; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Stoll et al., 2006)

## Slide 7

### Collaborative Culture

- PLCs are based on the premise that through collaboration, professionals achieve more than they could alone (DuFour & Eaker, 1998)
- Teachers benefit from the resources that each brings to the PLC (Newman, 1994)
- Collaboration provides a mechanism for sharing responsibility for student learning and a means to work together toward a common purpose (Reichstetter, 2006; Stoll et al., 2006)
- Collaboration (e.g., opportunities for teachers to engage in ongoing collegial opportunities where they talk about teaching, receive frequent feedback on teaching, design classes together, teach each other, etc.) has been found in successful schools and is missing in unsuccessful schools (Little, 1989, 2003)

## Slide 8

### Focus on Examining Outcomes to Improve Student Learning

- PLCs promote results-oriented thinking that is focused on continuous improvement and student learning (Reichstetter, 2006)
- The focus goes beyond a team getting together to look at data. In PLCs, teachers respond to data that require mutual accountability and changing classroom practices. Data help motivate teachers to see what is happening and what they need to do collectively (White & McIntosh, 2007)

## Slide 9

### Supportive and Shared Leadership

- PLCs often are viewed as a foundation for developing teacher leaders (Caine & Caine, 2000)
- Administrators are committed to sharing decision making with teachers and providing opportunities for them to serve as leaders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; McREL, 2003)
- Leadership is shared and distributed among formal and informal leaders (Phillips, 2003; Reichstetter, 2006)
- The purposes and goals of a PLC grow from among the participants, based on their values, beliefs, and individual and shared experiences (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004)
- Teacher leadership capacity sustains PLCs. Sharing power and authority with teachers through decision making and shared leadership increases leadership capacity and builds a belief in the school's collective ability to affect student teaching (Olivier & Hipp, 2006)

## Slide 10

### Shared Personal Practice

- A major focus of PLCs is on professional learning in which teachers work and learn together as they continually evaluate the effectiveness of their practices and the needs, interests, and skills of their students (McREL, 2003)
- Teachers share experiences, observe each other, and discuss teaching. Shared practice and collective inquiry help sustain improvement by strengthening connections among teachers, stimulating discussion about professional practice, and helping teachers build on one another's expertise (McREL, 2003)
- Through continuous inquiry and reflective dialogue teachers discover solutions and address student needs (Hord, 1997; Stoll et al., 2006)

## Slide 11

- PLC's should be sustainable and deeply embedded in the culture of the school (Dufour, 2004, p.8)
- DuFour (2004) believes that a pivotal factor of PLC's is the switch from the belief that the mission of educators is only to teach. He stresses that educators need to ensure that students learn.

## Slide 12

### 3 Critical Questions Driving the Work of PLC's

Work together as a table to answer the following questions:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? (Dufour, 2004, p. 8)

## Slide 13

DuFour (2004) believes the answer to the third question separates schools functioning as learning communities from those that are not .

- As a table look at your answer to question 3 and based on what you have learned today discuss if you think your answer places you in the category of a learning community or not.
- If it did not make you a learning community, what could you do to change that?
- If it did make you a learning community, what qualities made it that way?

## Slide 14

Grade level chairs, please take a chart to be filled out at your next grade level meeting. Each grade level will answer the following questions:

1. How will LLC's benefit ESD?
2. What challenges may LLC's present?
3. What expectations or apprehension do you have?

## Slide 15

Day 2



## Slide 16

- Discuss with your elbow partner who is responsible for the teaching of literacy?
- Share as a table what you discussed as partners.

## Slide 17

- The teaching of literacy is the responsibility of all teachers, not just classroom teachers.
- The teaching of literacy should not only be focused upon during a literacy block, but in all aspects of the curriculum.

Slide 18

### As a table...

- Brainstorm ways literacy skills are taught during a literacy block.
- Brainstorm ways literacy skills are focused on during other subject area instruction.

Slide 19

**Reading Strategies**  
vs.  
**Reading Behaviors**

- As a table separate the word cards into two categories. The categories are reading strategies and reading behaviors.
- Keep in mind strategies are internal and behaviors are external.

Strategy Cards: predicting, inferring, visualizing, connecting, analyzing, summarizing, synthesizing, skimming, critiquing, reflecting

Behavior Cards: rereading, previewing or surveying the text, asking questions before, during, and after reading, reading aloud to clarify thinking, using story structure, text genre, and writing conventions, using text aids to illuminate and extend meaning, marking texts and recording notes, using context and parts of words to infer meaning, writing in reading response logs, discussing ideas with others

Lists obtained from Dorn, L. J., & Soffos, C. (2005). *Teaching for deep comprehension: A reading workshop approach*. Portland, ME : Stenhouse Publishers.

## Slide 20

### Literacy Activities for Teachers

- Teachers must participate in literacy activities with other teachers to gain a deeper understanding of teaching literacy (Dorn & Soffos, 2005).
  - Teacher Book Clubs
  - Teacher Reading Log
  - Independent Reading during LLC's

## Slide 21

### Content Area Reading

- Requires reading and comprehending expository text
- Teaching strategies to aid in reading comprehension are part of the total school curriculum and are applicable across content-area classes (Bryant, Pedrotty, Ugel, Thompson, & Hamff, 1999).

## Slide 22

### Why do all teachers need to share the responsibility of teaching reading?

- Form an answer to this question in your mind and then share with your tablemates.
- Create a list of reasons to share with the group.
- It is important that teachers of all content areas learn how to incorporate reading strategies into the curriculum or all could be at risk for reduced teaching time or even possible elimination (Abril, 2006; Hinde et al., 2007)

## Slide 23

### Content Area Reading Strategies

- What strategies do you use when teaching content area reading?
  - Count off by counting 1-6. Form groups according to your numbers.
  - Generate a list using a semantic map.

