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POSTHUMAN ITERATIONS OF LITERACY COACHING: A WALKING INQUIRY

by

Leslee Kathryn Bailey Tarbett

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Major: Instruction and Curriculum Leadership

The University of Memphis

August 2020

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom, Ruth. Though dementia has made it difficult to communicate, I know that she would be so proud of this accomplishment.

Also, in loving memory of my dog, Jerry, who began this journey with me in 2015.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to have been welcomed into the school and neighborhood community of my participants. I appreciate each person's willingness to share their experiences and time with me. It was a pleasure to work with them.

I would also like to thank all of those who have been with me throughout this journey. I have been surrounded by a community of support and encouragement from the beginning of my doctoral program. I feel very fortunate to have had two dedicated dissertation co-chairs and mentors. Dr. Laurie MacGillivray and Dr. Susan Nordstrom have helped me to develop as a researcher and a scholar. They invited me into their research, helping me to build confidence and knowledge while establishing a line of research that would lead to this project. I acknowledge how their thoughtful guidance has prepared me for critically-focused scholarship, teaching, and service in the academy. Thank you, also, to my dissertation committee members, Dr. William Duffy and Dr. J. Helen Perkins, for your feedback and support through this process. Each of you brought a unique and vital perspective to this work.

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A big thank you to my husband Todd. Thank you for encouraging me to keep going and for celebrating small victories with me along the way. Thank you to my dad, stepmom, and sister, Kelly, for their support and love. I am so grateful to my family and friends. To Amelia and

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Lastly, I want to acknowledge the literacy and posthuman scholars that I have cited throughout this dissertation. I am very thankful to have studied your work and appreciate the impact you are making in the field of education.

Abstract

Leslee Kathryn Bailey Tarbett, Ed.D. The University of Memphis. May, 2020. Posthuman Iterations of Literacy Coaching: A Walking Inquiry. Dissertation Co-chairs: Dr. Laurie MacGillivray and Dr. Susan N. Nordstrom

Literacy coaching holds great potential to support professional growth over time, however, within the research literature, there has been a consistent call for a more expansive and interconnected exploration of the many aspects (social, linguistic, material, affective, etc.) that work together to produce knowledge in a literacy coaching context. This posthuman post-qualitative study explored how a K-2 school environment created certain iterations of literacy coaching through specific school policies, practices, spaces, non-human materials, and humans (e.g. interactions with teachers, administrators, etc.). Participants included one school-based literacy coach, school principal, two teachers, and the district literacy supervisor (four females and one male) working at Magnolia Springs Elementary (pseudonym) in the MidSouthern region of the United States. Using Thinking with Theory as an analysis framework, the researcher put to work four key concepts from posthumanism (entanglement, intra-action, agency, subjectivity) to theorize data assemblages from object-interviews, walks, photos, journal entries, and artifact collection. Findings demonstrate how certain linear assumptions about teaching and learning were made visible by theorizing the various data assemblages through the posthuman concepts. The data assemblages also made possible new ways to think about and understand the entangled and intra-active enactments of literacy coaching. These findings support and extend research on literacy coaching that has linked the political and historical origins of literacy coaching to the complex social and relational nature of the work, explored how coaching intersects with multiple environmental and relational factors, and made visible ways in which coaches roles are entangled in the political and historical contexts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Literacy coaching holds great potential to support professional growth over time (Bean et al., 2015; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010; Vogt & Shearer, 2016; Walpole and Blamey, 2008) and teachers who work with coaches may be more likely to enhance their literacy environments and practices (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Frederick, 2017). However, within the research literature, there has been a consistent call for a more expansive and interconnected exploration of the many aspects (social, linguistic, material, affective, etc.) that work together to produce knowledge in a literacy coaching context. This study sought to do that work.

Initially, I was drawn to the topic of literacy coaching because of my personal experiences during my time as a first-grade classroom teacher. My first year of teaching was greatly enhanced by the work of a literacy coach who, among her myriad of roles, supported my growth as a new teacher in a holistic and compassionate manner. Through our collaborative relationship, we were able to consider literacy learning and its challenges in creative and experimental ways that generated hope and excitement. For example, in one instance, we considered how the light, temperature, and arrangement of the classroom affected the attention of the students at varying times of the day. We sat in the students' small desks as we deliberated over how to work with the space to best support learning. These experiences not only helped me with my day to day teaching practices, but also pointed me toward an understanding of literacy coaching that is broader than the sociocultural philosophy that guides most scholarship on literacy coaching.

Experiences like this one shifted my understanding in two important ways. First, I began to see the impact of an ongoing situated coaching relationship for teachers and students.

Secondly, I learned important lessons about engaging in creative problem solving that considered affective and environmental aspects of learning and being. I began to think of being and knowing as connected and affective.

This realization and my appreciation for literacy coaching as a form of professional development drove my curiosity to learn what research has been done surrounding the roles and relationships of literacy coaches. However, it was after reading and synthesizing the literature, that I understood the need for a view of literacy coaching that considers the connections among the environment, emotions, and politics that occur in specific contexts. Consequently, I sought out a theoretical framework that could provide the kind of insight and support called for by researchers.

Posthumanism provides such a framework. This framework views the world as networks of living and nonliving elements, interconnected and inherently shifting and dynamic. This view encourages non-linearity in thought and in method as a way to see a phenomenon differently. The research literature on literacy coaching often focuses on the relationships only between the coaches and teachers. However, non-human materials and the physical environment, according to posthuman thought, are also “active in the production of knowledge and newness-new literacies, new truths, new relationships, new realities” (Kuby, Specter, & Thiel, 2018, p.12). For example, Kuby, Rucker, & Kirchhofer (2015) observed how second grade students worked with tissue paper, foam board, string, pipe cleaners and other materials in a multimodal writers’ workshop. Through a posthuman perspective, the materials and other nonhuman objects were not merely being used by the human, but actively productive with (intra-activity) the human subject. In other words, through a posthuman perspective, humans and the materials are co-creating or producing knowledge and reality together. Thinking with posthuman theories allowed the

researchers to explore how intra-activity with materials, time, and space influenced literacy learning.

Posthumanism assumes a complexity expansive enough to allow that knowledge production is a more-than-human event and a framework that would accommodate the exploration of the interrelated dimensions of literacy coaching. Posthuman concepts allowed me to think differently about my experience working with literacy coaches by opening up my thinking to consider not only my experience, but the innumerable other factors, perspectives, angles, and variables that were at play. For example, I now view interactions with literacy coaches as much more complex than simply two humans interacting. Human interactions are not isolated from the physical environment, past experiences, histories of the place, and the political and economic climate. Coaches and teachers are intertwined with their environment, with other people, space, time, and objects. How literacy is defined, how literacy practices are put into place, and how success is determined cannot be separated from the intricate and dynamic intersections of human and nonhuman factors. Posthumanism provides a way to make sense of nonlinear moments, accepting how the past, present, and a projected future can all be at work in a given context. It has allowed me to think in an expansive way, full of possibilities, that were once restricted when thinking only from my limited lived experiences.

Statement of the Problem

In this posthuman post-qualitative study, I engaged in a variety of fieldwork methods (e.g. interview, document analysis, and walking) to learn more about how a K-2 school environment created certain iterations of literacy coaching through specific school policies, practices, spaces, non-human materials, and humans (e.g. interactions with teachers, administrators, etc.).

Research Questions

My study explored the following research questions:

1. How does the entanglement of time, space, and objects produce conceptions and expectations of literacy coaching in the school context?
2. How does the historical/political context of the school shape the perceived priorities and expectations of the coach?
3. How are education policies enacted through the intra-actions of the literacy coach with material objects, environments, teachers, and administrators?

Roles of Literacy Coach

Due to the wide variety of duties and priorities within each individual school context, the role of literacy coach is difficult to define. Walpole and McKenna (2012) assert that “Literacy coaches are charged with answering questions that few PhD-level researchers would be able to answer easily” (p. 7). Additionally, literacy coaches are expected to interpret major theories of reading and writing processes, read and understand research about factors that contribute to reading success (e.g. social, cognitive, physical), interpret and summarize historically shared knowledge, demonstrate an understanding of research that undergirds reading and writing curriculum for PreK-12 students, and use instructional approaches supported by research (Walpole and McKenna, 2012, p. 13). These duties and skills come from a more exhaustive list of 68 expectations for effective literacy coaches, spanning the categories of learner, grant writer, curriculum expert, school-level planner, researcher, and teacher (Walpole and McKenna, 2012), demonstrating how complex and varied the work of literacy coaching can be.

The International Literacy Association’s (ILA) Standards for Literacy Professionals (revised 2010) affirmed individual positions are determined by the specific school context,

educational background of the coach, and the needs of the teachers, administrators, and staff. ILA described the Reading Specialists/Literacy Coach as “professionals whose goal is to improve reading achievement in their assigned school or district positions.” In addition, ILA states, “specific focus that further defines their duties, such as serving as a teacher for students experiencing reading difficulties, as a reading or literacy coach, as a coordinator of reading and writing programs at the school or district level, or in several combinations of these roles.” (p. 49).

The body of research literature consistently reinforces the notion that literacy coaching is complex (Bean et al., 2015; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Walpole and McKenna, 2012), relationally and emotionally taxing (Hunt, 2013, 2016; Rainville, 2007), and fraught with tensions related to power relations and shifting identities (Jones & Rainville, 2014). Because of this complexity, scholars recommend that more research should be done to theorize the ways that literacy coaching intersects with countless other variables (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Ferguson, 2014, Hunt, 2016; Killion, 2017; Swift & Kelly, 2010).

Traditionally, studies on literacy coaching have employed sociocultural theories of learning including social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and social learning theory (Bandura, 2001) in order to describe what literacy coaches do and say when they work with teachers (Coburn and Woulfin, 2012). These studies have illuminated how coaches spend their time and what duties and roles are enacted. Additionally, this work provides a foundation for understanding the challenges that exist in the defining and embodying literacy coaching. More recently, there have been some notable studies, using poststructural frameworks, to learn how coaches navigate human relationships and the complicated power relations with and among

teachers (Hunt, 2016; Jones & Rainville, 2014). For example, Jones and Rainville (2014) used poststructural theories to critically analyze the discourses of literacy coaches as they negotiate power and knowledge and aim to reposition classroom teachers who have been labeled as resistant to change. They found that there is scant research in the field that specifically addresses power relations and social positioning of literacy coaches and teachers. Hunt (2016) explored affect and emotion in the daily work of literacy coaches. She found that teachers avoided feelings of shame, fear, and guilt by positioning themselves according to the literacy coaches' expectations of a "good teacher". Hunt concluded that teachers and coaches would benefit from acknowledging the emotional aspects of their work in order to support and communicate a shared vision of teaching and learning.

The exploration of coaching discourses and power stand in stark contrast to the vast majority of studies of literacy coaching duties (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Frederick, 2017; Killion, 2017; Kruse and Zimmerman, 2012). These critical studies move away from identifying the enacted roles of literacy coaches in a particular school or context to theorizing how interactions among literacy coaches and teachers reinforce and reproduce particular types of discourses and worldviews, and in the process question how particular notions of literacy are perpetuated.

Theoretical Framework

Some literacy education scholars are beginning to think with posthuman theories as a way to expand the limits of what has been available using customary methods within literacy research. Kuby et al. (2018) consider how much of literacy research education research is tied and often constrained by the repetitive use of traditional theories and prescriptive methodologies. In their book, *Posthumanism and Literacy Education: Knowing/Becoming/Doing Literacies*, they

explore how posthuman theories might open up possibilities for thinking differently about literacy education:

In literacy education the theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological apparatuses that are widely available have all too often made cuts that are too small to account for the complexity in literacy teaching and learning in this more-than-human world (Kuby, Specter, & Thiel, 2018, p. 5).

In other words, they advocate for the inclusion of posthuman theories in literacy research as a potential way to approach the complexity of our world in new and novel ways.

Posthuman theories argue that we are always already interconnected with our environments, which represents a significant departure from a traditional human-centered approach to research (Ulmer, 2017). Language, which is human-centered and often privileged in research, is unable to represent the intricate connections within the rich complex webs that exist in our world. Ulmer critiques the notion that language can fully represent the complexity inherent in our world. “Language – whether it be in the forms of texts, sounds, or images – insufficiently represents the interactions among society, culture, geology, and ecology” (Ulmer, 2017, p. 3). Through a posthuman perspective, affective and material dimensions of phenomena are considered equally significant and valid forms of data and entangled with the cultural, political, and social aspects.

According to Barad (2007), entanglement is the notion that humans and nonhumans are intertwined and actively producing life together. Entanglement with the material world as mutual and productive and is a process of emerging and becoming through intra-action with human and non-human actors. This posthuman perspective disrupts the notion that 1) the human experience is central and paramount to all knowledge production and 2) the human subject’s experience can

be isolated and objectively studied apart from the complex entanglements with material, historical, cultural, and political contexts. For this reason, posthumanism offers a framework in which to engage with the phenomena differently and consider how factors such as affect, materiality, place, time, and power operate simultaneously to produce particular iterations of literacy coaches.

Further, a posthuman perspective allows for a more interconnected and dynamic understandings of the networks of living and nonliving with an awareness of time, space, and place and provides a framework to adhere to the calls for new ways of researching coaching. Ulmer (2017) describes how posthumanism as a theory and methodology encourages innovative thinking and methods that disrupts traditional qualitative inquiry by:

reconceptualizing our place in the world as we reconceptualize research. We might ask different questions, feel different things, and think different thoughts. We might move from cause and effect to entanglement, interconnection, and flow. This means that at times, the fluidity of posthumanism might be unsettling as it disturbs the comfortable prescription of method. (p.8 47).

Ulmer emphasizes how posthumanism forces researchers to start in a different place, outside the human subject, acknowledging the potential for new ways of seeing and new ways of questioning.

Posthumanism has the ability to challenge our conceptualizations of professional development and literacy coaching. Though to my knowledge, there are no studies at this time published on literacy coaching from a posthuman perspective, there is one study that attended to some nonhuman factors associated with literacy coaching. In Hunt's (2013) doctoral dissertation, which focused predominantly on dialogic encounters of coaches, she considered how physical

space influenced the institutional, physical, geographical, and ideological parameters in which literacy models and coaches developed. By exploring how space may be conceptualized as socially constructed, dynamic, flexible, and multilayered opened up a “spatial view of literacy coaching also emphasize[ing] how coaches see themselves and others in relation to the spaces in which they work” (p. 16). Hunt’s research finding demonstrates the power of posthumanism to extend current understandings of literacy coaching. This example provides one small opening to decenter the coach and view literacy coaching enactments as events occurring with and among many actors, living and nonliving- opening up possibilities to think in new ways.

Methodology

Thinking with posthumanism, I considered which methods might serve to decenter the human subject. I wanted to allow for the exploration of the environment and material surroundings, in addition to human participants. Posthumanism argues that because we are always already interconnected with our environments, methodological thinking should respond in kind by fostering similar interconnections (Ulmer, 2017).

This study explored how the entanglement of time, space, human, and nonhumans produced conceptions and expectations of literacy coaching. For this purpose, the methodological approaches were chosen in order to generate responses to the research questions and align with a posthuman ontological perspective, aiming to decenter the human perspective and allow for a different starting point for inquiry. For example, object-interviews and artifact collection are methods that are designed to consider how the entanglement of objects and other nonhuman elements in the environment create certain iterations of literacy coach.

In order to learn more about how a K-5 school environment creates a certain iteration, or version, of literacy coaching, I used writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre,

2008), object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013), object artifact collection, and walking methodology (Springgay & Truman, 2016). Since the act of writing is a composite of theory, methodological practices, mind, thought, emotion (Bazerman and Tinberg, 2015), and a form of creative discovery (Richardson, 1997), I kept a researcher journal throughout the study, recording my observations, my questions, my evolving understanding of theory as I saw it enacted and unfolded in the field. The researcher journal also served as a place where I analyzed and interpreted data. I will describe these methods in detail in Chapter 3.

In order to assemble data, I traveled back and forth to a city in the MidSouth for a total duration of four weeks. During that time, I walked the school grounds, inside the school building and around the outdoor property/adjacent neighborhood of one elementary school. Walking has been used extensively in the social sciences as a situated and embodied method that emphasizes the significance of place (Springgay & Truman, 2018). I explored walking as a material and relational way to engage in inquiry to disrupt privileged and normalized understandings (Springgay and Truman, 2018). Walking, informed by posthumanism, provided an embodied way of interacting and engaging with place.

Because this study was guided by posthuman theories, the data are not grounded only in the individual, but opened up to include non-human objects. Ulmer (2017) writes, “If humans are not the only possible subjects or objects of study in research, then a wealth of different possibilities emerge” p. 832). For this reason, I attempted to decenter the human subject by doing object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013). “The object-interview shifts the interview from a subject-centered conventional qualitative interview into a space in which both subjects and objects produce knowledge...” (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 238). Additionally, the interview questions during an object interview took on a different orientation than a traditional phenomenological or

interpretive paradigm. Nordstrom describes the kinds of connective questions that are generated when viewing the object interview from a post-qualitative theoretical perspective.

The object-interview is a conversation in which subjects...and objects are entangled...Such entanglement warranted different questions that did not rely on interpretive questions (e.g., What do you mean?) or phenomenological questions (e.g., What was that like?). (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 246).

The literacy coaches in this study shared objects and discussed how they engaged with these material objects. The collection and curation of object artifacts from the interviews/ walking (photographs, documents, texts, etc.) served as a primary form of data collection.

Significance of the Study

Past studies of literacy coaching have called for researchers to explore how literacy coaching intersects with innumerable variables relationally and environmentally (Ferguson, 2014, Hunt, 2016; Killion, 2017), as well as for alternative theoretical frameworks and methods that attend to the complexity of literacy coaches' work (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Hunt, 2016; Jones & Rainville, 2008, 2014). For this reason, the theoretical framework and methodology informed by posthuman theories provided a perspective that views networks of living and nonliving as interconnected, as well as, considers space, time, and affect as vital, dynamic components of a research setting. This study extends the field by examining the many aspects (social, linguistic, material, affective, etc.) that work together to produce knowledge in a literacy coaching context.

Overview of Chapters

In chapter two, I provide a background of literacy coaching from its beginnings in the early 20th century, tracing associated historical, political, and cultural practices. Next, I review

current empirical work of literacy coaching and theories related to and support the work of literacy coaching in order to provide an understanding of the diversity of contexts, attitudes, and challenging situations in which literacy coaches work, as well as an embodied perspective of how defined roles, responsibilities, and duties are enacted.

Chapter three describes the research design of the study. In this chapter, I outline and explain my methods of data assemblage and analysis, as well as how my theoretical framework supported my choices as a researcher. I provide a description of my human participants, selection procedures, and research site. I discuss issues of ethics and trustworthiness related to my work.

In chapter four, I describe my analytical approach of Thinking with Theory (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) using posthumanism. I share my understanding of how data from object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013), walking (Springgay & Truman, 2016), and researcher journal entries assemble in various configurations to produce situated and novel, though shifting and partial knowledges.

In chapter five, I discuss my findings in relation to the three research questions I detailed in this chapter. I give a brief overview of my findings for each research question, situating them within the larger body of literacy coaching research. I conclude this chapter by identifying my study's limitations, contributions to current research, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I present a review of literature on literacy coaching. First, I share the evolution of term *literacy coach* from its roots in the early 20th century through the educational reform policies and practices that shaped the current conceptualization of the position and its many expectations. Next, I present current empirical work of literacy coaching to demonstrate the diversity of contexts, attitudes, and challenges in which coaches work, as well as a perspective of how roles and responsibilities are traditionally defined and duties are enacted. Theories of constructivism and poststructuralism are reviewed in order to explain contrasting perspectives taken up by researchers in the field. Then, I will conclude by illustrating how this literature has informed my understanding of literacy coaching, how it contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation, and what theoretical and empirical gaps exist within the current body of literature.

Background of Literacy Coaching

This section explores how scholars conceptualize the role of the literacy coach today by tracing understandings of this position over time. In order to situate this review in a historical context, I investigate the evolution of use of the term literacy coach from its beginnings in the early 20th century. I examine the educational reform policies throughout in an effort to trace the historical, political, and cultural practices associated with literacy coaching. These shifts in education policy and practice have been integral components that have shaped the paradigmatic changes from literacy specialist to literacy coach. Next, I focus on recent empirical studies that highlight the various dimensions and nuanced roles of literacy coaches as a way to illustrate how the embodied, dynamic iterations of literacy coach are produced within specific school and community contexts.

Historical context of literacy coaching. The term *literacy coach*, though relatively new, originated from a position in the early 1920s in which remedial teachers intervened to help struggling readers (Kruse & Zimmerman, 2012). Variations of the current model of literacy coach date back to the 1930s (Deussen, et al., 2007), but the rise in popularity of literacy coaching as a form of professional development can be linked with the increasing demands for reading achievement through Title I's Reading First initiative, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.

Through ESEA, federal funding was used for research, professional development centers, support for libraries and resources. Schools also began using Title I funds to hire specialists to work with children experiencing difficulty in reading (Hathaway, et al., 2016). The reading specialist was a teacher who pulled students out of their regular classrooms to provide intervention for struggling readers. The interaction between the classroom teacher and the reading specialist, or "Title I teacher", was minimal and there was little attention paid to the literacy instruction provided by the classroom teacher.

During this time of increased attention to test scores and achievement, scholars were examining methods of training teachers and exploring professional development initiatives. Joyce and Showers (1980) introduced the term "coaching" as a model of embedded, ongoing professional development training through formal and informal models of coaching, though not specific to literacy instruction at that time. Technical coaching and peer-coaching were two models that originated from Joyce and Showers (1980) research on in-service training and professional development. They determined that "coaching for application" or the "hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies in the classroom" (p. 380) were effective components of teacher learning when used alone or in combination with other teacher

training components. The roles of the reading specialists in Title I schools began shifting from working with students in small groups to more supervisory positions with teachers, incorporating modeling and coaching of teachers in order to improve classroom instruction (Dole, 2004).

The shift from a reading specialist model to a literacy coach followed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 in response to traditional professional development workshops and a desire for more effective and on-going literacy instruction and support for teachers (Deussen, et al., 2007, p.1). Since 2001, literacy coaching has evolved and developed as districts across the country have hired coaches as a way to meet federal and state mandates and keep up with the demands of high-stakes testing (Hunt, 2013). It is important to note, however, that though literacy coaching is a popular innovation adopted by countless schools and districts across the nation, but at any given time, “multiple uncoordinated improvement efforts are simultaneously adopted” (Kruse & Zimmerman, 2012, p. 279). For that reason, it can be difficult to determine how literacy coaching affects student achievement and teacher learning. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how various policies, initiatives, and various other factors intersect, providing a more comprehensive view of how literacy coaching is enacted.

ILA literacy coaching standards & models. In 2017, to clarify roles and expectations and to address emerging research findings on the positioning of coaches, the International Reading Association (IRA) released separate standards specifically for literacy coaches. IRA identified professional standards for literacy coaches, but also specified three prominent coaching stances: Coaching to Conform, Coaching into Practice, and Coaching for Transformation. These models describe not only the duties and roles of each classification of literacy profession, but also situate them within a conceptual framework, drawing on historical, political, and theoretical understandings. Through these different views, IRA illustrates how

conceptions of literacy coaching, from the early NCLB era to recent findings, have become more complex and nuanced.

The Coaching to Conform model is most closely derived from the NCLB policies, which emphasized conformity and fidelity, using checklists and other tools. Literacy coaches were positioned as experts and enforcers of policy initiatives or district or state standards and requires “professional separation that allows space for supervisory and authoritative functions to play out” (p. 3). Under this model, the coach’s job is to help the teacher implement specific methods of instruction in order to reach a target standard as quickly as possible. “The short-term goal and role for the coach assuming a practice perspective is to support a teacher in making sense of the experiences the teacher has in a classroom” (ILA, 2018, p.3).

The Coaching into Practice model is described as “coaching for reflection” (p. 3) and frequently involves a cycle of pre-conference, observation, and post-conference meetings. “The expectation for the coach–teacher relationship in this practice model is less about authority and more about mutual trust, care, and respect” (p. 4). The purpose of this coaching model is to engage the teacher in dialogue about their experience of teaching and offer feedback. This method assumes that teacher learning is happening during the self-reflection section of the coaching conversation. In this model of coaching, the coach is expected to work cooperatively with the teacher, developing lesson plans, and perhaps even co-teach a lesson. Although there is a large emphasis on teacher reflection, the goal is a data-driven outcome related to student achievement in some form.

The third category of literacy coaching described by ILA (2018) is Coaching for Transformation. “A coach who is coaching for transformation creates spaces where teachers engage in double-loop reflection and question not only their own practice (as in coaching into

practice) but also the historical power structures that operate within schools” (p.5). “These humanizing coaching pedagogies can center on critical inquiry groups that decodify traditional and “best practices” (p. 5). This coaching model requires teachers and coaches to challenge traditional ways of engaging in professional development, which also means critically examining prescribed roles and hierarchical structures.

Research Studies on Literacy Coaching

This section explores the work of literacy coaches following the shift from “reading specialist” to the current conceptualization of “literacy coach.” Two major areas of literature were reviewed: a) empirical studies of how coaches conceptualize, enact, and perform their roles, and b) research related to how coaches navigate relationships and power relations with, and among, teachers.

Literacy coaching roles. In the two decades since the reauthorization of ESEA and the passage of NCLB, scholars have sought to understand how literacy coaching operates as a form of professional development and how the daily work of literacy coaches may enhance classroom instruction. Because literacy coaching varies across states, districts, and schools, the role of literacy coach is not an easy concept to define (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). In some instances, the literacy coach has been described as an expert who assists in “altering teachers’ mental models of literacy instruction, thinking and practice” (Kruse and Zimmerman, 2012, p. 281). For example, in one study, Kruse and Zimmerman interviewed principals, literacy coaches, and teachers in two elementary and two middle schools to examine the potential for literacy coaching to foster school-wide professional learning. Findings from this study suggest that the presence of the literacy coach helped create a teaching culture contributing to innovative instructional practices, particularly through modeling and co-teaching.

Literacy coaches also are challenged to understand how professional development can be utilized to facilitate teacher growth and student achievement. According to L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean (2010), coaches need to be opportunistic and intentional in the way they facilitate discussions with teachers about student assessment data. Literacy coaches additionally are expected to possess specialized knowledge concerning literacy processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2007; L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2006).

Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) conducted a mixed-methods study that analyzed 12 literacy coaches' weekly journals and the results from 3,029 district reading achievement tests. The researchers found that teachers who worked with a certified literacy coach had students with higher reading gains. Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) concluded that advanced preparation does make a difference in the effectiveness of literacy coaches when related to student reading achievement.

Other research indicates that teachers that work with coaches may be more likely to enhance their literacy environments and practices (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Frederick, 2017). Killion (2017) performed a meta-analysis that looked at 37 studies of literacy coaches and their impact on achievement. The findings suggest that literacy coaching, in general and content specific roles, have positive impact on both teacher instruction and student performance. Ferguson (2014) found that one of the four indicators for growth in student achievement was collaboration with and commitment of a literacy coach.

Researchers (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Ferguson, 2014; Killion, 2017) point out that it is necessary to study the complex ways that literacy coaching intersects with countless other variables. For example, in many of the studies that highlight literacy coaching as contributing to student achievement, there were other factors

also taking place such as the implementation of a new curriculum or instructional model (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010). Elish-Piper & L'Allier wrote, “further research is needed to examine the chain of relationships from literacy coaching to teacher practice to student reading gains” (p. 103). In other words, it is difficult to determine the cause of student achievement gains without looking at the combinations of various factors within a setting.

To clarify expectations, Walpole and Blamey (2008) investigated the roles of literacy coaches, through a two-year, multiple-case study. Over the course of the research, 31 participants were interviewed (14 school principals and 17 school-based literacy coaches) to learn how participants perceived the roles and expectations associated with literacy coaching. Walpole and Blamey (2008) found that there was a wide variety of expectations for literacy coaches; some were the roles that they assign themselves and some are perceived by principals. Among these roles, principals viewed coaches as acting on a classroom-level or at a school-level as either a “mentor” or “director”. A coach working as “mentor”, the dominant role identified by almost half of the principals, was described as a coach who spent a lot of time in the classroom, teaching the teacher. A “director”, identified as the main role by eight of the 14 principals, was a coach that served as school-wide change-agent, responsible for implementing state, district, and school-wide initiatives. The assumption of this role by administrators was that the coach has left the teacher realm and now existed in a space between teacher and administrator (Walpole & Blamey, 2008).

When literacy coaches in this study were asked about the mentor/director roles defined by principals, six coaches identified as a school-level director, five of the 17 coaches identified as a classroom-level mentor, and six coaches identified as both director and mentor. Beyond the director/mentor roles, the coaches provided insight into other roles that they enacted on a day-to-

day basis including curriculum manager, formative observer, modeler, trainer, teacher, and assessor, all requiring a reflective demeanor.

Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio (2007), argue that “there is a difference between being a coach and doing coaching” (p. 3). For example, in their study determining how various coaches spent their time on a daily basis, Duessen, et al. (2007) surveyed K-3 teachers and literacy coaches from 203 Reading First schools across five western states. Following the surveys, more than 300 teachers and 77 literacy coaches were interviewed. The coaches’ survey responses were used to create five categories of coaching roles.

The five coaching categories were: 1) data-oriented coaches, 2) student-oriented coaches, 3) teacher (groups)-oriented coaches 4) teacher (individual)-oriented coaches, and 5) managerial coaches. Data-oriented coaches spent at least 45 percent of their time on data and assessment-related tasks. Student-oriented coaches spent more time working directly with students and saw that as central to their job. Teacher-oriented coaches saw their primary goal as providing teachers with resources and ongoing professional development, working with groups of teachers or individuals one-on-one. Managerial coaches spent the majority of their time facilitating meeting and keeping up with paperwork (Duessen, et al., 2007).

The follow-up interviews for this study provided more detailed descriptions as to what the coaches emphasized to be their most important work. Though coaches’ responsibilities and tasks were somewhat similar across five states, how coaches actually allocated their time and described the focus of their work during interviews varied widely based on individuals and school settings, and social contexts. Duessen, et al. (2007) found that other factors such as the school’s size, the coaches’ educational background, and coaches’ professional experience shaped the experiences of the coaches and teachers. The study’s use of categories highlighted similar

expectations across different states and districts, however, the findings demonstrated how diverse the enactment of these duties looked as they were carried out in specific contexts.

Similarly, Stevens (2011) examined the daily work and routine of a high school literacy coach in order to learn more about the roles assigned versus enacted. Using a case-study approach, Stevens analyzed interview and observation data to explore how the literacy coach constructed identity and understood their job roles and duties. The findings indicated that the lack of clarity of coaching roles and priorities made defining the role of literacy coach challenging.

Additionally, the findings also highlight the importance of the administrator in defining and delegating relevant tasks to the literacy coach within a specific coaching context.

In another interview study examining roles and expectations of literacy coaches, McGrath & Bardsley(2018) explored how fieldwork in a literacy coaching course might provide advanced literacy specialist candidates clearer understandings of their possible roles. They found that practicing coaches were expected to fulfill multiple roles, including leadership roles in which they expressed difficulty and frustration balancing.

Relationships and power relations. As demonstrated, the body of literature on literacy coaching has been focused on identifying roles and expectations of coaches. However, there are a growing number of studies that examine how social interactions between teachers and coaches are fraught with the challenges of unequal status, differing, priorities, and power relations (Jones & Rainville, 2014). In one of the early studies examining power and positioning in coaching relationships, Rainville and Jones (2008) studied a literacy coach in action, assuming her various roles and attending to her many, often ambiguous, expectations.

Through participant observation, video observation, interviews, and artifact collection Rainville and Jones demonstrate how literacy coach engages in “complicated identity

negotiation” (p. 440) as she engages in a seemingly simple interaction with a classroom teacher. They draw on Gee’s (1999) notion of situated identities and the poststructural concepts of power and positioning (Davies & Harre, 1990) to explore how subjectivity is constantly being negotiated in a coaching context. They looked at how literacy coaches negotiate power and knowledge and aim to reposition classroom teachers who have been labeled as “resistant.” For example, they learned that power struggles were less inhibitive for those coaches had an informal relationship with the teacher. Additionally, they found that if the coach positioned herself as a learner, it opened up productive conversation and space for cooperation and collaboration.

In another study, Wilder (2014) looked at teacher/coach interactions to explore how instructional coaching affects disciplinary literacy of high school students. Through interpretive case studies consisting of data from teacher and coach interviews, observations, and debriefing session following teacher/coach interactions, Wilder found tensions arose due to differences in discipline expertise (i.e. the coach was a former English teacher but working with a math teacher). He found that embracing an “inquiry as coaching stance” (p. 174), where the coach intentionally positions himself as a disciplinary outsider, could ease tensions and provided better collaboration between the coaches and teachers.

In a 2018 study, Di Domenico, Elish-Piper, Manderino and L’Allier (2018) also explored the relationships between literacy coaches and content area teachers by analyzing video-recorded interviews with teachers and coaches, field notes from observations, analytic memos written by coaches, and artifact collection of documents and instructional materials in multiple high schools across the district. Like Rainville and Jones (2008) and Wilder (2014), they also found the coaches’ positioning played an important role in easing or increasing tensions in coaching

interactions. For example, when the coach positioned herself as a partner rather than a literacy expert, more meaningful dialogue was enabled.

In another study examining one-on-one coaching sessions, Heineke (2013) was interested to learn how four teacher/coach pairs from four different elementary schools positioned themselves discursively within coaching interactions. She audio-recorded coaching conversations between teacher/coach pairs, conducted interviews, and kept a researcher's journal throughout the study. Using discourse analysis to analyze 18 coaching "episodes", Heineke found that a foundation of trust must be laid by coaches and both coaches and teachers agreed that accessibility and visibility are needed components to maintain a productive coaching relationship.

Also interested in exploring relationship dynamics, Jones and Rainville (2014) applied the theories of poststructuralism, Bourdieu's theory of field, and Eastern philosophies of Taoism and Buddhism to analyze how power circulated through the interactions of two literacy coaches. Foucault and Bourdieu offered analytical tools for seeing how power operates through discourse and people, which, Jones and Rainville (2014) argue are imperative for theorizing the work of literacy coaches and preparing new coaches. They found Eastern philosophies, particularly compassion, humility, and suffering can inform the work of researchers and practitioners to respond in compassionate, humble ways. According to Jones and Rainville, it is the wielding of power, through conversation, that is often misunderstood and leads to the suffering of teachers and coaches.