Provide an example of a semantic map.

Slide 24

## Content Area Reading Strategies

How to help students navigate the change between learning how to read and reading to learn:

1. Word Identification
2. Vocabulary
3. Comprehension

Using the semantic map your group created, apply these three categories to your list.

Slide 25

## Reading Activity

- Each group will be given an article to read.
- Divide your article into sections for each person to read.
- After you read your section you will be responsible for relaying the information to your group.
- Come up with a creative way to share the information from the article with the rest of the groups.

## Slide 26

- Make “content literacy a visible part of your instructional routines without sacrificing high standards for content learning”, Vaca & Vaca (2005, xviii).

## Slide 27

Day 3

## Slide 28

### Creating LLC's

- Each LLC will have a goal related to an area in literacy in which students have been identified to be struggling
- Research-based methods will be used to inform instruction (Hanson, 2011)
- Every teacher will be part of an LLC and a literacy coach will be a member of all LLC's

•Using data drawn from standardized testing and informal assessments, several areas of need will be identified and used to begin the LLCs.

•At least one member from each grade level should be on each LLC, this will allow the entire grade level to benefit from what is learned at each LLC meeting, as group members can share information at grade level meetings.

•The Literacy Coaches should decide which groups they wish to be a part of prior to other members joining, however, this should not be made known until after members choose LLCs to limit bias.

•After everyone has chosen an LLC the rest of the time will be spent deciding what the first goal will be and what research-based methods will be used to help meet the goal.

Materials can begin to be gathered/located and roles can be established.



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## **Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised**

### **Directions:**

This questionnaire assesses your perceptions about your principal, staff, and stakeholders based on the dimensions of a professional learning community (PLC) and related attributes. This questionnaire contains a number of statements about practices which occur in some schools. Read each statement and then use the scale below to select the scale point that best reflects your personal degree of agreement with the statement. Shade the appropriate oval provided to the right of each statement. Be certain to select only one response for each statement. Comments after each dimension section are optional.

### **Key Terms:**

- Principal = Principal, not Associate or Assistant Principal
- Staff/Staff Members = All adult staff directly associated with curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students
- Stakeholders = Parents and community members

**Scale:** 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

2 = Disagree (D)

3 = Agree (A)

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

STATEMENTS		SCALE			
		SD	D	A	SA
	<b>Shared and Supportive Leadership</b>				
1.	Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.	0	0	0	0
2.	The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.	0	0	0	0

3.	Staff members have accessibility to key information.	0	0	0	0
4.	The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.	0	0	0	0
5.	Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.	0	0	0	0
6.	The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.	0	0	0	0
7.	The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.	0	0	0	0
8.	Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.	0	0	0	0
9.	Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.	0	0	0	0

10.	Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.	0	0	0	0
11.	Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					
	<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>SCALE</b>			
	<b>Shared Values and Vision</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>

12.	A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.	0	0	0	0
13.	Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.	0	0	0	0
14.	Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.	0	0	0	0
15.	Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.	0	0	0	0
16.	A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.	0	0	0	0
17.	School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.	0	0	0	0

18.	Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.	0	0	0	0
19.	Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.	0	0	0	0
20.	Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					
	<b>Collective Learning and Application</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
21.	Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.	0	0	0	0

22.	Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.	0	0	0	0
23.	Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.	0	0	0	0
24.	A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.	0	0	0	0
25.	Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.	0	0	0	0
26.	Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.	0	0	0	0

27.	School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.	0	0	0	0
28.	School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.	0	0	0	0
29.	Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.	0	0	0	0
30.	Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					



	STATEMENTS	SCALE			
	Shared Personal Practice	SD	D	A	SA
31.	Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.	0	0	0	0
32.	Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.	0	0	0	0
33.	Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.	0	0	0	0
34.	Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.	0	0	0	0
35.	Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.	0	0	0	0

36.	Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.	0	0	0	0
37.	Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					
	<b>Supportive Conditions - Relationships</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
38.	Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.	0	0	0	0
39.					

	A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.	0	0	0	0
40.	Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.	0	0	0	0
41.	School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.	0	0	0	0
42.	Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					
	<b>Supportive Conditions - Structures</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>

43.	Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.	0	0	0	0
44.	The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.	0	0	0	0
45.	Fiscal resources are available for professional development.	0	0	0	0
46.	Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.	0	0	0	0
	<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>SCALE</b>			
		<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
47.	Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.	0	0	0	0

48.	The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.	0	0	0	0
49.	The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.	0	0	0	0
50.	Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.	0	0	0	0
51.	Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.	0	0	0	0
52.	Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.	0	0	0	0
COMMENTS:					

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Source: Olivier, D. F., Hipp, K. K., & Huffman, J. B. (2010). Assessing and analyzing schools. In K. K.

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**Professional Learning Communities**

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by employing reasonable, industry-recognized security and virus safeguards, and conducting routine system maintenance and monitoring.

---

**From:** Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised

**Sent:** Saturday, April 2, 2016 1:17 PM

**To:** XXX@yahoo.com

**Subject:** Access to the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised Online

Dear kate welborn,

Thank you for contacting SEDL regarding the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised Online. Your administrator account for the PLCA-R online has been created.

A quantity of "10" survey completions have been added to your account so you can test the PLCA-R site to see how it works before using it with live survey participants.

You can log on to the PLCA-R Administrative interface at:

<http://www.sedl.org/plc/survey/admin>

You will log on to the admin site using

- Your e-mail address "XXX@yahoo.com"

- Your password "JyXD&P3bL!CB" (After you log on to the site, you can change this password to something memorable to you.)

#### NEXT STEPS:

Once you set up a survey "cohort" on the Admin site, you will have a password for that cohort which the participants will use to take the survey. You will also be able to send a link to participants that has the password embedded into the link, so they do not have to type in the password separately.