Through her microethnographic study, Hunt (2016) also sought to deepen the understandings of how teachers and coaches position themselves and "do emotions." Through video-recorded coaching interactions, Hunt analyzed the discourses of power, positioning, and

identity as teachers and coaches enacted emotions, especially in the context of high-stakes testing, accountability, and reform. Hunt argues it is essential to examine how emotions affect the work of literacy coaches as they negotiate issues of power, positioning, and identity. She found that teachers avoided shame, fear, and guilt as they positioned themselves in relation to their conceptualizations of good teachers who use best practices. Hunt concluded that teachers and coaches would benefit from acknowledging the emotional aspects of their work in order to support a shared vision of teaching and learning.

The growing number of studies examining power dynamics and relations between teachers and literacy coaches point to the evolving awareness of the complexity and challenges associated with literacy coaching. As demonstrated, positioning and status of coaches affect how teacher and coaches interact (Rainville, 2014) and literacy coaching has been shown to be emotionally taxing (Hunt, 2013; 2016) as well. Assuming different coaching stances (Wilder, 2014) is one way that literacy coaches have attempted to ease tensions and create more trusting collaborative relationships.

Theoretical Frameworks

In this section, I examine two theoretical frameworks (Social Constructivism and Poststructuralism) taken up by researchers in studies of literacy coaching. Then, I outline five key concepts of posthumanism, arguing this theory has the potential to provide an alternative perspectives of literacy coaching.

Social constructivism. Empirical studies of literacy coaching have generally adopted a social constructivist perspective (i.e. a sociocultural framework), focusing on the interactions and relationships between and among coaches and teachers (Barksdale, 2018; Binkley, Keiser, & Strahan, 2011; Blachowicz, Buhle, Ogle, Frost, Correa, & Kinner, 2010; Cheney, 2018; Collet,

2012; Di Domenico, Elish-Piper, Manderino & L’Allier, 2018; Matsumura, Satoris, Bickel, & Garnier, 2009; McLean, Mallozzi, Hu, & Dailey, 2010; Reichenberg & Boyd, 2019; Reichenberg, 2018; Stevens, 2011). Constructivist theory is characterized by the idea that people make meaning by linking new knowledge to their own previous experience (DeVries, 2015).

Constructivism emerged in the 1970s in psychology and has become a dominant philosophy in education and teacher preparation (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Among the various perspectives within constructivism, one unifying concept connects them; a learner constructs knowledge and understanding through personal reflection of their experiences (McGrath & Bardsley, 2018). In contrast, social constructivism assumes language is not only understood through personal reflection, but also is socially constructed. Social interactions and experiences collectively impact how learners think about, interpret, and make meaning of language (Vygotsky, 1962). According to Vygotsky, the transition from sensing the world to the use of language as discourse in the world is the key to understanding cognitive development (Liu & Matthews, 2005).

Liu & Matthews (2005) describe how Vygotsky’s emphasis on speech characterizes how he prioritizes language in learning, which has had enormous implications for social constructivism for education research.

Vygotsky acknowledges sensation and perception, it is this language-mediated thinking that he calls the higher mental ability, for the transition from the immediate sensation to thinking is what differs man from animals. His object of investigation – not sounds, not syllables nor marks, but speech units with meanings – reflects an awareness of the living, holistic feature of human as social beings with our social lives (p. 393)

This view of speech as central to learning informs Vygotsky’s claims about teaching.

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) was established as a way to explain how cognitive development is connected with the social aspect of learning, particularly the teacher's role in facilitating learning. The zone of proximal development is, "the distance between the actual level of development as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (DeVries, 2015, p.86). The ZPD names the "sweet spot" where an individual still needs guidance to learn and master a new skill or concept. Once the learner no longer needs this support, they are no longer in the ZPD.

Like the studies of literacy coaching, most models of literacy coaching are also grounded in social constructivism and social learning theory. That is to say, generally, literacy coaches embrace learning as socially constructed with an emphasis on verbal language, utilizing ZPD, and the idea that the coach is the expert (Gibbons & Cobb, 2017). According to Gibbons & Cobb (2017), coaching involves teachers working with a more accomplished colleague (coach) as a primary form of job-embedded support to improve instructional practices. The majority of coaching models hinge on this concept that the coach will impart specialized knowledge to the teacher and/or collaborate with the teacher until they can implement strategies independently (Hunt, 2013; L'Allier et al., 2010). For example, cognitive coaching is grounded in principals of constructivism and the idea that, "coaches view themselves as mediators of others' meaning-making" (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 390). Literacy coaches, in this model, provide support and expertise as the teacher develops particular skills and strategies.

Cognitive coaching also highlights the importance of developing trust between the coach and teachers, allowing teachers to share their thoughts on their current practice and mutually discuss how to improve their instructional practices (Vogt & Shearer, 2016; Hunt, 2013).

Conversation plays a key role in the development of teacher learning. Cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 2002) was developed as a way of helping teachers improve instruction by focusing on refining the perceptions of teachers through individualized conversations and mentoring (Aguilar, 2017).

Constructivism has emerged as the most influential learning theories to the field of education. Constructivism helped to shift earlier conceptualizations of learning as a product to more of a process. Vygotsky's work has formed the foundation for social constructivism in educational settings. Vygotsky's emphasis on language through speech to mediate higher order thinking has shaped educational practices and challenged teachers to consider the role of language during social interactions. Literacy coaching models are also aligned with this sociocultural view and reflect the social constructivist principle that language is central to learning and meaning is constructed through social interaction (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).

Poststructural theories. Poststructuralism offers a perspective in which to view identity and positioning of teachers and coaches, particularly through language. Poststructuralists question the idea of a fixed inner-self and prefer to use the term *subjectivity* to show the variability and malleability of the self, as it is continually constructed and reconstructed (Broughton, 2002). According to Broughton (2002), poststructuralists argue that identity is a constant negotiation of power relations and contradictions. Similarly, Freedman and Appleman (2008) write that the construction of identity is fundamentally social in nature and inseparable from issues of community, structure, and power.

Poststructuralists concentrate on specific, local contexts, where realities (multiple) exist within a particular context and culture. Language deconstruction, and the rejection of grand narratives are central to this way of thinking (Grbich, 2007). Poststructural analyses like

Derrida's (1974) concept of deconstruction aims to open what is considered "natural" to other possibilities by tracing them back historically to see how meaning has been constructed but challenge its necessity to be seen only in this way. St. Pierre (2000) summarizes Derrida's deconstruction stating that it "make (s) visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world" and "troubles the idea that language mirrors the world" (p. 481). In other words, language, which is never neutral, operates within power relations to either reinforce dominant social structures or to disrupt them.

Within this perspective, St. Pierre (2014) discusses her experience studying poststructural theories and how these critiques and analyses can be used and developed in the new material turn.

...privileging the material and empirical (as if we know what those words mean) over the textual and linguistic (as if we know what those words mean) does us no good because doing so keeps us trapped in the material/textual binary enabled by a particular ontological order the turns are working against. My assessment of the 'newness' of this work is that it draws heavily on the ontological critiques available in the 'posts', critiques we may only just be attending to (St. Pierre, 2014, p.14).

In other words, St. Pierre encourages new materialist and posthuman scholars to engage in and put to work concepts from poststructural theories and theorists as they also create new methods, think with the material, textual, and linguist, and actively decenter the human subject.

Posthumanism

In the next section, I discuss how the posthumanist concepts of entanglement, intra-action, agency, and subjectivity operate in a broad sense and then offer a more specific example of each as it relates to literacy education and literacy coaching.

Entanglement. Barad (2007) developed the concept of entanglement to demonstrate how all things, human and non-human are connected. This view assumes humans are enmeshed in their environment, including visible and invisible factors, and other humans and nonhumans. Entanglement challenges the notion of the individual that acts apart from their material environment, operating objectively and independently of political and cultural factors. Posthuman entanglement views the human being as embedded into the material and discursive dimensions and cannot be teased out.

The studies presented in this literature review on literacy coaching present the traditional view of schools as places where humans come together to develop skills. “This occurs in spite of the fact that schools are connected with the nonhuman world in so many explicit and implicit ways” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 39). In advocating for posthumanist discourse to be embraced in education, Snaza, et al. (2014) illustrates how the nonhuman environment, visible and invisible, is entangled with human lives in schools.

... schools are also sites that contain: networks of wire and pipe linking the buildings’ architecture to the subterranean infrastructures of cities and beyond that to the swirls of the oceans and global deposits of prehistoric dead organisms waiting to be mined and refined; dead nonhuman animals on plates in cafeterias, as well as on feet, human bodies, athletic equipment, and biology dissection trays; innumerable microorganisms, weeds, and insects colonizing every nook and cranny; pheromones and other less “natural” chemicals passing among hormone-addled adolescent humans and slightly less- hormonal adults; and stockpiles of books, computer equipment, office supplies, light bulbs, cleaning chemicals, historical records, sporting equipment, and cooking utensils... (Snaza, et al, 2014, p. 39).

Snaza demonstrates how the familiar site of a child's school can also be viewed as a complex network of visible and invisible actors, entangled together, producing outcomes together.

Entanglement requires a different orientation to the study of literacy coaching. The coach is no longer at the center of the exploration, but rather an entangled thread in a tapestry of the physical, material, emotional, and political environment.

Intra-action & agency. Intra-action is the notion that “entities do not preexist their relations, that they are constituted through their relations and therefore always entangled together in a dynamic and ongoing process” (Taylor, 2018, p.87). The posthuman perspective is interested in the engagement and relations that become materialized through intra-action with other actors and through relational events.

“The term ‘enacted agency’ is used in posthumanism to signal all the actors (i.e. human, nonhuman, more-than-human) produce agency together in their intra-actions” (Thiel, Kuby, & Specter, 2018, p. 20). Agency, generally, is understood as humans have the ability to act. Posthumanism challenges the idea of subject/object binary and approaches agency as something that is produced through the engagement and relations of humans and non-humans. The quality that emerges through the intra-actions of these bodies is enacted agency. Enacted agency then is not restricted to the human subject but instead, is opened up to describe what is produced through the intra-action of human and humans and humans and non-human actors. For example, we typically think of a human as acting on an animal in some way (e.g. training, raising livestock, etc.), however, an enacted agency would not view the interactions as human acting on the animal, but rather asks how the intra-action from both the animal and the human produce something new.

This perspective recognizes the multiple actors involved in an account. A human-centered school account could be expanded to include intra-action with the many materials present in the classroom and school environment, a far more complex, and dimensional picture could be seen. Additionally, this concept from a research design perspective would hold important implications when deciding what, how, when, and where knowledge was being produced, and how to begin to think about what is considered data.

Jones and Rainville (2008) described a literacy coach in action. Their account demonstrates how humans and nonhumans intra-act to create this moment. Though the researchers were not drawing from posthuman perspectives, this description provides a clear example of how a coaching interaction materializes as a more-than-human event.

At 7:45 a.m. Kate (all names are pseudonyms) is already busy gathering materials to fill her cart that will serve as a mobile office today—her physical one will be used for make-up testing. Books, sticky notes, pens, and reflection sheets for grade-level meetings are first on her list. She shakes her head as she glances at the piles of running record assessments waiting to be collated, stapled, and distributed and the stacks of books waiting to be sorted, leveled, and placed on shelves...A few children's books are next into the cart, anticipating they may come up in a discussion. The last thing to go in the cart, and sometimes the most important, are the snacks she purchased for the teachers. (Rainville & Jones, 2008, p. 440).

A posthuman perspective recognizes the multiple actors involved in this literacy coaching account, expanding a traditional human-centered description to one that views materials acting agentially, co-creating with humans. In the vignette above, a more traditional view of agency would consider what the literacy coach does to the materials. The concept of posthuman agency

allows for a very different account of what is going on in that moment. For example, her mobile office is filled with materials. She intra-acts with those materials, becoming teacher-materials. The objects and the material environment help create the context in which the literacy coach operates. She is not in a vacuum. The literacy coach is intra-acting with the materials and within the material environment to produce a particular variation of that role.

Subjectivity. Braidotti (2013) argues for a “need to devise new social, ethical and discursive schemes of subject formation to match the profound transformations we are undergoing. That means we need to think differently about ourselves. I take the posthuman predicament as an opportunity to empower the pursuit of alternative schemes of thought, knowledge and self-representation (p. 12). Posthumanism aims to decenter the human as the basis for all knowledge production. This stance challenges the traditional idea of a fixed inner self or identity. The term *subjectivity* has been used in poststructural discourse to show the variability and malleability of the self, as it is continually constructed and reconstructed.

Posthumanism works from and extends the poststructural concept of subjectivity displacing further the boundaries between human and nonhuman. For example, arts-based methods that embrace becoming-with materials, time and space (Kuby, Rucker, & Kirchhofer, 2015) and other embodied practices of learning-through making with materials are encounters/events that allows for new iterations of self to be generated, though not independent of the other materials, people, objects, etc. (Taylor, 2018). These events are viewed as co-produced by all actors, including the nonhuman materials, time, and space.

Summary

From literacy coaching’s roots as a way to satisfy NCLB funding requirements to the current complex conceptualizations, the body of research has extensively explored roles and

expectations (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; L'Allier et al., 2010; McGrath & Bardsley, 2018; Stevens, 2011; Walpole & Blamey, 2008) and power relations, positioning, and emotions (Finkelstein, 2019; Hunt, 2016; 2013; Rainville, 2008; Jones & Rainville, 2014). Research findings (the majority resulting from large-scale surveys, observations, and interviews) report that the roles of literacy coach are difficult to define because of the contextual nature of the work. Additionally, research reinforces again and again that coaches take up particular models and stances depending on what they, and their administration, values and prioritizes.

A growing body of research on positioning of literacy coaches finds that coaching interactions can be viewed through the perspectives of power relations and other social structures. These studies have shed light on how coaches might minimize tensions and maximize positive interactions with teachers. Blachowicz, Obrochta and Fogelberg (2005), Elish-Piper & L'Allier (2010), Ferguson (2014), Hunt (2016), and Killion (2017) all recommend further research be done to extend our current understandings and complexities involved in coaching interactions, including alternative theoretical orientations in which coaching is viewed and analyzed.

Studies on literacy coaching have overwhelmingly employed sociocultural frameworks of design and analysis, however, a few studies used poststructural perspectives, to learn how coaches navigate human relationships and the complicated power relations with and among teachers (Jones & Rainville, 2014; Hunt, 2016). Literacy education scholars are beginning to think with posthuman theories as a way to expand the limits of what has been available and customary methods within literacy research. Posthuman concepts such as entanglement disrupt the notion that the human experience is central and the human subject's experience can be

isolated and objectively studied apart from the complex entanglements the material, political, and cultural. Posthumanism offers a framework in which to engage with the phenomena differently and consider how factors such as affect, materiality, place, time, and power operate simultaneously to produce particular iterations of literacy coaches. Further, a posthuman perspective could potentially offer dynamic understandings of the networks of living and nonliving with an awareness of time, space, and place provides a framework to adhere to the calls for new ways of researching coaching.

Chapter 3: Research Design

In this chapter, I describe my methodology, methods for data collection, and analysis as well as the theoretical frameworks that supported my choices as a researcher. First, I situate this study by reviewing the statement of the problem and the guiding research questions. Then, I describe my experience of coming to theory (St. Pierre, 2001) through reading, writing, and thinking with mentors, colleagues, and professors. Next, I employ ideas from poststructural and posthumanist theories to lay a conceptual foundation from which to argue for my particular “patchwork methodology” (Higgins, Madden, Berard, Lenz Kothe, & Nordstrom, 2017). Finally, I share the methods of data assembling and analysis.

Statement of the Problem

In this posthuman post-qualitative study, I engaged in a variety of fieldwork methods (e.g. interview, document analysis, and walking) to learn more about how a K-2 school environment created a certain iteration, or version, of a literacy coach through specific school policies, practices, spaces, non-human materials, and humans (e.g. interactions with teachers, administrators, etc.).

Research Questions

My study explored the following research questions:

1. How does the entanglement of time, space, and objects produce conceptions and expectations of literacy coaching in a school context?
2. How does the historical/political context of the school shape the perceived priorities and expectations of the coach?
3. How are education policies enacted through the intra-actions of the literacy coach with material objects, environments, teachers, and administrators?

My Coming to Theory

My reading of thinkers and theorists, particularly feminist post-qualitative researchers (St. Pierre, Lather, Barad, Manning, Kuby, Nordstrom, and Ulmer) has informed my understanding of the relationships that exist among epistemology, ontology, and methodological decisions. This understanding informed my research design, particularly the methodology of my study. According to St. Pierre (2014) “methodology should never be separated from epistemology and ontology (as if it can be) lest it become mechanized and instrumental and reduced to methods, process, and technique.” (p. 2). For this reason, I have spent a great deal of time considering how my theoretical framework might guide my research design choices.

In educational research, particularly of teaching and learning, epistemology, or how we come to know, has been the dominant focus (Kuby, 2017). However, the current ontological movement, which focuses on issues of materiality, ecologies, and interconnectedness has radically shifted what is possible in research methodology and allows for different kinds of questions to be asked (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Ulmer, 2017). My study addresses how the entanglement of time, space, and objects produce conceptions and expectations of literacy coaching. For this purpose, methodologies and methods were needed that align with this new ontological perspective.

Post-qualitative research reimagines conventional qualitative methods in order to disrupt habitual, prescriptive practices and instead put theory to work in crafting new methods. St. Pierre (2014) describes the radical shift in thinking that must occur before one can conceptualize post-qualitative research and the tensions that arise. She wrote:

I deliberately used the rather large and ambiguous term “post qualitative” to mark what I see as the impossibility of an intersection between conventional humanist qualitative

methodology and “the posts.” Acknowledging that impossibility can help clear the way for what I hope will be a multitude of different possibilities for post qualitative inquiry... First, if social science researchers put aside conventional humanist qualitative methodology, which I think has become monolithic and stifling, they might actually *use* the productive analyses provided by the “posts”... But, to repeat, I’m not sure how one can think those analyses *with* conventional humanist qualitative methodology because their epistemological and ontological commitments don’t align...I believe we are at the beginning of this work, especially in educational research, and what might happen to inquiry in *post inquiry* is not at all clear (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 3).

Post-qualitative research, according to St. Pierre (2014), begins with ontology, is driven by theory, and is experimental and non-linear. Since the nature of the “posts” do not align with conventional methods of inquiry, there is no other choice but to create new or reimagine the traditional ways of doing research.

Since post-qualitative concepts are unthinkable with conventional methods (St. Pierre, 2014), Nordstrom (2018) developed the concept of *antimethodology*, as a way of conceptualizing research design as “a doing, rather than an entity” (p.223). Post-qualitative research takes on a different orientation than conventional qualitative research methodology. Nordstrom (2018) writes,

The passage, the series of research events and the theorization of those events, articulated throughout this article have created a particular ecology of practices, antimethodology. Antimethodology resists an approach ordered definition of reason and practices. Rather, it is a product of what a study does (Nordstrom, 2018, p. 223).

Within post-qualitative research, methodology and methods (antimethodology) are not simply a means to an end, but an active component of what the study will produce. This shift from methodology in a conventional paradigm to a post-qualitative perspective is a “re-imagining of what method might *do*, rather than what it *is* or *how to do* it (St. Pierre, et al., 2016, p. 105). This change highlights the shift from prescriptive procedures to a creative process where the methodology is not a static, predictable apparatus, but something that can generate new thinking and ultimately new ways of doing research.

Post-qualitative researchers are rethinking what methodology could look like in this ontological material turn. For example, Koro-Ljungberg (2015) describes post-qualitative methodology as a “journey without a clear beginning or ending point and a journey with multiple paths to be taken (p. 3). Post-qualitative research is in the doing. It is a messy process, a becoming. Post-qualitative research methods play with multiplicity and multi-directionality (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). For example, Higgins, Madden, Berard, Lenz Kothe, & Nordstrom (2017) argue that “patchwork methodology” (p. 18) is one way to envision how methods can be imagined as multiple and generative, while holding tension with the tailored fit (conventional methods) of qualitative research.

In this post-qualitative moment, no exacting stitch of the tailor’s needle and thread will suture (pre-)fabricated methodological designs...In this way, patchwork might be a more apt, though not perfect, figuration to explain the work we do in moving towards methodology as plural and productive (Higgins, et al., 2017, p. 18).

I find this to be particularly useful as I patchworked together poststructural and posthuman theories and concepts I’ve read and reimagined how my study might counter prescriptive methodology.

Through this research design, I seek to demonstrate not only the structure of my study, but to connect the process of design to deeper theoretical, epistemological, and ontological relationships that guided the methodological framework of this study. The research questions were developed through 1) careful consideration to the call of literacy researchers for more complex and critical theories and methods in which to look at the phenomenon of literacy coaching (Hunt, 2016; Jones & Rainville, 2014; Rainville, 2008) and 2) my growing understanding of the current ontological movement occurring in qualitative research that focuses on issues of materiality and interconnectedness (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Ulmer, 2017) as a way to disrupt dominant human-centered frameworks to produce new knowledge (Kuby, 2017). This study does not aim to be generalizable, but instead bring awareness to novel ways of knowing and understanding how literacy coaching is enacted and embodied.

Data Assemblage

To work with the patchwork methodology (Higgins, et al., 2017), I find Nordstrom's (2015) data assemblage to be useful. The methods of data assemblage (Nordstrom, 2015) in their unstructured, messy, and non-linear structures are unpredictable, uncertain, and open to continuous design and decision-making throughout the process. I considered which methods might serve to decenter the human subject to allow for the exploration of the environment and how humans interact and are shaped by their material surroundings. This aligned with a patchwork methodology because patchworking is "at once both nodes of furtive movement (i.e. the patchwork) and the movement itself (i.e. the ongoing patchworking)" (p. 36). In other words, patchworking is both the weaving theories through pieces of data and the assemblages the data form to produce something entirely new.

In this section, each of the lines of my data assemblage are explored. These lines include: walking methodology (Truman and Springgay, 2016), object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013), writing as a method of inquiry, and object artifact collection. While I address each line by itself, I propose that these methods worked to foster interconnections between the human participants, objects, affect, etc. Each method worked with theory and each of the other methods. For example, writing, walking, and the object interview happened simultaneously, generating data that is woven together and embedded in a particular moment.

Walking as method. Walking has been used extensively in the social sciences and is re-emerging as an embodied and participatory research practice (Springgay & Truman, 2016). Walking is a material and relational way to engage in inquiry, disrupting privileged and normalized understandings and decentering the human in the process (Springgay & Truman, 2018). According to Truman and Springgay (2016), “Properties are no longer embedded in individuals but emergent features of entangled productions” (p. 261). Thinking with Barad’s (2007) concept of entanglement, they reimagine walking, not as an individual experience, but as a production of interconnected elements, human and non-human, creating a particular moment.

Walking, then, is an ongoing process of emerging and becoming with humans and non-humans through walking events. Entanglement with the material world is characterized as both mutual and productive (Barad, 2007). This perspective disrupts the notion that 1) the human experience is central and paramount to all knowledge production and 2) the human subject’s experience can be isolated and objectively studied apart from the complex entanglements with material, historical, cultural, and political contexts.

According to Springgay & Truman (2017) embodiment as physical, relational-social, affective, and material are intertwined. “Embodiment is crucial to walking research...and needs

to move beyond an individual and sensuous account of the body in space towards a different ethico-political engagement” (p.). Walking methodology offers a way to explore data “through our engagement in materials and the materiality in the event (Waterhouse, Otterstad, & Jensen, 2016, p. 202).

In order to engage in an embodied study of literacy coaching (Ferguson, 2014; Killion, 2017), I draw upon Truman & Springgay’s (2016) notion and exploration of “propositional thinking” (p. 259) in relation to walking research. They developed five ways to think propositionally when doing walking research from Alfred Whitehead’s (1978) concept of propositions. Propositions, for Whitehead (1978) and for Truman and Springgay (2016) are speculative and suggestive, offering ideas of what could happen in an event. They are at the same time co-constitutive within the event. The proposition describes and co-creates.

St. Pierre (2019) describes how concepts are useful to the post-qualitative researcher by “reorienting thought toward the continuous variation in living that might engender thinking in thought, experimentation, and creation” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 6). Instead of viewing walking as a habitual movement or simply embodying a space, propositional thinking helped to envision walking as becoming through the entangled production of events. “When walking is understood as a proposition, subjects are not given to experiencing movement, space, walking, etc. in any pre-determined way. Walking becomes stripped of its own assumptions” (Truman & Springgay, 2016, p. 259). The propositions do not pre-determine what will happen during a walk, but instead offer possibilities and things to consider while moving, thinking, and sensing a space.

During each of the three weeks, I went on two walks for a total of six. During each walk, I drew on one of Truman and Springgay’s (2016) five propositions for walking research. These

propositions are: 1) Open space for novelty, 2) De-familiarize your body, 3) Mix the senses, 4) Walk like an archive, and 5) Propose! Each of the five propositions are outlined below.

Proposition 1: Open space for novelty. Truman and Springgay (2016) propose an orientation to walking that embraces Barad's (2007) concepts of entanglement and intra-action. Walking propositionally works when one can conceptualize the walker as entangled with all other elements and that all are intra-acting, affecting one another in a creative and co-constitutive manner. Springgay and Truman (2016) describe this mindset as follows.

In thinking-walking propositionally, we posit how walking research *could be* and what it *could do*...viewing walking research with different perspectives and of course new propositions If thinking-walking research is intra-active, then propositional relations precede relata, which then alter and change phenomena. (p. 261)

Thinking-walking propositionally means considering the interconnections and entangled production of an event (place, space, time, affect, etc.). Additionally, it means exploring this entanglement as becoming in the event- not as a static, stable environment, but a dynamic, shifting creative process.

Truman and Springgay (2016) draw attention to the tension between interculturality and propositionally thinking. By thinking propositionally, it is necessary to look at interculturality, not as a noun (stable), but as a verb (becoming). Thinking of culture as a noun reifies and reinforces binaries and privileged understandings. However, by invoking the Deleuzian concept of difference, interculturality can be viewed as “interstitial space between belonging” (p. 260), one that works with the notions of entanglement and intra-action.

In my initial walk through the school and around the school grounds, proposition #1 allowed me to focus my attention on how I am entangled and intra-acting with and among the

environment, humans, objects, etc. Additionally, Truman and Springgay's (2016) notion of culture as a verb helped me think of the school culture as an active, dynamic, and always becoming concept. For this initial walk, I took in as many of the elements of the space and the place as I moved, while refractively sifting the sensory data through the posthuman readings and my own history and experiences, doing my best to conceptualize the entangled production of time, space, and matter.

Proposition 2: De-familiarize your body. De-familiarizing your body as a proposition for walking research helps to open-up ways of knowing, thinking, and communicating through movement. It is a way to actively assist in changing perceptions by disrupting habitual ways of moving and thinking. "De-familiarization requires us to rethink and re/move what has become habitual, and to re-evaluate or upset common opinion" (Truman & Springgay, 2016, p. 261). For example, in literacy theory, de-familiarization is the act of presenting common tropes in a new or unfamiliar way in order to broaden the reader's perspective. In other words, de-familiarizing means viewing from a different or strange perspective as a way to disrupt a normalized understanding. When writers attempt to write from an unfamiliar or unconventional place, they evoke creative insight and potential possibility. De-familiarizing can have more radical goals such as destabilizing walkers and onlookers in order to draw attention to injustices that have been normalized through dominant social discourses (Truman & Springgay, 2016).

For walk 2, I de-familiarized my body by becoming aware of habitual ways of moving and thinking in school spaces. By rethinking what has become habitual, new ways of seeing materialized. Perspective-taking, either as a different person or as an object, aided in de-familiarizing the way that I move and think. I walked the hallways of the school and took on the perspective of the floor or the security cameras. In order to do this, I often stopped to stoop close

to the floor or pause within the range of the camera. I imagined how children view and walk the terrain from their vantage-point, paying close attention to what objects and images are at their eye-level.

Proposition 3: Mix the senses. This proposition draws upon the literary device of synesthesia, where writers use words associated with one sense to describe another sense. For example, the phrases *drinking in silence* or *fragrant warmth* play with affect through language. Truman and Springgay (2016) “recognize words as vectors in the affective encounter, or as another part of the feeling-event across bodies from which material experience arises” (p. 262). As a proposition of walking research, mixing the senses disorients and reorients a new and novel perspective, holding space for bodily sensations, movement, language, and space.

For walk 3, I mapped sensation and mixed the senses as a way to focus my mind on the sensory experience of the space and place. For example, when mapping sensory experiences of the school property, I employed synesthesia to describe the senses in a novel ways, activating focus and creativity.

Proposition 4: Walk like an archive. Truman and Springgay (2016) re-imagine the concept of archive from a collection of historical information about a place, institution, or people to an active embodiment of past, present, and future possibilities that are being made and remade. This proposition reflects that the past and future are being remade or made in the present moment. Walking like an archive thinks with the “full inheritances, of remembering, and full of comings or nurturing that might still be” (Haraway, 2016, p. 3).

This proposition was helpful for me to consider time, space, and movement as entangled and productive. For example, when walking the school property, echoes of the past and hopes for the future manifested at the same time, along with the present. Additionally, as I learned about

the history of the school, the residents of the neighborhood in which the school is located, and the land and geographic characteristics of the property, I carried this information with me (holding past, present, and imagined future). Considering how those temporalities form and shape the iteration of coaching in this context provided new ways of knowing and understanding.

Proposition 5: Propose! Propositionally thinking-walking “demand[s] that we conceive of research as happening in the now...” (Truman & Springgay, 2016, p. 266). One proposition will lead to the next proposition, and so on. For this reason, I left room for prior walks and propositions to spark new, novel propositions for my remaining two walks. I decided to create my own “enabling restraint (Manning, 2013) that guided my thinking in movement in the fifth and sixth walks. The literacy coach offered to take me on a guided school tour, sharing stories and introducing me to various staff members. During this walk, I decided to focus on the sounds we encountered as we moved through the building. During the final walk, I listened to the recorded object-interviews as I walked the neighborhood. I considered how the interview objects, human participants, me as researcher, and the space of the school-neighborhood assembled in various ways to give rise to new understandings.

I walked the school grounds and surrounding neighborhood, not as an individual, but as one element in an entangled production, intra-acting and co-creating with other elements (physical environment, humans, objects, etc.). Walking propositionally (Truman & Springgay, 2016) helped guide my walks by focusing thought on the interconnection of time, space, affect, and place.

Object-interviews & artifact collection. The object-interview was developed by Susan Nordstrom (2013) as a way of reimagining “the interview from a subject-centered conventional qualitative interview into a space in which both subjects and objects produce knowledge” (p.

238). Because this study is guided by posthuman theories, the data are not grounded only in the individual, but instead, opened up to include non-humans as well as humans.

Literacy coaches interact not only with teachers, administrators, supervisors, etc., they are also interacting with various digital, material, and object texts in which they construct knowledge about themselves and their position. For example, emails received from a literacy coach's supervisor or principal could serve as an essential component that coaches use to understand particular expectations and roles of her/his job. These objects were chosen by the participant and included curriculum materials (i.e. teacher manual) or other materials used by the coach. The participants were asked to bring in objects that they associated with the work of the literacy coach.

In addition, textbooks, manuals, training materials, etc. are nonhuman objects that play an important role in the daily life and role of a literacy coach and could be included in the cultural ecology of the system in which the literacy coach works. During the object-interviews, I asked participants to share material and/or digital object artifacts. The collection and curation of object artifacts (photographs, documents, texts, etc.) constitute a line in the data assemblage and serve as a primary form of data. Additionally, the collection of artifacts included objects and documents related to reading policy initiatives which helped me to think with the research question: How are reading policies enacted through the intra-actions of literacy coaches with material objects, environments, teachers, and administrators?

I conducted six unstructured object-interviews for this study with the literacy coach, teachers, principal, and district supervisor. Interviews lasted between forty-five and sixty minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by me. The objects, when possible, were

photographed and included in the interview transcript. The interviews took place in the setting of the participants' choosing, most often an office or classroom.

Writing as method of inquiry. Throughout the study, I kept a research journal in order to formulate ideas, to think through readings of theory, and to engage with the data. The act of writing is a composite of theory, methodological practices, mind, thought, emotion (Bazerman and Tinberg, 2015), and a form of creative discovery (Richardson, 1997). This form of inquiry is compatible with the onto-epistemology of the posthuman theories. Writing as a generative, playful, and multidirectional process (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015) may take many different paths. For this reason, writing was employed before, during, and after the walk and object interviews.

Manning (2015) writes, "Research-creation does not need new methods. What it needs is a re-accounting of what writing can do in the process of thinking-doing. At its best, writing is an act, alive with the rhythms of uncertainty and the openings of a speculative pragmatism that engages with the milieu where transversality is at its most acute (p. 42). Engaging in the act of writing as a process of thinking, theorizing, analyzing, becoming-with the data will be seen as creative discovery and research-creation.

In the tables below (See Tables 1-3), I outline the three weeks of data assemblage. I intentionally organized the information in way that serves to decenter me as the researcher and allow for the material-discursive practices to be the prominent focus.

According to Barad (2007), existence is not an individual affair; it is the emerging through events entangled with the material world, across time and space. For this reason, each week is described as an event, understood as an entangled production of matter, space, and time.

I list the walks, object-interviews, journal writing, and artifact collection as moments that occurred. By naming these “methods” as moments, I am acknowledging the unpredictability and non-linear structure of these encounters. Minutia describes the focus for each moment.

Table 1

Event: Week One

<i>Moments</i>	<i>Minutia</i>
Walk 1	<i>Proposition 1: Open space for novelty:</i> In my initial walk through the school and around the school grounds, proposition #1 allowed me to focus my attention on how I am entangled and intra-acting with and among the environment, humans, objects, etc. Additionally, Truman and Springgay’s (2016) notion of culture as a verb helped me think of the school culture as an active, dynamic, and always becoming concept. This forty-five minute walk around the school, inside and outside took place after school hours at approximately 3:00pm.
Walk 2	<i>Proposition 2: De-familiarize your body:</i> For walk 2, I de-familiarized my body by being aware of habitual ways of moving and thinking in school spaces and how they serve to normalize injustice. By rethinking what has become habitual, new ways of seeing emerged. For 20 minutes of this walk, I walked by myself, noting how I moved through the space (hallways, stairs, doorways, etc.) and how I noticed others moving. For the last 20 minutes of the walk, I was joined by the literacy coach. We visited two classrooms, where I also focused on movement.
Object-Interview 1 Literacy Coach	This object-interview took place in the coach’s office. During this interview, the literacy coach chose her office space as her object. She shared objects in this space including books, reading nook, coffee & snack bar, etc.
Object-Interview 2 Literacy Coach	This object-interview was the second of six unstructured object-interviews for this study. This interview took place in the literacy coach’s office. She shared more of the objects within this space including state curriculum standards and the district pacing guide/scaffolding document.
Journal Writing	Throughout the study, I kept a research journal in order to formulate ideas, to think through readings of theory, and to engage with the data.
Artifact Collection	During the walks and object-interviews, I collected artifacts (photographs, documents, texts, etc.). These artifacts constitute a line in the data assemblage and serve as a primary form of data.