Survey participants will access the PLCA-R online at:

<http://www.sedl.org/plc/survey>

Let me know if you have any difficulty accessing the site or have other questions about customizing the PLCA-R Online.

#### WATCH A DEMO:

You can watch a walkthrough video and view some screenshots of the different parts of the PLCA-R admin site at:

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/plc01.html>

Contact Brian Litke at [XXX@air.org](mailto:XXX@air.org) for assistance or additional information about the PLCA-R Online.

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## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

### Interview Questions

1. Describe the role of the literacy coach with regards to literacy in your school.
2. Describe the role of the literacy coach with regards to literacy within individual classrooms in your school.
3. Have you noticed a change in the teaching of reading after working with the teachers?
4. In regards to literacy what is your focus? How often?
5. Describe the overall feel in the school climate amongst the teachers about the importance of the literacy coach? Give an example of what makes you think this way.
6. What impact, if any, do you feel infusing the literacy coach into the staff development at the school has on teachers? On student achievement?
7. What do you believe are the most beneficial aspects of working directly with the teachers?
8. What would you recommend could be done differently to improve the experience in the future?
9. Do you have anything to add?

## Appendix C: Protocol for Coaching Logs

### **Directions for Completing Coaching Log**

1. Complete the coaching log each day of the school work week during the data collection period (February 3, 2014 through March 7, 2014). Please be sure to include your participant number and the ‘week of’ date.
2. Record information in all categories that pertain each day. Descriptions are brief, containing only the information noted, unless you feel a more detailed explanation is necessary.
3. Email coaching log to [kate.welborn@waldenu.edu](mailto:kate.welborn@waldenu.edu) on the last day of each school work week during the data collection period (2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, and 3/7).
4. Please call me if you have any questions, 325, 277-0086.

### **Coaching Log**

Participant Number \_\_\_\_\_ Week of \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the chart below for each day of the week. Briefly describe the activity.

Coaching Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Staff Development (whole staff, small group, individual/topic/time spent)					
Modeling/Coaching (grade level of teacher/topic/time spent)					
Meetings Attended (participants/topic/ time spent)					

Work with Students (individual, small group, whole group/topic/time spent)					
Other					

## Appendix D: Tables and Figures

Table D1

*Participants' Views Regarding the Role of the Literacy Coach in the School*

Role	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Model lessons	X	X		X	
Plan curriculum	X	X	X	X	
Observe/Debrief		X		X	
Data		X		X	X
Professional development		X	X	X	X

---

Mentor new

X

teachers

Locate resources X

---



Table D2

*Participants' Views Regarding the Role of the Literacy Coach in Individual Classrooms*

Role	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Observe/Debrief	X	X	X		X
Individual needs	X			X	X
Principal intervention	X			X	
Model lessons		X	X	X	X
Share ideas		X			X

Table D3

*Opinion Regarding Changes in Teaching of Reading*

Change	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Yes	X	X	X	X	X
No					

Table D4

*Opinion Regarding Literacy Focus*

Focus	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Primary Grade	X		X	X	
Literacy					
Intermediate		X	X	X	X
Grade literacy					
Writing	X	X		X	
Data driven		X	X	X	X
focus					
Team goal		X			X

Table D5

*Opinion Regarding Perception of Literacy Coach*

Perception	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Administrator	X	X		X	
Evaluator	X			X	
Mentor	X		X	X	X
Resource Collector		X	X	X	X

Table D6

*Opinion Regarding Impact on Teachers of Infusing Literacy Coach Into Staff Development*

Impact	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Positive impact, especially Math/Science	X	X	X	X	X
Willingness to try new strategies	X	X	X		X
Eager to share feedback	X	X	X		X
Operate as PLC	X	X	X	X	

Table D7

*Opinion Regarding Impact on Student Achievement of Infusing Literacy Coach Into Staff Development*

Impact	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Increase in vocabulary evident from data	X				
Need to look at next year's STAR data		X			
Positive impact (nonspecific)			X	X	X

Table D8

*Opinion Regarding Beneficial Aspects of Working Directly With Teachers*

Impact	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Part. 5
Ability to reach all students	X		X	X	
Accessible/Knowledgeable resource		X		X	X
Trustworthy mentor		X	X	X	X