Table 2

Event: Week Two

<i>Moments</i>	<i>Minutia</i>
Walk 3	Proposition 3: Mix the senses: As a proposition of walking research, mixing the senses disorients and reorients a new and novel perspective, holding space for bodily sensations, movement, language, and space. During this 45-minute walk of the school grounds and adjacent neighborhood, I considered how the sensory data could be described using unconventional language.
Walk 4	Proposition 4: Walk like an archive: This proposition was helpful for me to consider time, space, and movement as entangled and productive. For example, when walking the school property, echoes of the past and hopes for the future existed at the same time that I walked in the present. I considered how those temporalities form and shape the iteration of coaching in this context.
Object-Interview 3 District Literacy Supervisor	This object-interview was third of six unstructured object-interviews for this study. The Supervisor shared the job description for the literacy coach. The interview took place in a conference room.
Object-Interview 4 Principal	This object-interview was fourth of six unstructured object-interviews for this study. The principal, Mr. Weber, chose to share a Solution Tree document from a recent professional development workshop he attended with the school’s literacy coach (See Appendix B). The interview took place in his office and lasted 45 minutes.
Journal Writing	Throughout the study, I kept a research journal in order to formulate ideas, to think through readings of theory, and to engage with the data. I journaled before, during, and after the walks and object-interviews.
Artifact Collection	During the walks and object-interviews, I collected object artifacts (photographs, documents, texts, etc.). These artifacts constitute a line in the data assemblage and serve as a primary form of data.

Table 3

Event: Week Three

<i>Moments</i>	<i>Minutia</i>
Walk 5	<p>Proposition 5: Propose! I left room for prior walks and propositions to spark new, novel propositions for my remaining two walks. I decided to create my own “enabling restraint (Manning, 2013) that guided my thinking in movement in the fifth and sixth walks.</p> <p>The literacy coach offered to take me on a guided school tour, sharing stories and introducing me to various staff members. During this walk, I decided to focus on the sounds we encountered as we moved through the building.</p>
Walk 6	<p>Proposition 5: Propose! During the final walk, I listened to the recorded object-interviews as I walked the neighborhood. I considered how the interview objects, human participants, me as researcher, and the space of the school-neighborhood assembled in various ways to give rise to new understandings.</p>
Object-Interview 5 1st Grade Teacher	<p>This object-interview was the fifth of six unstructured object-interviews for this study. This interview took place in the hallway, just outside of the teacher’s classroom. The teacher chose the state curriculum standards as her object that she associated with the work of the literacy coach.</p>
Object-Interview 6 2nd Grade Teacher	<p>This object-interview was the sixth of six unstructured object-interviews for this study. The interview took place in the teacher’s 2nd grade classroom. For her object, the teacher chose the ELA curriculum, Collaborative Classroom, as her object.</p>
Journal Writing	<p>Throughout the study, I kept a research journal in order to formulate ideas, to think through readings of theory, and to engage with the data. I journaled before, during, and after the walks and object-interviews.</p>
Artifact Collection	<p>During the walks and object-interviews, I collected object artifacts (photographs, documents, texts, etc.). These artifacts constitute a line in the data assemblage and serve as a primary form of data.</p>

Trustworthiness and Ethics

In concordance with the institutional review board (IRB), I took steps to ensure the protection of the rights of my participants. I completed the appropriate Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) modules and received approval for my study by the University of

Memphis IRB. During the IRB application process, I submitted consent forms and introductory letters detailing the perimeters of the study including the purpose, methods, and procedures to ensure confidentiality. The letter outlined potential risks and benefits and explained that participants may opt out of the study at any time for any reason. I also provided the interview guide for the participants.

At first, the IRB reviewers were unsure how to categorize a study titled “posthuman.” I received feedback that asked for a “mouth script” detailing how I would introduce the study verbally to potential participants. I provided the script, but then the IRB was withdrawn because it was “determined that [the] activity does not meet the Office of Human Subjects Research Protections’ definition of human subjects research and 45 CFR part 46 does not apply.” On further questioning, the IRB reviewer explained, “When determining the purposed research, the purpose of this research is to learn more about how a K-5 school environment creates a certain iteration of a literacy coach, thus not about the subjects themselves. Secondly, when evaluating the interview questions, the questions are about a particular object and not the people being interviewed. These are what lead me to the determination of not human subjects research.” Since the primary focus was not solely on the individual human subjects, the IRB was deemed unnecessary.

After several discussions via email, my chairs and I were able to convince the IRB reviewer that as part of this research, I would be doing object-interviews that include human participants, recording the interviews, and transcribing them. I was able to submit an additional IRB request for the study which was approved.

Though, it was necessary and important to obtain the approved IRB, researchers’ responsibility should extend beyond the issues of participant protection and Institutional

compliance toward broader interrelated practices of decision making throughout the process of conducting scholarly research (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). Christians (2018) argues for an ethical path that transcends conventional IRB concerns associated with betrayal, deception, and harm of participants, an ethic of care rooted in feminist scholarship. According to Christians (2018), the priority should not only be preventing harm but instead reflecting mutual understanding and action toward a restorative social justice.

Both Christians' (2018) words deeply resonate with how I view my responsibility as a researcher. I diligently, and persistently in this case, complied to each of the standards set forth by the IRB, but beyond that, I broadened my understanding of trustworthiness within the feminist ethic of care framework. This framework attempts to move beyond binary categories and emphasizes compassion and empathy as an ethical responsibility to the individual. As an emerging scholar in the field of literacy education, I will continue to examine research practices through critical perspectives that help to uncover personal biases as well as institutional/systemic biases.

To extend beyond protecting human subjects from harm, his study aims to examine certain taken-for-granted humanist assumptions and imagine generative possibilities for entanglements with material, historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Research Setting

To provide context, offer statistics about the research site, situated within a large suburban school district in the MidSouthern United States. The school district has 21 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 8 high schools. The school site, determined by the literacy coach, was a K-2 elementary school with a total student enrollment of 704 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Table 4 shows the student demographic information broken down by gender,

ethnicity, English proficiency, and students receiving special education services and modifications under 504 plans. 78% of the student population receives free and reduced lunch (FRPL).

Table 4

Student Demographic Information

Total Enrollment	704
Free and Reduced-price Lunch (FRPL)	78.0%
Female	45.5%
Male	54.5%
Students with Disabilities (IDEA)	16.9%
Students with Disabilities (Section 504 Only)	0.3%
Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	9.9%
African American	42.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%
Asian	0.6%
Hispanic or Latino	13.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
Two or more races	4.4%
White	38.1%

Table 5 Indicates the school’s teacher information, broken down by state licensing and teachers in their first or second year of teaching. The table reflects that out of the 42 total teachers, 23.8% of the teachers are in their first or second year of teaching. All of the teachers meet state licensing and certificate requirements.

Table 5

Teacher Information

Total Teachers	42.0
Total Counselors	1.0

Table 5 Continued

Teachers Meeting all State Licensing and Certification Requirements	100.0 %
Teachers in 1st Year of Teaching	9.5 %
Teachers in 2nd Year of Teaching	14.3 %
Teachers Absent > 10 Days of the School Year (FTE)	15.0
Students to Teachers Ratio	16.76: 1
Average Teacher Salary Expenditures	\$34,589.60

Participants

The primary participant was one school-based literacy coach. I reached out to former and current colleagues to identify potential participants, looking for a public-school elementary literacy coach that works on-site at one or more schools. I was introduced to the literacy coach through a colleague. The literacy coach identified two teachers to interview, one first-grade teacher and one second-grade teacher. I also interviewed the district literacy supervisor and the school principal. Table 6 lists the participants' pseudonyms, position titles, years in current positions, ethnicity, approximate ages, and where each object-interview took place.

Table 6

Participants' Demographic Information

Position	Pseudonym	Years in Current Position	Self-Identified Gender	Self-Identified Ethnicity	Interview Setting
Literacy Coach	Teri Lewis	7	Female	White	Office
First Grade Teacher	Amelia Barr	6	Female	White	School Hallway
Second Grade Teacher	Rachel Williams	3	Female	White	Playground & Classroom
Principal	Tom Weber	1	Male	African-American	Office

Table 6 Continued

District Literacy Supervisor	Lydia Haas	10	Female	White	Conference Room
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Analysis

Thinking with theory. In their article, “Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding”, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) examine qualitative researchers’ relationship with coding as a go-to in data analysis, asking “whether one would code data if one had not been taught to do so” (p. 715). They posit that coding data, because of its teachability, has become the method proliferated by textbooks and preferred by instructors. By questioning coding as a quasi-statistical analytic practice, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) invite researchers to rethink this practice, thus opening up the possibility of using theory as analysis.

Simply put, “there is no formula for thinking with theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 717). Jackson and Mazzei (2018) write, “It is something that is to come; something that happens, paradoxically, in a moment that has already happened; something emergent, unpredictable, and always rethinkable and redoable” (p. 717). The work of thinking with theory is described as a “process methodology” (p.719) that is ontological; it is all in the doing. Thinking with theory counteracts conventional qualitative practices by inviting researchers to “plug in” theories and think data through the theoretical perspective. This approach cannot be reproducible or simplified to a list of procedures, thereby opening up possibilities for new readings and understandings to develop.

I read and analyzed the data with the posthuman concepts from chapter 2 (entanglement, intra-action, subjectivity, affect, and agency). Jackson & Mazzei (2018) wrote, “by putting a concept to work, we begin to think voice as that which is entangled in the intra-action of things

and doings in an assemblage—bodies, words, histories, materialities, affects, and so on” (p.721). As I read the theoretical texts with the data assemblage, I put the posthuman concepts to work with the data, theorizing how these concepts are operating and what we can learn from their engagement with the data assemblage.

In the next chapter, I describe my approach to Thinking with Theory (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) using the posthuman concepts of agency, entanglement, intra-action, subjectivity, and affect to illuminate the material-discursive aspects of literacy coaching. I assembled the data from object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013), walking (Springgay & Truman, 2016), and researcher journal entries in various ways in order to explore how the living, the nonliving, matter, space, and time are interconnected and vital elements of a research setting, working to generate knowledge and shape particular iterations of literacy coaching.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data Assemblages

Thinking with Posthumanism

In this chapter, I share the connections, intersections, and becomings that thinking with posthumanism has produced from this study. I take seriously Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) assertion that "the result of 'thinking with theory' across the data illustrates how knowledge is opened up and proliferated rather than foreclosed and simplified" (p. vii). In other words, I worked to counter traditional qualitative methods of analysis, which generally rely on the reduction of data into codes and themes (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014), to instead examine the multiplicities of intersections among the research site, researcher, human participants, discourses, objects, policy, curriculum, etc.

Posthumanism is grounded in an onto-epistemology that recognizes the "inseparable connection between the linguistic, social, political, and biological" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 119). When thinking with posthumanism, it is necessary to take on this onto-epistemological orientation, "which requires a different approach to thinking with theory" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 120). My aim was to "think methodologically *and* philosophically together" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. vii), recognizing how knowledge is produced through *knowing in being* (Barad, 2007). Jackson and Mazzei offer three maneuvers to scholars taking up this analysis framework. First, thinking with theory should aim to disrupt the theory/practice binary and demonstrate how they constitute one another. Secondly, they recommend "working with the same data chunks repeatedly to make them groan...and show the suppleness of each" (p. 5). Lastly, Jackson and Mazzei urge researchers to be transparent and deliberate in what questions are produced during analysis. I employed these three maneuvers as ways of reading the data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) with and through posthuman concepts.

Thinking with the shifting data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015), I considered connections and differences, as well as what broader social and political issues were continuously being made, unmade, and remade. I have chosen to use the hyphen to represent various assemblages instead of the forward slash, which is commonly used to signify binaries. By using the hyphen to connect the assembled data (e.g. PLC document-principal-coach), I intend to show the entities as linked and entangled.

Four Theoretical Concepts of Posthumanism

In the following sections, I put to work four theoretical concepts from posthumanism (entanglement, agency, intra-action, and subjectivity) with the data assemblages from the six object-interviews, six walks, and my researcher journal to see how these enactments function both materially and discursively. These concepts do not operate as themes, but rather serve as entry points into the assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The concepts of entanglement, agency, intra-action, and subjectivity bleed into one another and cannot be teased apart. For example, posthuman agency cannot be discussed without invoking the concepts of intra-action, entanglement, and so on.

Entanglement. In quantum physics, entanglement refers to the ways entities intra-act, weaving into the other, while already being tangled together as one. According to Barad (2007), the “inescapable entanglement of matters of being, knowing, and doing” (p. 3) is made evident through contemporary physics. She writes,

To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating (Barad, 2007, p. ix).

In other words, Barad argues we do not exist as separate individuals apart from other humans, non-humans, objects, culture, nature, etc., but rather, exist and emerge through relational, entangled encounters.

Kuby, Thiel, and Spector (2018) imagine how posthuman concepts can help educators and researchers think differently about teaching and learning. The concept of entanglement, they claim, is foundational for “shift[ing] how we think about learning spaces. Students are not viewed as separate individuals, but entangled with each other and materials (e.g. paper, glue, markers, iPads, books, nature, animals, and so forth)” (p. 70). In the same way, teachers and instructional coaches can be understood as part of an entangled ecology, including the material, emotional, political, and cultural dimensions of their work.

Thinking about literacy coaching with the concept of posthuman entanglement, these questions emerged: How is literacy coaching entangled with the social, political, and affective dimensions of the school? How can we view this phenomena through an entangled perspective? What can be produced by considering the entanglement of humans-non-humans-space-time through the arrangement of different data assemblages?

Assemblage 1: Political-social-material assemblage. Administrators, teachers, and instructional coaches are entangled with the political, cultural, and social dimensions of a school context. Policies-people-materials entangle, while past policies-norms-people remain enmeshed and present. Accepted views of teacher learning are woven into financial and political decision-making, as well as physical space and available resources.

As one point of access into the boundless topic of entangled political-material-social co-production, I began to think about the entanglement of Magnolia Springs’ principal-literacy coach assemblage to explore how policy-materials-discourse co-produced particular expectations

and understandings of coaching. The principal, Mr. Weber, chose to share a document from a recent professional development workshop he attended with the school's literacy coach (See Appendix B). The following is an excerpt from the object-interview where he discussed his reasons for choosing this particular object:

Mr. Weber: ...It's sort of my guiding principles for our school. It's the four questions of a professional learning community which is a driving force and the thing that our school is going to depend on for its success. It comes from a conference on PLCs from Solution Tree.

In schools like ours, at-risk and low socio-economic families, the mentality in education is because they don't have the money or because they don't have the resources that means that their learning is limited. That's not true at all. Given a different environment, different exposure, they can learn the same thing.

So, that's one of the things that I concentrate on at my school and the literacy coach plays a major part. [The literacy coach] train[s] the teachers and when you start giving teachers training and information about outside influences, then that combination grows the teachers as well. Not only just the instruction, but them as people to help our kids.

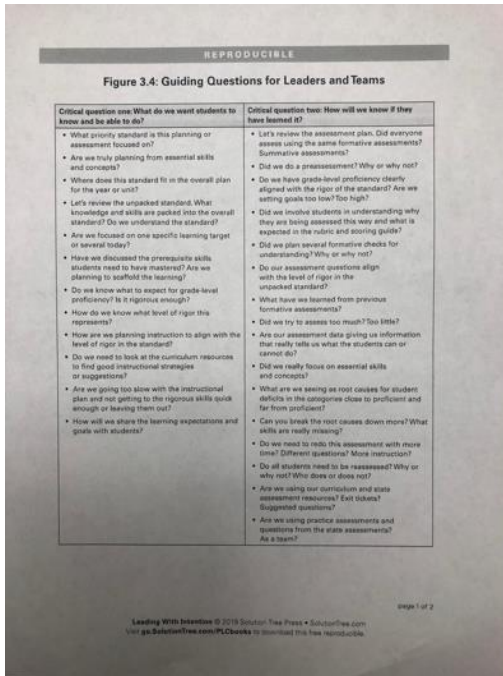


Figure 1: Principal's document (front), PLC questions from Solution Tree.

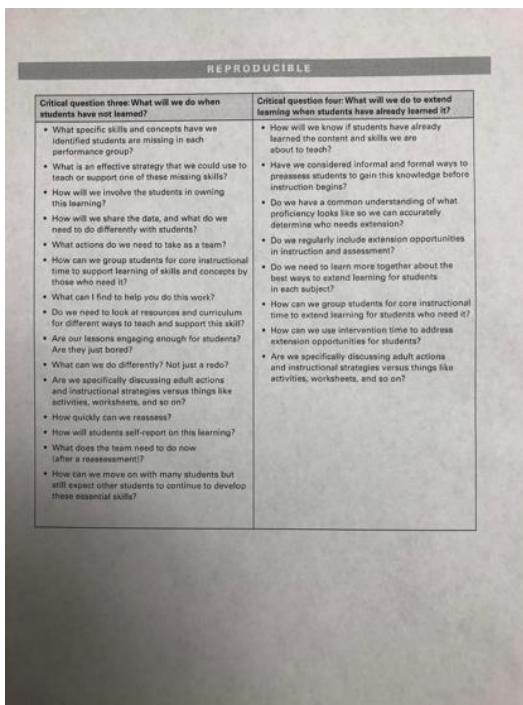


Figure 2: Principal's document (back), PLC questions from Solution Tree.

Mr. Weber shared how this document provides structure to the grade-level planning meetings, or PLCs.

Mr. Weber: [At] our grade level planning meetings, we do not leave without answering these four questions. They are: What do we want students to know and able to do? How will we know if they have learned it? What will we do when students have not learned? And what will we do to extend learning when students have already learned it? Those four questions we answer every PLC.

The literacy coach is the lead in these meetings. It's hard for literacy coaches to not do everything for their teachers, you know, because that's in their nature, I believe. The literacy coach's nature is to do those things, especially when you come from the classroom, you know how hard the teachers have it. You know how hard they work.

These four questions guide everything we do. These four questions, every one of them, has to do with data-driven instruction. And it's about the students. The literacy coach teaches the teachers and it trickles down and then the teachers guide the students. That's how it was presented at the conference.

Entangled within this interaction is the material (physical document), the political (district/Solution Tree's agenda), and the discursive (discourses around teaching Title I students), among many other elements. The physical document is widely distributed to teachers and prominently displayed in classrooms and conference rooms. In the literacy coach's office, these

questions are posted on a large bulletin board for teachers to reference during their weekly meetings. This material document is entangled with political and economic motivations associated with Solution Tree, a professional development company and publisher and the school district. The discourses surrounding Title I students entangles with the material and political (and economic) to produce particular understandings of who “those kids” are and assumptions about their aptitude for learning and “success”.

As Teri, the literacy coach, mentioned, the PLC questions from this Solution Tree document are posted in her office. This document holds a particular significance and is entangled with the professional learning community and literacy coach. Embedded within this document and these questions are assumptions about teaching and learning and a human-centered notion of agency. What do the teachers do to make students learn? What do the students do to show learning has occurred? What do the teachers do to address students who do not show their learning? What do teachers do when they have demonstrated learning has occurred?

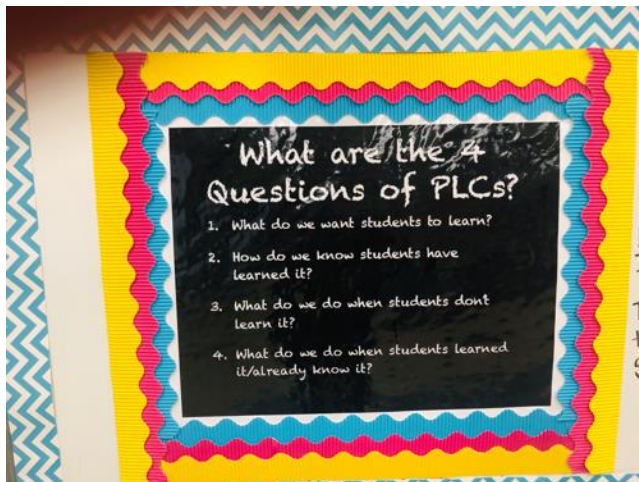


Figure 3: Solution Tree’s PLC questions in the literacy coach’s office.

The circulation, posting, and referencing of these questions reinforces specific views about teaching, student learning, and success. In the following sections, I examine the priorities

and discourses surrounding professional learning community and expectations for the literacy coach produced through the principal-document assemblage. I will also explore how the document-literacy coach assemblage produces discourses and understandings about instruction, assessment, and achievement.

Assemblage 2: PLC document-principal-coach assemblage. I examined how the PLC document-principal-coach assemblage co-produce particular expectations and understandings of coaching, while remaining entangled within the political and historical context of the school. For example, the document-principal-coach assemblage reinforces and produces a causal view of learning and agency as humans acting on other humans to achieve particular outcomes. In other words, literacy coaches act on teachers, so that they will act on students, so students will act on assessments, to produce specific data outcomes.

Atteberry and Bryk (2011) describe (and critique) the widely accepted assumption between instructional coaching and changes in student learning as a causal chain of connections which they refer to as a *causal cascade* (p. 358). In this linear model, coaches follow a process in which their actions ultimately affect student learning. Atteberry and Bryk (2011) outline this step-by-step model: “First, a coach must establish relationships...Second, teachers must participate in the professional development that the coach initiates. Third, this participation must result in the desired changes in teachers’ classroom practice. Finally, assuming these desired changes occur, significant improvement in student learning are expected” (p. 358). The *causal cascade* assumes a trickle-down effect beginning with the coach’s actions and culminating in student achievement.

Mr. Weber’s words are entangled within a larger discourse around how learning occurs and who is able to initiate learning. “The literacy coach teaches the teachers and it trickles down

and then the teachers guide the students.” An acceptance of the causal cascade related to student achievement becomes visible in how principals and districts communicate expectations of instructional coaching through materials like the document Mr. Weber shared.

Studies that focus on principals’ roles and implementation of literacy coaching have highlighted the political connection to coaching roles and practices. For example, Mangin (2009) examined 20 school districts and interviewed district-level administrators to learn how literacy coaching roles were implemented and what contextual factors influenced implementation. According to Mangin, moving from reading specialist to literacy coach “demanded a shift in how educators understood the problem of low student achievement.

Principals in this study referred to a ‘fix the kids’ mentality associated with reading specialists, whereby teachers can send their underperforming students to get ‘fixed’ by the reading specialist. Shifting from reading specialists to literacy coaches involves relocating the problem of low achievement with teachers” (p. 780). Along with title change of reading specialist to literacy coach, expectations of what coaching means were being reassigned within this new model. In referring to learning “trickling down” from coach to teacher to students, Mr. Weber demonstrates this paradigm shift from reading specialist to coach.

During the time of Teri’s hiring as literacy coach, the school district was in the process of moving from a reading specialist model (working with children) to a coaching model (working with teachers). This political context helps to demonstrate the entanglement of past and current policies and discourses associated with coaching at Magnolia Springs.

Teri, shared her understanding of the hiring process for her position, highlighting how financial and political decisions impacted her experience.

Teri: I was a first-year teacher [at Magnolia Springs] and I was getting my masters in literacy education. I didn't really think that I was going to pursue anything else outside of the classroom anytime soon. [The district supervisor] told me that the district was going to hire coaches.

For five years coaches were under the curriculum department and then because of the way our positions were funded, we were Title I, so coaches were split between Title I schools. The district decided to put that money back into the schools and let them decide how they wanted to spend the money. So, Magnolia Springs was the first to say we want Teri full-time.

During Teri's first year as a literacy coach, she was splitting her time between Magnolia Springs and another elementary school in the district. At this time, the district was transitioning from a reading specialist model toward a coaching model. Teri spoke about her experience within this context.

Teri: [Working with teachers] is very, very, very different. I mean you have to go about it such different ways. That is one thing. Then also just very surprising and eye-opening what happens in classroom to classroom. You assume everyone is doing the same as you. You find out that that is not always the case. You are wondering why is that person even a teacher? Do they hate kids? Why are they even here? Not even so much at this school, but in general. Not like I am saying how different people do things differently- that is okay. I'm talking about the way

people talk to kids sometimes and just if you want to just do a million worksheets all day long.

Leslee: How do you engage teachers without—

Teri: Without stepping on their toes? Yeah. It did take a while to build a relationship with one teacher in particular but now we are great. It took a little while, probably months, and maybe that whole school year to really feel like I had a good relationship with her where I could be like, do you really think that is a good idea? Actually, I would be more like, hey, guys, here is some research I found on reading workshop. Maybe you all could try this... It just so happened that we were getting these new programs, so I could start by helping that implementation and modeling lessons for them.

Teri's engagement with teachers, especially with teachers she did not agree with, created tension and highlights the complexity of the relationships between teachers and coaches and the entanglement of those relations with policy decisions.

According to Mangin (2009), moving from reading specialist to literacy coach "demanded a shift in how educators understood the problem of low student achievement. Administrators in this study referred to a 'fix the kids' mentality associated with reading specialists, whereby teachers can send their underperforming students to get 'fixed' by the reading specialist. Shifting from reading specialists to literacy coaches involves relocating the problem of low achievement with teachers" (p. 780). Along with title change of reading specialist to literacy coach, expectations of what coaching means were being reconceptualized, challenged, and negotiated.

This conceptual shift of focusing on children’s skills or deficiencies to a focused effort to address teacher practice and instruction is entangled with the causal discourses that Mr. Weber invoked and a humanist understanding of agency. In other words, understanding student achievement as a causal and linear process assumes that if one moves up the chain of causation, they can affect those links at the end of the chain. The PLC document that Mr. Weber shared assumes this kind of causal relationship between planning, teaching, and achievement, without considering the complex entanglement of material-discursive intra-actions at play.

Assemblage 3: PLC document-coach-curriculum standards assemblage. I began to wonder how the entanglement of these questions within the PLC reinforces specific views about teaching and learning and what else may be produced through the enacted agency of these entities. Mr. Weber and Teri brought up the Solution Tree PLC document as something that is routinely referred to and referenced. Mr. Weber said that these questions are a, “driving force and the thing that our school is going to depend on for its success”. In Teri’s office, the four main PLC questions are posted on a large bulletin board. Teri explained that the PLC questions provide structure for weekly meetings and even guide her position more broadly.

Teri: Within this space, there are a lot of specific objects. We have lots of teacher resources like our professional reading and we have the reminders of the four PLC questions which guide all of our conversations-and pretty much guides everything I do.

Considering the entanglement of the political, material, and discursive, I examined each

of the four PLC questions individually, then collectively as an assemblage of PLC document-coach. What does this assemblage produce in the meetings? What expectations of coaching does this assemblage produce through enacted agency?

Critical question one: What do we want students to know and be able to do?

Question one asks teachers to consider what they expect students to know and do. The critical question is broken down into twelve additional questions, following in a bulleted list, guiding and narrowing this critical question toward a focus on curriculum standards. Thinking about the entanglement of the PLC document-coach-curriculum standards, I focused on the first bullet point listed under critical question one (See figure 1):

- What priority standard is this planning or assessment focused on?

Second Grade			
CCR.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.			
RI.2.3	Desired Student Performance		
<p>Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.</p>	<p>A student should know (Prerequisite Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to understand types of informational text: literary nonfiction, expository, technical, etc. • How to use text features. • How to make connections (self, text, world) within and across multiple texts. • How simple transition words such as first, next, then, and that identify sequences that signal varying types of text structures and show connections of ideas. 	<p>A student should understand (Conceptual Understanding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors of informational text utilize varying text structures (e.g., cause/effect, sequence, chronology). This helps readers make connections between ideas, concepts, and steps in a process. • Growing readers take notes to organize their thinking so they are able to logically describe connections within text. • Readers recognize signal words and transitions that connect ideas (e.g., is, are, because, same, different, first, next, etc.) in different types of informational text. 	<p>A student should be able to do (Evidence of Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the main topic (idea) of a text. • Establish a connection, link, or relationship to the events, ideas, or steps that relate to the main topic. • Identify the description, cause and effect, or problem and solution of the actions, events, ideas, concepts, or steps and how they relate to the topic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do the events, ideas, concepts, or steps fit together to tell about the topic? ○ How did Martin Luther King, Jr.'s actions lead to his death?
<p>KEY LANGUAGE/VERBS/TERMS RELATED TO THE STANDARD: connection, historical events, scientific ideas, technical steps, text structure, text feature, literary nonfiction, nonfiction, expository, transition words</p>			

Figure 4: 2nd Grade ELA state curriculum standard.

When the question of what do we want the students to know and do, teachers are directed to the curriculum standards and asked, what standard are we focused on? The assumption is that this is

where planning begins, with the curriculum standard. The PLC document and the curriculum standards are entangled with certain assumptions about knowledge and learning. In what follows, I trace the entangled thread of a second-grade curriculum state standard, considering how the PLC questions intra-act with the standard and the teachers as they plan in a PLC meeting. These documents are widely accepted and embraced by the teachers, literacy coach, administration, and district-level supervisors at Magnolia Springs. I wondered what might be produced by looking at these intra-actions with and through the concept of posthuman entanglement.

During an object-interview with Amelia, a second-grade teacher, she shared the state curriculum standards as her object that she associated with literacy coaching. She directed me to the English Language Arts standards on the state's Department of Education website. The teachers and literacy coach often refer to the curriculum standards document as the "scaffolding document" because in addition to the state standard, there is information related to prerequisite knowledge, conceptual understanding, and evidence of knowledge that guides planning and pacing. Teri had also explained sections of the scaffolding document by showing me this second grade English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum standard as an example.

I began to consider how the material and discursive elements of these documents work to produce particular understandings of knowledge and pedagogy. These questions emerged as I considered the assemblage of curriculum standards-critical questions-PLC meeting:

What assumptions about learning and knowledge were entangled with these documents? How are those assumptions entangled within the political and historical dimensions of the school?

What is being produced through this entangled assemblage? I explore these below.

When Teri leads the PLC each week at Magnolia Springs, these questions are asked at the beginning of the meeting: What do we want students to know and be able to do? What priority

standard is this planning or assessment focused on? These documents intra-act in a way that drives a particular kind of discourse. For example, the second grade ELA standard asks students to analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas interact and develop over the course of a text. This standard appears to be open-ended, leaving space for teachers to interpret in a variety of ways. However, the sections listed under “Desired Student Performance” provide a specific progression of knowledge acquisition, resulting in a puzzling final result in the “Evidence of Knowledge” section.

The scaffolding document lists prerequisite knowledge, or what the student should know before they learn this particular standard. Understanding different types of informational text and using text features are listed as two indicators that students are ready to learn a new standard. According to the document, students should have a conceptual understanding that authors of informational text utilize text structures (e.g. cause/effect, sequence, chronology), helping readers to make connections between ideas, concepts, and steps in a process. They should also understand that growing readers take notes to organize thinking and to recognize signal words and transitions in informational texts. The student will be able to demonstrate that they have learned this information by identifying a main idea of the text, establish the connection between the events, ideas, and steps related to the main idea.

Finally, students are to identify the description, cause and effect, or problem and solution of the actions, events, ideas, concepts, or steps and how they relate to the topic. The document authors offer two questions to illustrate this performance indicator:

How do the events, ideas, concepts, or steps fit together to tell about the topic?

How did Martin Luther King, Jr.'s actions lead to his death?¹

Though the language of the state standard and the majority of the language surrounding the performance indicators focuses on a broad understanding of how different elements (ideas, events, etc.) fit together to produce particular outcomes, the final question assumes particular assumptions that highlight political and racial leanings and harken to Sonu and Snaza's (2015) assertion that standards "forward particular conceptions of the self and legitimize ways of responding to the world" (p. 270). The state standards are entangled in the political and cultural perspectives of the authors. The standards are not impartial or apolitical. The PLC questions from Solution Tree, once adopted, posted, and referenced routinely demonstrate how the material-discursive are deeply entangled in the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the school and the work of the literacy coach.

Sonu & Snaza (2015) draw attention to elementary curriculum standards, demonstrating how reading the standards through posthumanism changes the types of questions we ask and pushes against taken-for-granted notions of knowledge production. For example, when investigating how curriculum standards frame environmentalism in ways that reinforce individualism and what counts as knowledge. They write, "the pragmatic question then becomes not what may be done to address this attack on nature, but what is it that impedes the possibility of acknowledging our entanglement with nature? (p. 270). The standards are written in a way that assumes a human-centered orientation in which humans are positioned as separate from

¹ The state's Department of Education scaffolding document lists, "How did Martin Luther King, Jr.'s actions lead to his death?" as an example for how students will be able to demonstrate their mastery of the curriculum standard: Analyze why and how individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. The wording of the question is problematic for many reasons. The question is oriented to blame the victim for his own assassination. The standard asks students to analyze how different elements interact and develop over the course of the text, however, this language reinforces discrimination and a lack of awareness of historical and systemic injustices that contributed to and produced a climate in which Dr. King was murdered.

nature and must “save the Earth.” The notion of “saving the Earth” is such a ubiquitous concept that it is rarely, if ever, challenged.

Posthumanism, however, resists the idea that humans should be understood as centered, separate, and owners of the natural world. Rather, posthumanism asks how environmentalism might operate differently if humans were considered as one organism of many within an entangled network. The curriculum standards reinforce particular humanist understandings of nature and human’s relationship to it.

In a similar way, English Language Arts standards communicate a particular perspective how knowledge is produced, who can produce knowledge, and what counts as knowledge. The performance indicators lay out a linear path for students to acquire a particular skill or certain information. In the example of the second grade ELA standard at Magnolia Springs, students should be able to answer the question, how did Martin Luther King, Jr.’s actions lead to his death? Entangled within this question are discourses about race, causality, and politics, among others.

At Magnolia Springs Elementary School, these PLC questions, along with the state standards, are embedded and intra-actively working to produce particular discourses around learning and teaching. The work of the literacy coach cannot be teased out from the material-discursive intra-actions with these documents. Sonu and Snaza (2015) describe how curriculum standards (and I argue documents like the PLC questions) act agentially with leadership to drive forward a system of thoughts and values, often without critical awareness to the underlying assumptions. Speaking directly about state curriculum standards, Sonu & Snaza (2015) write,

One clear outgrowth of our modern knowledge society is that power is exercised less through direct force and more through systems of reason that order and classify what is

said, thought about, and done...Standards then come to symbolize what counts as knowledge (p. 270).