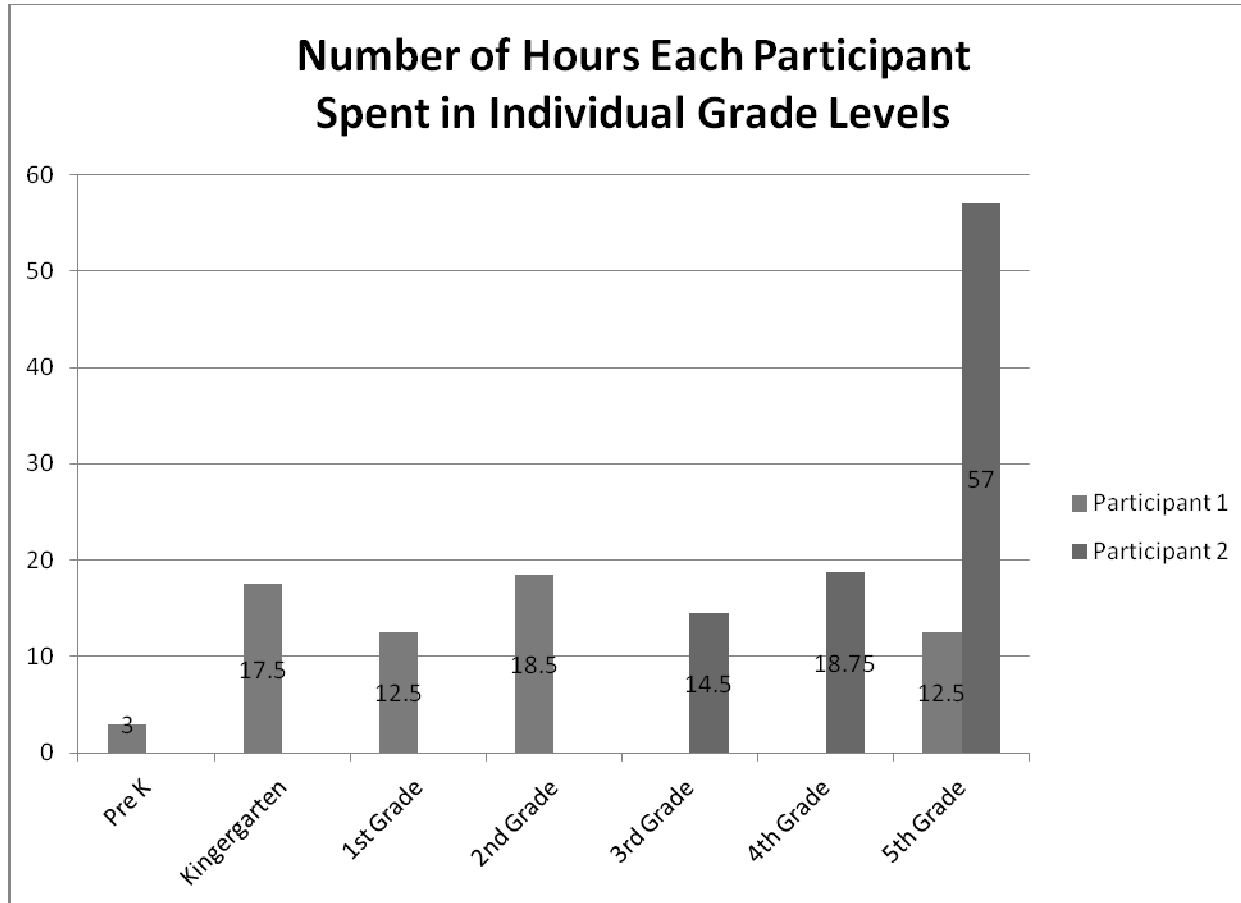
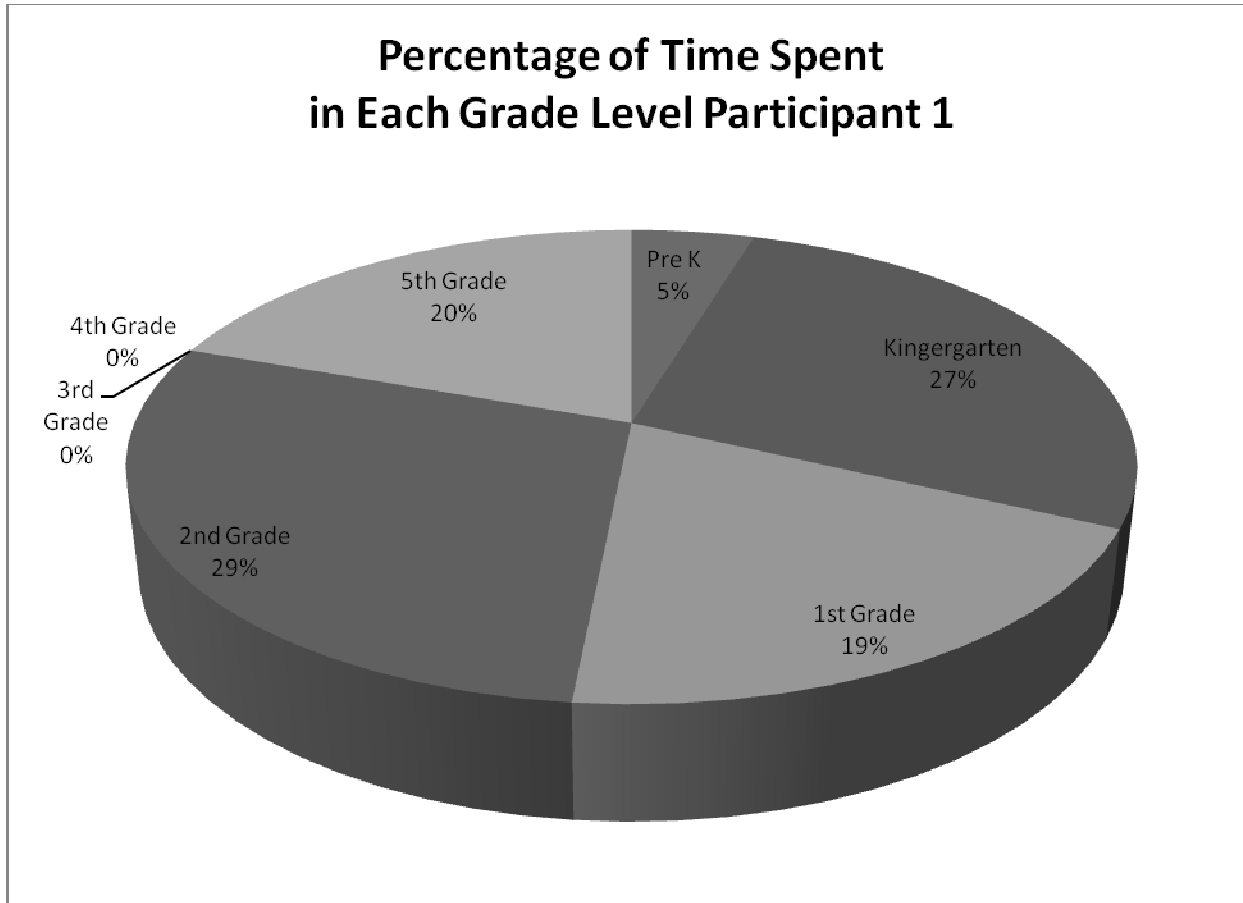
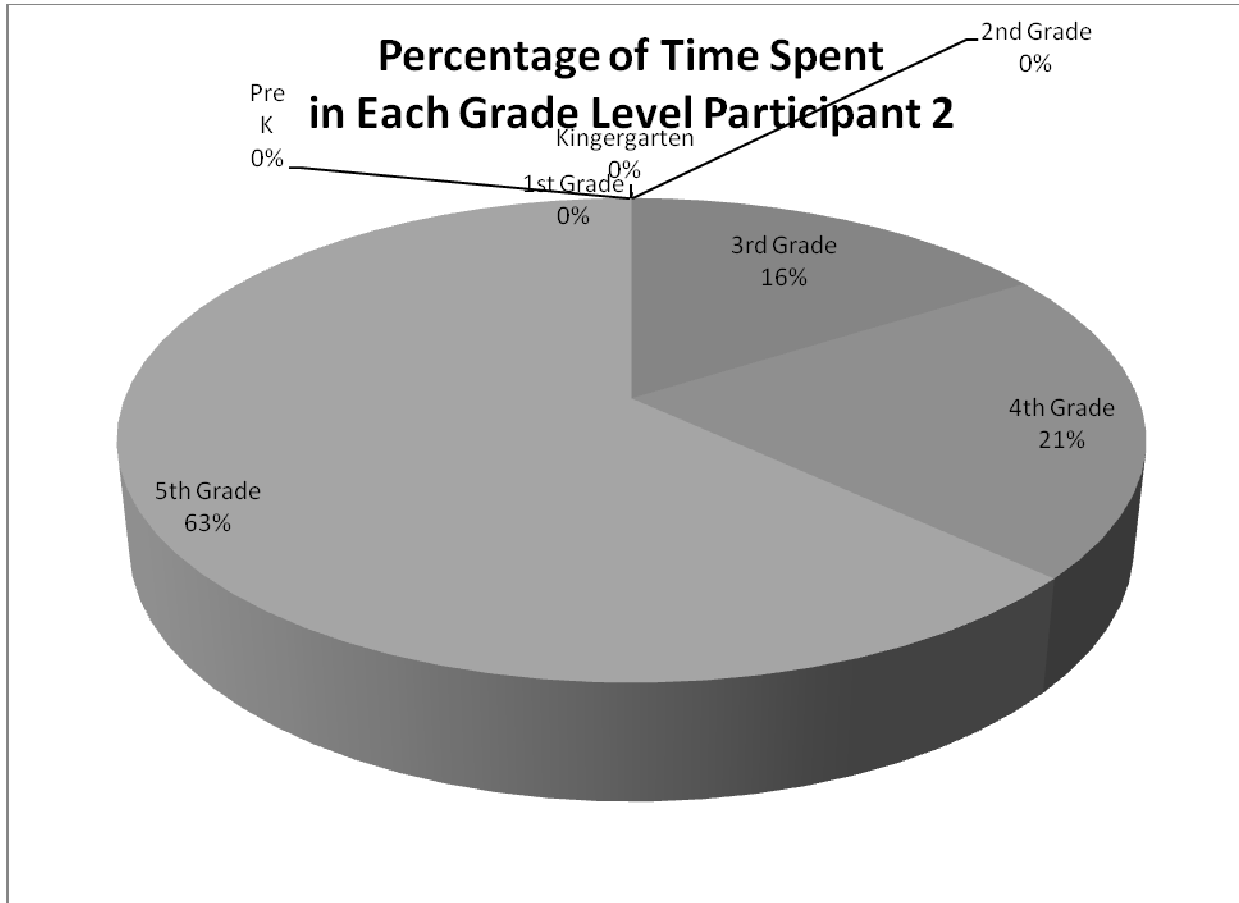