Examining various assemblages of documents, spaces, and humans through the concept of entanglement allowed for new understandings of how these documents operate and how they work agentially to produce particular discourses, reinforcing what counts as knowledge.

In this section, I looked closely at two data assemblages that include the Solution Tree's PLC questions, exploring what this assemblage does and what is produced through the entanglement of the political-discursive-material. First, I examined how the PLC document-principal-coach assemblage co-produce particular expectations and understandings of coaching, remaining entangled within the political and historical context of the school. Then, I analyzed the data assemblage of PLC document-coach-curriculum standards to see how the political-discursive-material work together to create specific iterations of coaching encounters during weekly PLCs, making visible assumptions about the nature of learning and teaching.

Agency and intra-action. Posthumanism challenges this humanist notion of agency by decentering the human (Kuby, Rucker, & Darolia, 2017) and disrupting the subject/object binary. From a posthuman perspective, agency does not exist as an individual possession or exercise of personal power. Rather, agency is mutually created through the entangled assemblages of humans and nonhumans. Barad (2007) developed the term *enacted agency* to demonstrate how the coming together of entities (humans and nonhumans) to produce knowledge within the assemblage. Intra-action and agency, like all of the posthuman concepts taken up in this chapter, bleed into one another and are deeply enmeshed in one another. For this reason, to understand how Barad's posthuman agency is conceptualized, the concept of intra-action is essential and inseparable.

Intra-action assumes more than interaction of entities, emphasizing the “the inseparability of entities in assemblage as they are doing/being/thinking together” (Lenters & McDermott, 2019, p. 23). Intra-action implies that entities are becoming through their relational encounters and are deeply entangled with one another. Intra-action is a doing and a becoming in the event, producing something new from each encounter.

One possible entryway into a discussion of posthuman agency was to consider the enacted agency of the humans in relation to physical space and objects within the space. In taking up walking as an embodied methodology, the intra-actions that occurred between the humans, space, objects, etc. produced enactments that when assembled and diffractively read with other data, produced further (and different) intra-actions. For example, I describe a walk where I toured the school building with the literacy coach. As we move through the school spaces (hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, playground), I focus not only on humans doing things, but rather on the encounters between things-people-spaces-animals.

Prior to this walk, I decided to focus on sound as both an activation device and proposition (Springgay & Truman, 2018; Truman & Springgay, 2016) to help disrupt normative understandings of the school space. I used my phone to record the sounds on our walk. These recordings, combined with my notes and researcher journal, formed the following account of this walk. I draw from Springgay and Truman’s (2016) understanding that this account “doesn’t represent place but holds in place the multiplicity of sound and affects evoked through movement” (p.11). I think of this walk as an attempt to present “an embodied, tactile, and auditory understanding of place” (Springgay and Truman’s, 2016, p.9), though partial and unstable. Before, during, and after the walks, I considered how school spaces might intra-act with others to produce knowledge and conceptions of literacy coaching. How is Teri becoming

literacy coach through her intra-actions with space-time-objects-humans? How is posthuman agency enacted with objects and specific school spaces?

Stepping into the quiet hallway, under the glow of the fluorescent lighting, the blue rubber soles of Teri's flip-flops snap against the shiny linoleum floor- snap, snap, snap. The snaps intensify as she picks up speed. Her long cotton maxi dress is almost covering her feet. I watch her bare pink heels kicking up her hem, bobbing up and down to the flip-flop rhythm. The snaps slow and the familiar, sleepy hum of two copiers echo one another, like waves crashing one and then the other.

Turning the corner into the school's copy room, Teri-Flip-flops announce our arrival while accidentally dropping a quarter on the floor in front of an illuminated Pepsi vending machine. The shiny disk's spin becomes a wobble. "I'm giving a tour!" Teri sings to two women at the side-by-side humming machines. They both look up and smile, one of the women waves at me and says something, but the hum continues, and I can't hear what she has said. One copier lid ajar with a thick book sandwiched between produces a strobe-lighting effect each time the wave crashes. Teri inserts her coins and makes her selection- Dr. Pepper. The vending machine jostles and delivers the cold can to Teri's waiting hand. Teri-Dr. Pepper-Flip-flops lead me into the hallway toward the sounds of a choir singing in the cafeteria (Researcher Journal, May 15, 2019).



Figure 5: School hallway.

For teachers or others who have spent time in school settings, these encounters are commonplace. Within the coaching literature, descriptions of school spaces in which literacy coaches work are often overlooked and decontextualized. Everyday objects and common school spaces are not given much description or focus. However, from a posthuman perspective, space and place matter differently and are understood to work with humans to manifest specific outcomes. The scene described above deliberately slows and makes visible the often-ignored intra-actions that take place during an everyday moment, allowing objects and actions to be seen anew through the concept of enacted agency. Carolyn Taylor (2016) aptly describes this attention to particularity in posthuman research as trying to “see a world in a grain of sand” (p.28).

These particularities of the physical, material, emotional, and political can also be made more visible through the concept of enacted agency; the humans, with the space and objects, are producing reality (the world) together. Teri intra-acts with countless objects, people, and spaces

during the school day. Drawing on the posthuman concepts of intra-action and enacted agency, simple encounters of the literacy coach in various school spaces can be viewed as complex, relational, and mutually productive. How do different objects and spaces work with Teri to produce particular iterations of literacy coach?

In thinking about how space and bodies mutually produce particular material-discursive practices through enacted agency, the first object-interview with Teri offered some insight. One Friday afternoon, just before school dismissal, I met Teri in her office, a converted classroom, located on the second floor. She greeted me warmly and we sat down at her wide steel-framed desk positioned in one corner of the large room.

Assemblage 4: Teri-office assemblage. Through email, I had provided Teri with my interview guide (See Appendix A) and had requested she choose an object that she associated with her work as a literacy coach. On the interview guide, the term “object” was loosely defined as anything from communications (emails, memos, texts, notes, social media), curriculum materials (i.e. teacher manual, standards, pacing guides, books) to other materials (phone, photographs, videos, office supplies, food, clothing, etc.). Additionally, the “object” could be a space or a place. Teri chose her office as her object she associated with literacy coaching.

Teri: So, [I chose] this space because it represents a comfortable place where teachers feel safe coming and talking to me. But also, it's where we have our grade-level planning meetings and our professional development workshops.

Within this space, there are a lot of specific objects. We have lots of teacher resources like our professional reading and we have the reminders of the four

PLC questions which guide all of our conversations-and pretty much guides everything I do.

I definitely I wanted it to feel like a comfortable space for the teachers so that they didn't feel like oh, I have to go to planning or oh, we have to talk about data.

We're not allowed to have coffee machines throughout the building, but [the former principal] said I could have it in here to make it seem homier.



Figure 6: Coffee and snack bar in the literacy coach's office.

In cultivating a “homey” space for teachers to visit and gather, Teri saw her office as integral to how she enacts literacy coaching at her school. This space is agentic, co-producing particular moments with the coach and other humans and nonhumans. I began to consider how this space worked with other entities (humans, objects, time, affect), entangled in particular discourses and power relations. Considering space as active and agentic pushes against the

conventional understanding of human agency and allows for a deeper analysis of material dimensions within literacy coaching contexts.

As Teri moved around the room, she described each area and her rationale for designing it. I considered both her narrative and the way she engaged with the space and objects. I tried to imagine how Teri and these objects co-emerge and become through their intra-action (Barad, 2007). For example, when showing me the bookshelf that housed professional literature, Teri reached out to gently touch the spine of each book as she talked about it, a few times pulling a book off the shelf to show me the cover or to thumb through the pages, exposing curly scribbles of marginalia and crumpled sticky-notes. Some of the books were Teri's personal copies and when opening to specific pages, she shared memories and anecdotes with me. In this moment, I resisted asking questions such as, how are these books used? Do the teachers read these? How did you decide which books to display? Which are most popular among the teachers? I resisted asking these questions in order to focus on the on the intra-action of the books-Teri-Leslee assemblage in this encounter.

I found myself being drawn into the books, passing them back and forth, scanning the table of contents for familiar themes. After a few moments of silence, both of us engrossed in what we were reading, we looked up and laughed, realizing we had zoned-out. Though one could easily characterize this sequence of actions as simply two people interacting, the encounter could also be viewed as one of intra-activity, mutually co-producing with the books, space, and people, all as active agents. I began to understand what Rautio (2013) described as “momentary blurrings of the animate/inanimate...of embodied engagement with material other than self. Of knowing through embodied being” (p.10). In characterizing this moment as simply an interaction between

two people, the complexity and intensity of the encounter would be diminished and the affective dimensions overlooked.

Lenters and McDermott (2019) draw on Barad's conceptualization of posthuman agency by describing how agency is produced through intra-actions among nonhuman entities and humans through relational and affective encounters.

Agency is enacted relationally as entities in assemblage come into association with each other, as they intra-act. Importantly, in this conceptualization, more-than-human entities also have the ability to move others with whom they come into contact, and likewise, to be changed in these associations... Understandings of agency connect intimately with the concept of affect through emphasizing the ways in which human and more-than-human entities have the capacity to affect, or move, other entities when in relation. (Lenters & McDermott, 2019, p. 20-21).

A mutual agency is produced through intra-actions within the assemblage and driven by affective qualities.

In this moment with the literacy coach, I was more aware that the lines of being, knowing, and doing were intertwined. The affective intensity of that event was one of "flow", being in the present moment, while also sharing a relational and mutual understanding. Lines of researcher, coach, objects, space, and time momentarily blurred and knowing, doing, and being were one. Agency was enacted, not as one individual acting on the other, but through our sharing of the books, passing them, pointing out particular sections, gleeful acknowledgements, and quiet browsing.



Figure 7: Reading area for teachers in the literacy coach's office.

After carefully organizing the books, Teri continued describing her motivation for creating a special reading nook, adjacent to the bookshelf, using a small futon and other specific details she considered when decorating the space for the teachers. She also shared another reason why this space is important to her. In previous years, she split her time between several schools and did not have a designated office space at Magnolia Springs. In the following transcript excerpt, Teri shares a sense of relief about having a consistent place to work each day.

Teri: Before I moved to this room, I was in classrooms more and what is now the speech room. Then, I had moved from there into the counselor's office. The nurse might have been in there too. I had one little corner.

On the days when I wasn't there someone would use my desk but I wouldn't know that until I would come back and be like who took my favorite pen? Who was here messing with my stuff? So, it's nice to feel like I can leave something on my desk and it will still be there tomorrow.

Teri's current office, a somewhat new and novel place for her, allowed her to know that she would have a predictable workspace after moving from school to school and office to office. As in the bookshelf example, Teri was able to keep books and other professional and personal objects in close proximity which gave her a sense of security. Teri's intra-actions with this space enhanced my understanding of how the everyday materiality involved with literacy coaching matters and produces particular ways of being-doing coach(ing).

Assemblage 5: Teri-office-teachers assemblage. Thinking with the Teri-office assemblage became a new way to diffractively read the enacted agency of other assemblages as well. Teri-office-teachers assemblage helped me to think about how this space (and the objects within) intra-acts with these and other assemblages to produce material and discursive effects. I began to wonder how agency is enacted in other ways with this space.



Figure 8: Tables in the literacy coach's office.

Each week, grade-level teams of teachers come to Teri's office for their Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting, also known throughout the school as Grade Level Planning meeting, or simply referred to as "planning". According to Teri, the teachers sit around these tables, two short children's tables pushed together. Within the PLC, Teri operates as the facilitator, referencing the district pacing guide, state standards, and PLC questions throughout the session. During PLCs, the teachers will share activities and handouts related to upcoming standards listed on the pacing guide and bring student work and assessments to discuss.

At the time of my interview with Teri, the size of the tables and chairs did not prompt questions for me. After all, as a former elementary teacher, I am used to sitting on the floor or pulling up a child's chair if needed. However, as I began to think about the encounters as an assemblage of space-matter-humans-time, I began to consider what these intra-actions and

enacted agency produced and how it may be entangled with certain discourses, particularly during the weekly PLC. In other words, the material space *and* objects in the room *and* people *and* discourses all work together as a force of becoming (Kuby, et al., 2017). I sat in the small chair, my knees rising above the tabletop wondering how this space and objects intra-acted with the teachers to produce particular moments of enacted agency during professional development sessions.

This idea of enacted agency pushes against the type of humanist agency in which Atteberry and Bryk (2011) and Vanderburg and Stephens (2009) refer to in their studies of literacy coaching. In both of these studies, teacher agency was characterized by the degree in which individuals were able to act on their professional judgement or personal interest. This characterization of agency is closely related to an individual autonomy. Posthuman enacted agency is not understood in terms of increasing or minimizing personal power, but rather, how entities (human and more-than human) are woven together to produce affective outcomes. The question of whether the teacher's agency is increased or decreased in a PLC meeting, becomes, what is produced through the enacted agencies of teachers-coach-space-discourses in a PLC meeting? What possibilities emerge when the focus is on the intra-activity of affective encounters? What could happen if the PLC could be reconfigured to highlight these possibilities?

When speaking with the teachers about their experiences during the PLC, what emerged was a discourse that aligned with humanist agency, as demonstrated in the aforementioned literacy coaching studies (Atteberry and Bryk, 2011; Vanderburg and Stephens, 2009). Two Magnolia Springs' teachers, Rachel and Amelia, described PLC meetings as time away from their students and as an unnecessary task that they endured but did not necessarily see a benefit. Their narratives reinforced a feeling of diminished humanist agency or individual autonomy.

Thinking with the concepts of teacher agency from a humanist perspective (which was pervasive during the teacher interviews and prevailing in the literature) and the posthuman view of agency as mutual and co-constitutive created a productive tension in which to consider the enactment of the PLC at Magnolia Springs. It was helpful to consider how the teachers conceptualized these weekly meetings first through a humanist sense of agency, then by operationalizing a notion of posthuman enacted agency.

During an object-interview with Rachel, a 2nd grade teacher at Magnolia Springs, she shared her hesitancy about going to Teri's office for weekly PLC meetings. Rachel was concerned that gathering each week for these meetings meant that she would miss instructional time with her students.

Rachel: Basically, [Teri] orchestrates the grade level meetings. We call them planning. That's where we come together in her space. We discuss the upcoming units that we have.

I'm not a fan because I have to miss my instructional time to go sit in there. We have to share activity time so some of us have it in the morning and some of us have it later in the day. If we all had it at the same time and we all had it where we wouldn't have to miss teaching.

So, we all miss that hour every week of instructional time. I'm in the National Guard, too. I already have to miss a lot for training. Any time I'm out, it's like nerve-wracking and I don't want to be out. I just want to teach and stay here.

[The meetings] are basically to talk about where we're going and where we've been. What's not working, what's working. What you are doing in your room that's helping your kids. That kind of thing.

Rachel voiced the anxiety that she felt while sitting in the grade-level planning meetings and her frustration with missing instructional time in her classroom. Rachel's emotional response highlights the complexities of social, emotional, political, and material elements at work during a weekly teacher meeting.

When considering teacher agency from a humanist perspective, Rachel's individual choice and freedom to act was clearly being stifled by the weekly mandated meeting. Acting on her personal and professional judgement, she would choose to exercise her agency and stay in her classroom and attend to her students. Consistent with the notion of teacher agency discussed in studies on literacy coaching, some amount of agency must be given up by the teacher in order to come and participate in the PLC meeting.

Rachel's narrative illustrates a common theme prevalent in the coaching literature, the concept of *teacher resistance* (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Jacobs, Boardman, Potvin & Wang, 2017; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010). Research on teacher resistance is well-documented and often defined as resisting pressure to change or participate in coaching activities. In fact, researchers cite teacher resistance is one of the primary obstacles for literacy coaches (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010).

Riveros, et al. (2012) demonstrate how extensively a humanist notion of teacher agency operates and examines how the concept of teacher resistance seemingly challenges power

structures but may ultimately reinforce the subject/object binary. Specifically looking at how teachers assert agency through peer-collaboration as a function of the PLC, Riveros, et al. (2012) explain,

Teacher resistance as an exercise of teacher agency is a fundamental challenge to current formulations of professional learning communities and would represent a significant addition to our understandings of teacher practice within professional learning communities. In the particular case of professional learning communities, we call attention to the fact that organizational change must go beyond the simplistic idea that subjects can be influenced to commit to change” (p. 208).

Riveros, et al.’s call for a more complex view of a PLC by considering teacher resistance as an exercise of their professional agency. Underlying this assertion is the assumption that agency is an individual’s ability to act or exert power over a situation. This binary also assumes that one’s ability to increase agency thereby reduces another’s ability to act. For example, if teachers have the ability to choose not to attend a weekly meeting, the ability of the literacy coach to perform is then lessened. By exercising resistance, acting using a human-centric agency, teachers are actually characterized as less cooperative, and less professional.

In another object-interview, 1st Grade teacher, Amelia, shares a similar narrative about attending the weekly PLC meeting. Her attitude could also be characterized as “resistant” and her agency, in the conventional form, as restricted.

Amelia: I would like for our literacy coach to be more involved inside the classroom rather than in grade level meeting. I would rather her come along and come in the room

and give us more feedback on what we can do to become better teachers. Like just hopping in.