Figure D1. Number of hours each participant spent in individual grade levels.





*Figure D2.* Percentage of time spent in each grade level Participant 1.



*Figure D3.*Percentage of time spent in each grade level Participant 2.

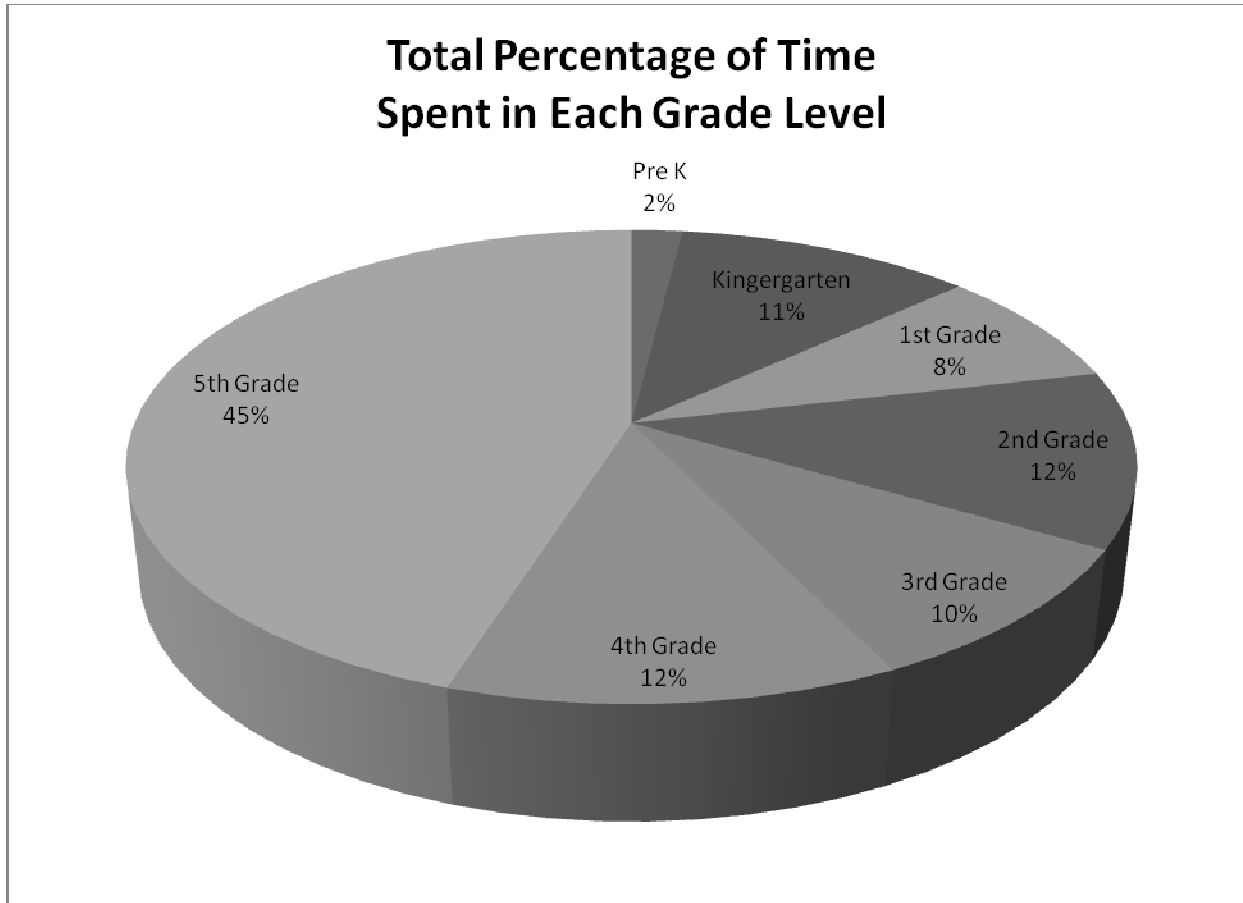
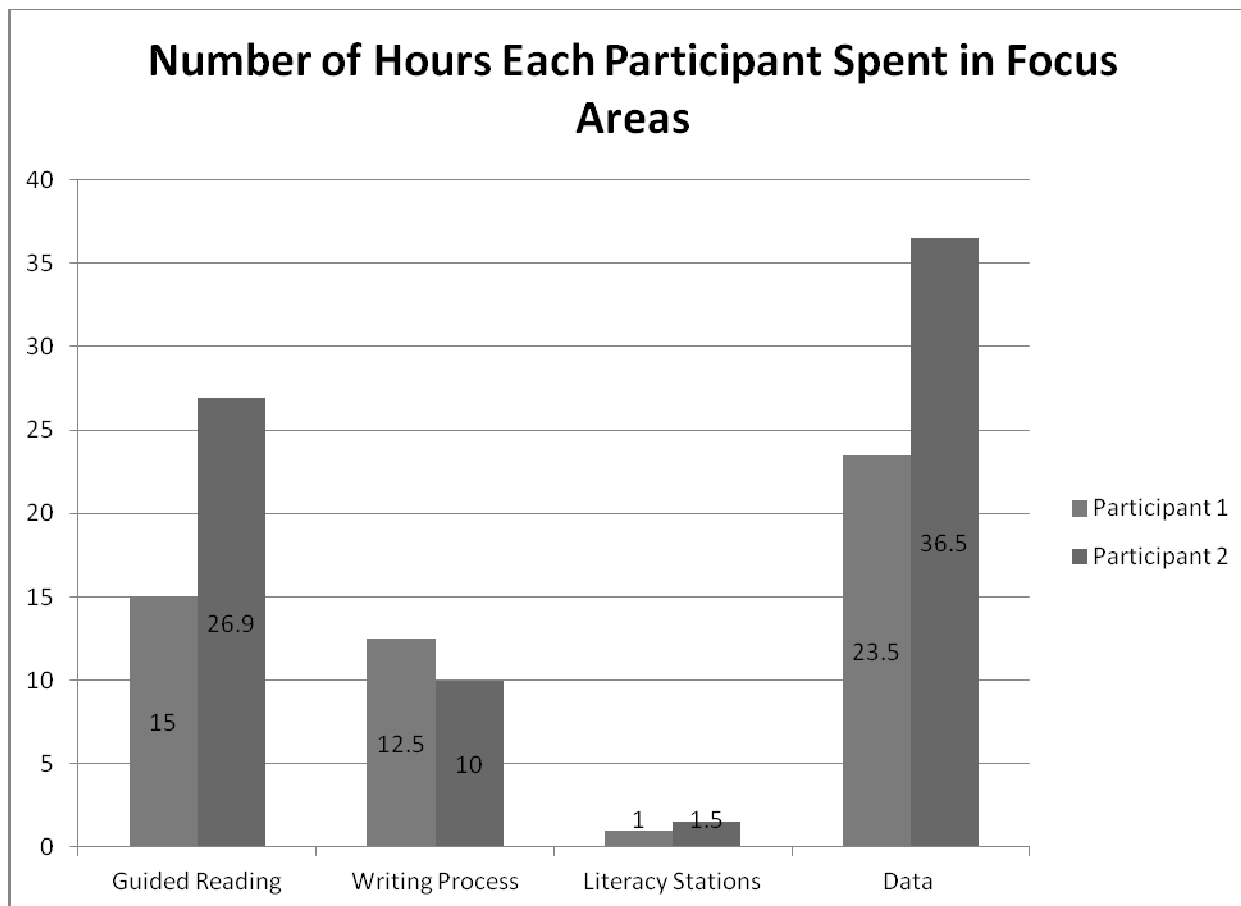
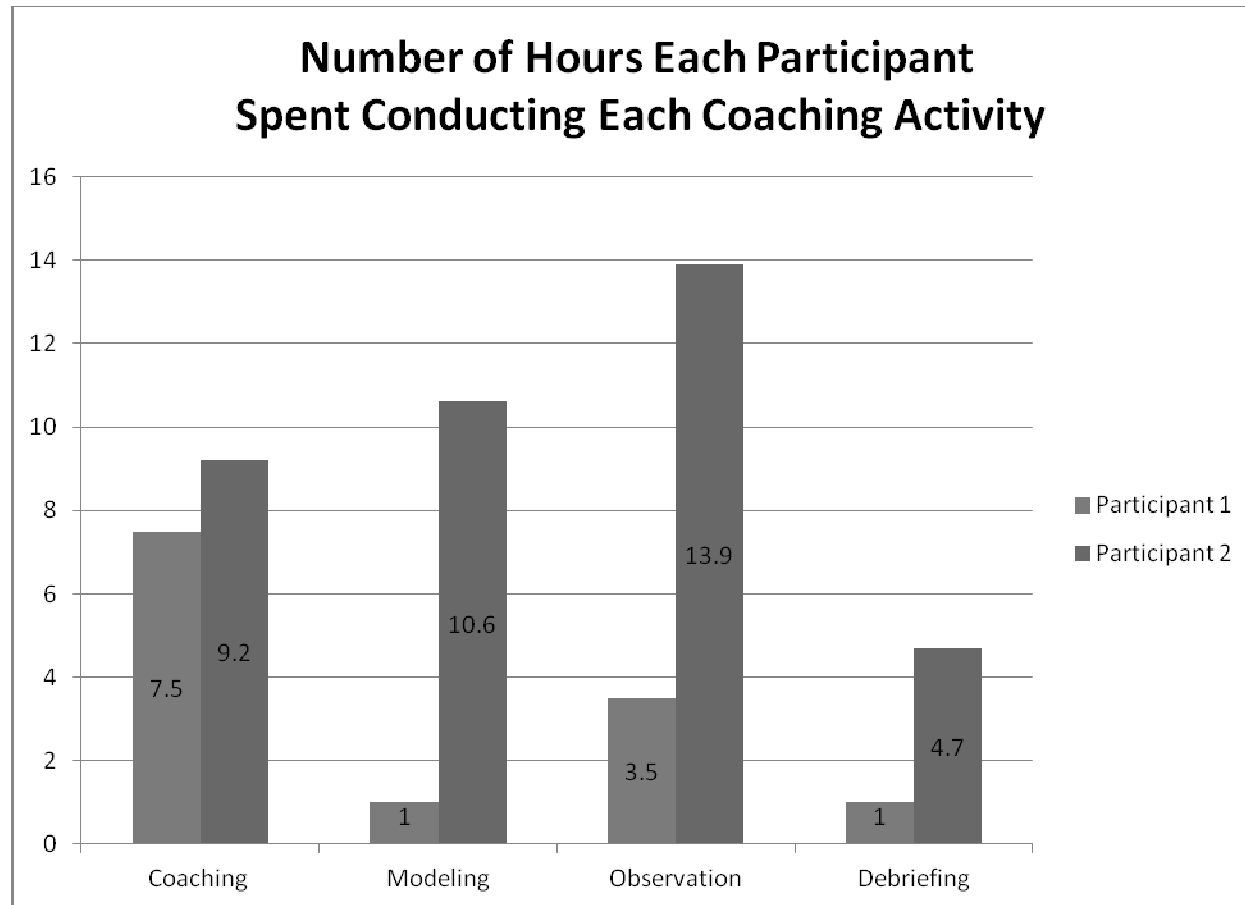


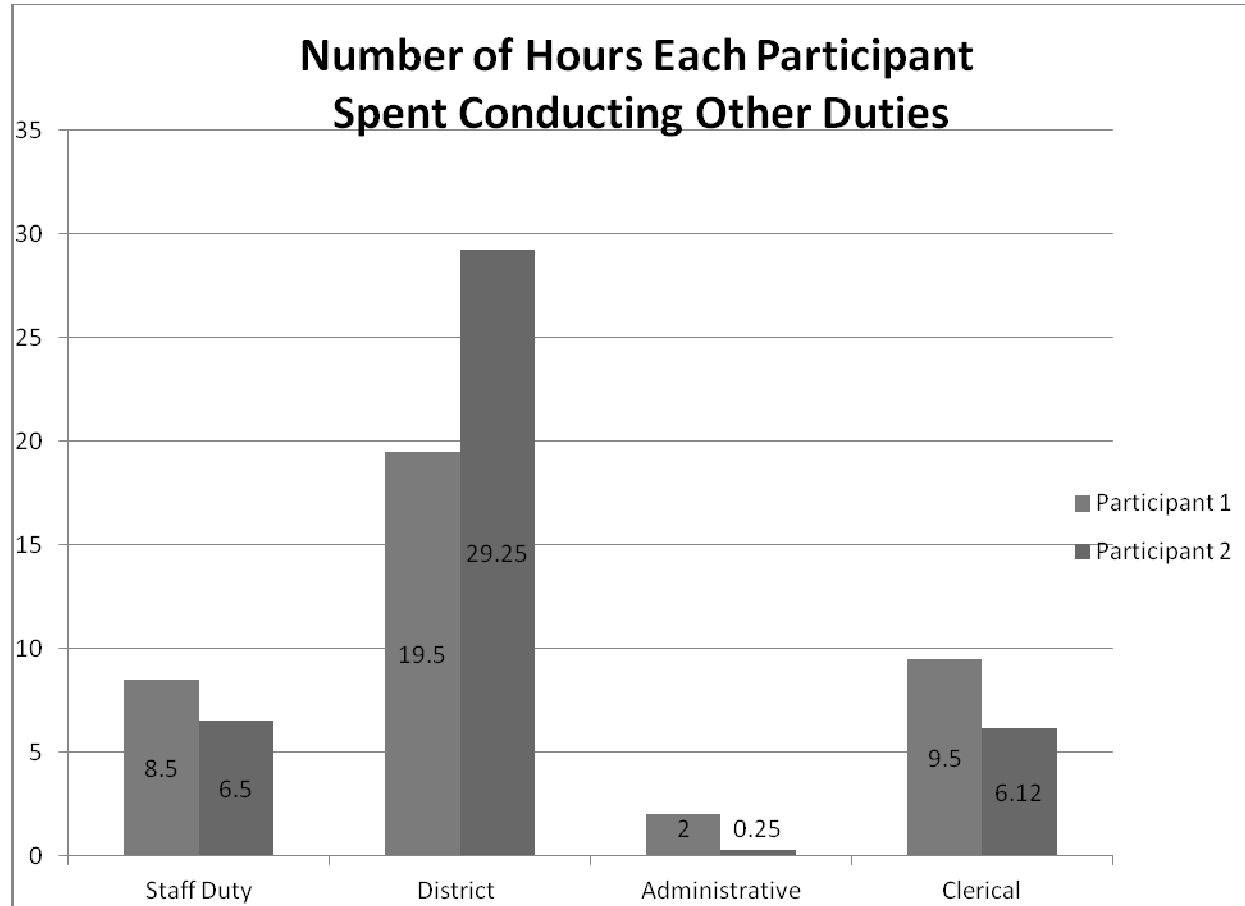
Figure D4. Total percentage of time spent in each grade level.



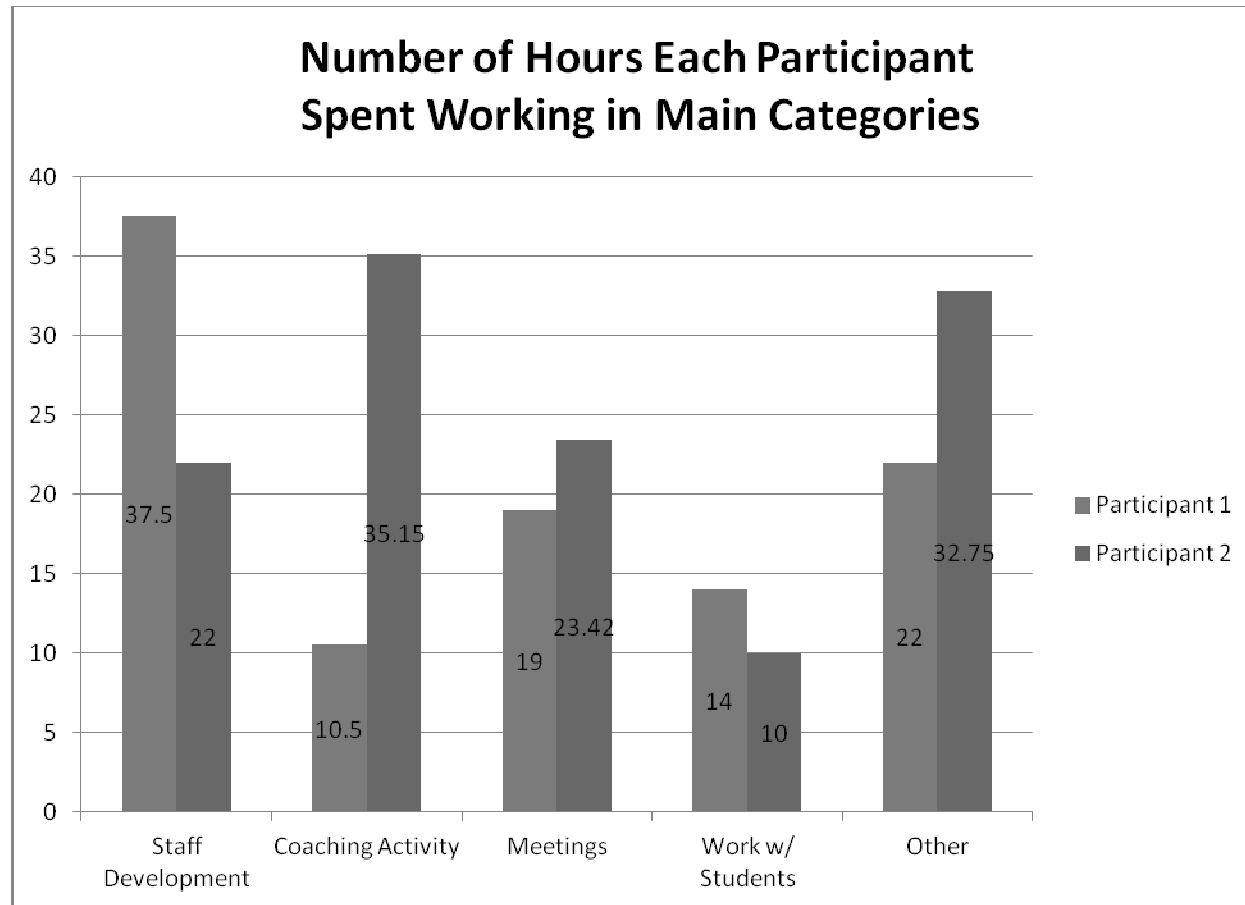
*Figure D5.* Number of hours each participant spent in focus areas.



*Figure D6.* Number of hours each participant spent conducting each coaching activity.



*Figure D7.* Number of hours each participant spent conducting other duties.



*Figure D8.* Number of hours each participant spent working in main categories.