Because when we go up there [to her office]...it would be more beneficial to come in and see us in action, rather than being up there. I'm not saying critique everything or come in to tell you everything you're doing wrong but give suggestions. It's hard to see as a teacher everything that's going on.

That's something that I would really enjoy if she came into the classroom rather than in grade level planning where I don't feel like I need help. I know my standards. I know how I'm teaching that. It's not as beneficial for me. I'd rather her come into my room and see what I'm doing and not doing and help me that way.

Amelia's frustration appears to come from a desire to remain in her classroom where she feels her time is more efficiently spent. Because she knows her state standards, she feels like the time spent in the grade level meeting is not beneficial. Here, like with Rachel, it appears that her professional agency (humanist) is lost when she has to attend a meeting that she does not find necessary or helpful.

Jacobs, et al. (2017) explored teacher resistance in coaching contexts, conceptualizing the relationship between coach and teacher as individual demonstrations of human agency. For example, teachers were classified as receptive or resistant based on how compliant the coaches perceived the teachers to be.

The relatively large number of observations and meetings coaches held even with the most resistant teachers speaks to a certain level of compliance from almost all of the teachers in the study...[Resistant] teachers appeared similar to those in other studies who desire autonomy...and might benefit from professional support models that maximize these preferences (p. 11).

When considering teacher agency using a human-centric frame, one where individual power is negotiated and one person must give up some amount of their agency, possibilities are limited to reorganizing existing structures (e.g. PLC meetings, observation cycles, etc.) and/or dialogic undertakings designed to open communication between the teachers and coach.

In this section, I explored the concepts of posthuman agency and intra-action through two data assemblages: the Teri-office assemblage and the Teri-office-teachers assemblage. Through the Teri-office assemblage, I theorized her office space, and the objects within, as agentic, co-producing particular affective moments. Enacted agency decenters the individual as the only actant and views human-objects-space encounters as complex, relational, and mutually productive. The Teri-office-teachers assemblage, when viewed through the concept of posthuman agency, provides an alternative view of teacher resistance, one of the most common challenges cited in the literature associated with literacy coaching. Teacher agency is reconceptualized, not as a matter of compliance or resistance, but rather as mutually productive with and within the space-place-time-humans-objects assemblages in which they operate.

Subjectivity. Thinking with a posthuman subjectivity is not easy. In fact, St. Pierre (2000) illustrates just how difficult it is to begin to think outside of humanism, and outside of the individual.

Humanism is the air we breathe, the language we speak, the shape of the homes we live in, the relations we are able to have with others, the politics we practice, the map that locates us on the earth, the futures we can imagine, the limits of our pleasures. Humanism is everywhere, overwhelming in its totality; and, since it is so ‘natural,’ it is difficult to watch it work. (p. 478).

Humanism, or centering the individual, and understanding the world through a lens of human exceptionalism is “natural” and “normal”. It is the air we breathe and the legacy of modern philosophy and education. Posthumanism works from and extends feminist and poststructural concepts of subjectivity, displacing further the boundaries between human and nonhuman.

The term *subjectivity*, used in feminist and poststructural discourse, shows the variability and malleability of the self and is often contrasted with the notion of a fixed identity or the objective self of humanism (Honderich, 2005). Subjectivity, particularly in feminist thought, has been used to denote an individual’s partial and situated understanding of the world, underscoring the expression of an individual’s feelings, beliefs, and desires as well as recognizing the impact and intersections of race, gender, and culture on the construction and positioning of the subject. This shift from the Cartesian notion of the rational subject of the Enlightenment to a more complex and multiple understanding of subjectivity was a “radical theoretical break with the liberal humanist individual” (Davies, et al., 2006, p. 87), opening up new ways of theorizing being and knowing in the world.

Poststructural theorists challenge the notion of the human as a stable subject, viewing subjectivity as something continually being remade relationally through language, power, and politics. “Subjectivity is produced socially, through language in relations” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 502). “A significant question in poststructuralism is who gets to be a subject in a particular

discourse, in a particular set of practices? Who is allowed a subject position and who is not? And to ask the other part of that question, who is subjected?” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 503).

Poststructuralists interrogate language to understand how power operates and subjectivities are formed.

The idea of the rational, conscious subject (and human in posthumanism) is decentered in order to provide alternative ways of understanding and exploring knowledge production and challenging dominant and oppressive views. Braidotti (2013a) emphasizes how a posthuman subjectivity is aligned with a different ontological stance than that of Descartes. She writes,

I have argued that posthuman theory rests on a process ontology that challenges the traditional equation of subjectivity with rational consciousness, resisting the reduction of both to objectivity and linearity...Posthuman thought proposes an alternative vision of the thinking subject...the actual structure of thinking. (Braidotti, 2013a, p.14-15).

Theorizing subjectivity using a posthuman perspective requires a different starting point, one other than the individual. This position requires rejecting “a Cartesian dualism, subject/object, that implies the existence of an object separate from and independent of the collecting subject” (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014, p. 716). By decentering the individual human, posthuman subjectivity can be viewed as multiple, non-linear, and in-process.

Conceptualizing a posthuman subjectivity with literacy coaches. In this section, I theorize posthuman subjectivity by decentering the individual literacy coach and conceptualizing coaching as an assemblage of material, discursive, and affective elements. Reading these assemblages through the concept of posthuman subjectivity, new questions and possibilities were generated. In what follows, I demonstrate how unique assemblages produce particular ways of

seeing and understanding literacy coaching, while pushing against humanist notions of fixed identities.

Drawing from Braidotti, St. Pierre, Deleuze and Guattari, among others, I began to craft a working understanding of how this concept might guide and provoke new thinking related to posthuman subjectivity in teaching and literacy coaching. Murriss' words inspired my thinking and curiosity. She wrote, "A posthuman subjectivity that goes beyond the boundaries of atomistic individual selves makes us think differently about teaching" (Murriss, 2016, p.7). In other words, what could a posthuman subjectivity push us to think beyond the individual? Flowing from this idea, she raised a series of questions that stayed with me as I read and thought with the data of my study. She asked,

Now, what difference does it make to move the focus away from the human individual (either teacher or learner) and put relationality at the center of pedagogy? What difference does this make epistemologically, politically and ethically? Does it shift the 'who' of knowledge production and would the knowledge produced be different? What is the role of the educator in this kind of education? (Murriss, 2016, p. 120-121).

Murriss is questioning what ideas and insights might arise if we attempt to think outside of humanism, to imagine what is produced through intra-actions with and among others. Other questions materialized from these questions including, how do I explore a posthuman subjectivity in a literacy coaching context? What can we learn about literacy coaching if it is understood as relational, multiple, and intra-active with the material environment? How does a posthuman subjectivity allow for new ways of thinking about literacy coaching?

I considered how subjectivity is characterized in the scholarly literature, paying attention to the ontological origins and assumptions aligned with specific examples of literacy coaching

studies and findings. In much of the literature related to literacy coaching, coaches are defined by the roles they are assigned and the duties they perform (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Kruse and Zimmerman, 2012; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean, 2010). Coaches' identities are described as socially constructed and negotiated from the individual coach's perspective, sometimes informed by teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their performance.

As one example, Stevens (2011) studied how a high school literacy coach constructed their identity through their understanding of their job duties, highlighting the frustrations from a lack of clearly defined expectations from administrators and the challenging task of juggling multiple roles daily. Stevens described the literacy coach as searching for a clear identity among the myriad of expectations from teachers and administrators. In this case, identity was theorized as something that could potentially be directly defined, constructed, and performed.

Additionally, there is an assumption, that if the coach were able to have a clear identity as a coach (i.e. meet a specific set of expectations), the work would be less frustrating and more effective.

At Magnolia Springs, the principal, Mr. Weber, referred me to the literacy coaches' job description as a way to understand "who the literacy coach is." Mr. Weber explained how the job description would give me a better understanding of the roles of a literacy coach.

Mr. Weber: I think you would get more of an essence of who the literacy coach is through the [job] description. And it's going to vary between schools. It is going to depend on each individual school, but when you look at the literacy coach description, that's going to tell you a lot about what they do. Of course, it describes what they do but it is going to tell you a lot about

how they go about doing it too. You should really look at that job description you know, and it's going to tell you a lot.

Mr. Weber shared that the job description not only describes what the coach does but also how they go about doing it. In other words, within the description, there is an understanding or a philosophy that undergirds and supports those expectations. Mr. Weber directed me to the state's website, where I found the document, [State] Department of Education Office of Curriculum and Instruction Literacy Coach Criteria where I found the following description (See Appendix C).

Literacy coaches will work with the [State] Department of Education to implement the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act* and provide appropriate services to schools so that there can be a cohesive, sustained, intensive and classroom-focused approach that is rigorous, engaging, and relevant for students.

Literacy coaches will provide a non-threatening, open, professional, and collaborative work relationship with district-level school personnel, school-based literacy coaches, principals, and teachers. They will be required to effectively identify the needs of assigned schools in order to prioritize, schedule, organize, and provide technical assistance so that students in assigned schools achieve grade level reading by the end of 3rd grade.

The document lists sections for Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes that literacy coaches should possess. Under the title, “Attributes: The following personal qualities are essential” these points are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

[State] Department of Education Office of Curriculum and Instruction Literacy Coach Criteria

Knowledge: A thorough understanding of the following is vital:	Skills: Acquisition of the following expertise is crucial:	Attributes: The following personal qualities are essential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction, • Systematic, explicit instructional process, • Instructional coaching approaches and strategies for teaching adult learners, • Scientific reading research and its application to effective classroom instruction, structure, and practices, as well as intervention, • [State] <i>College- and Career-Readiness Standards for English Language Arts</i>, • Multi-Tiered System of Supports model, and • Data analysis and application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic, explicit, instructional delivery, • Ability to effectively prioritize, schedule, manage, and organize multiple daily tasks to achieve goals, • Ability to administer and interpret reading assessments and use data to determine professional development needs, and recommend changes to improve school-wide and/or classroom instructional practices, • Ability to rapidly acquire and apply new skills and information, • Ability to provide effective instructional feedback, • Ability to identify problems and develop appropriate solutions, • Use effective written and oral communication skills, including the ability to engage in difficult and candid conversations with a variety of stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of urgency for literacy achievement, • Motivating others to perform at high standards, • High degree of professionalism to ensure and protect the confidentiality of educators and students, • Strong work ethic, self-directed and reliable, and the ability to work both independently and collaboratively, • High quality interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to and interact with adults exhibiting a range of abilities and dispositions, • Persistent in spite of obstacles, • Ability to orchestrate change, • Valuing lifelong learning, • Belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges, and • Desire to grow professionally.

The de-contextualized nature of the state job description aligns with the humanist notion of a stable and fixed identity. In other words, this list of personal attributes, when adopted or achieved, should produce a particular subject- a successful one- regardless of the context. Though the principal confirmed there would be variations of literacy coaching roles depending on the school context, his repeated referral to the state’s job description as a way to get to the essence of who the coach is and how they operate offers some insight into how school

administrators conceptualize literacy coaches' identities and how they understand agency. For example, "being persistent in spite of obstacles", though broad, characterizes persistence as a fixed personality trait based on a product of an individual's own agency, separate from and outside other influences and contexts.

Coach as a subject-in-process. In contrast, posthumanism rejects the idea that one can individually and autonomously exist outside of the tangle of relations, material and discursive. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari and Braidotti, Murriss (2017) applies the concept of the nomadic subject to indicate a departure from the subject of humanism to a form of posthuman subjectivity.

The nomadic subject does not have one singular stable identity and is not firmly located geographically, historically, ethnically, or 'fixed' by a class structure. The key idea here is that self is not 'subject-as-substance', but always 'subject-in-process', and always produced involving contradiction and multiplicity (p. 122).

The posthuman subject is neither stable nor fixed, but rather, multiple, complex and always in the process of becoming something else. How does one begin to study a subjectivity that is constantly changing? How do I, as the researcher, begin with this concept in mind? How can I rethink subjectivity within a new paradigm of nomadic subjectivity?

Viewing individuals as assemblages. Postqualitative researchers work within the humanistic view of research subject through compliance with the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) procedures. However, posthuman perspectives trouble the binary of subject/object (researcher/participant). The "subject" of research is alternatively viewed as "multiplicities, relational, embedded, always already materialdiscursive, co-evolutionary with other species,

affected by pre-conscious and non-volitional forces, and thoroughly entangled with materials and technologies” (Kuby, Spector, Thiel, 2019, p.126). The stable humanist individual is understood instead as a multiplicity of relations and forces, co-producing reality together moment to moment.

Nordstrom (2015), reconfigures the idea of the humanist researcher as an assemblage becoming-with innumerable other assemblages. She writes,

I myself am an assemblage, constantly navigating the assemblages that entangle me. The world does not revolve around me. I am not apart from my data or the world. I am assemblage—in the middle of vast connective assemblages, trying to make sense of the constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing entanglements (p. 167).

Understanding a person (researcher, participants, etc.) as an assemblage-multiple, complex, and ever-changing provides a different framework to analyze, theorize, and challenge fixed understandings of identity. “I” am multiple and entangled with “them”, the participants and the material-discursive elements of the study.

The concept of assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Nordstrom, 2015) continued to help me conceptualize and work with posthuman subjectivities in flux, challenging notions of humanist subjectivity. Davies and Gannon discuss the idea of the nomad, an unbounded subject understood as an assemblage of entities and relations.

Subjectivity can be understood as an ‘assemblage’ of flows of desire and affect of varying speeds and intensities, not bounded but constituted in relation to other human and non-human subjects, spaces, times, surfaces and events (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 36).

Through the assemblages of affects and relations we constitute and reconstitute our subjectivities and becomings in the event (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). We are constantly becoming-with and entangled in the material-discursive world. Subjectivities are glimpses of a particular coming-together, not fixed or lasting.

In order to diffractively read and analyze literacy coaching through the figuration of the unbounded subject, I explored how the literacy coach pushes against and opens up the structures and fixed characteristics of the job description. Instead of looking to see how, or to what extent, the literacy coach fulfills or performs these characteristics and expectations, I am interested in how the coach (as assemblage) might push against notions of narrow and stable identity through a multiple and intra-active subjectivity. For example, in the following section, I describe how Teri, the literacy coach, can be understood as a number of shifting assemblages, coming together as she intra-acts with humans, objects, space, time, etc.

Drawing upon a posthuman concept of subjectivity, as one that manifests briefly through the coming together through an event or events, I imagined how I might demonstrate and theorize moments where the coach was a “‘subject-in-process’, and always produced involving contradiction and multiplicity” (Murriss, 2017, p. 122) and where subjectivity [could] be understood as an ‘assemblage’ of flows of desire and affect of varying speeds and intensities” (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 36).

Teri as assemblage. Teri is understood as Teri-office-curriculum standards assemblage in certain moments during a PLC and at other moments seen as the flip-flops-Dr. Pepper-Teri assemblage at another moment. She is constituted and reconstituted through the continuous shifting and assembling of entities and events. She is constantly becoming-with the world around

her. In this way, Teri, and the other participants are assemblages, being made and unmade through the coming together of specific events and intra-actions with other assemblages.

Flint (2018) considered how to trace a posthuman subjectivity “as an unbounded and nomadic process of becoming” (p. 6) by mapping it onto an event and looking for the ripples and textures it created. She followed the lines of an event “deconstruct[ing] bounded subjectivities and knowings, illustrating subjectivity as nomadic, flowing, complicated, and nuanced” (p. 16). Drawing on Flint’s example, I considered several moments or events during my time at Magnolia Springs, mapping onto them ripples and textures (affect) produced through particular assemblages. I also tried to deconstruct particular bounded subjectivities present in the state job description as a way to demonstrate the complicated and nuanced posthuman subjectivities of the literacy coach. In the following section, I describe how Teri can be viewed as one part of a complex assemblage while pushing against the fixed notions of identity provided by the job description document.

Challenging fixed identities of the job description. One particular attribute listed on the job description resonated with specific discourses shared by the literacy coach at Magnolia Springs. *The belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges* is listed under the title, Attributes: The following personal qualities are essential (See Appendix C). During my interviews and walks with the literacy coach, Teri mentioned on several occasions that she questioned whether or not she was making a difference and expressed a dilemma of whether or not she should return to the classroom. She also shared moments when she felt she was successful in her job as a literacy coach.

I noticed how these feelings of uncertainty or confidence (often a mixture of both) were generated during particular times and in specific spaces. These shifting feelings pushed against

the fixed and permanent attributes of the job description. I began to think about how this notion, *the belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges*, could be viewed using a posthuman subjectivity. Could this idea be opened up to highlight the nomadic “subject-in-process” (Braidotti, 2013a) always “involving contradiction and multiplicity” (Murriss, 2017, p. 122). I wondered how the concept of posthuman subjectivity could shed light on this attribute and expectation of the literacy coach. What does it mean to believe that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges. What happens if there are moments of uncertainty or disbelief?

I considered a moment when walking past a first-grade classroom with the literacy coach one afternoon. Teri pointed to the closed door and said, “That was my classroom when I was a teacher here.” She frowned dramatically and traced an imaginary tear down her face with her index finger. The proximity to her former classroom brought up memories as a classroom teacher and an intense emotional response for Teri. I was reminded of Flint’s (2018) words regarding nomadic subjectivity,

The event of remembering, of being moved to remember, produces the body differently in the world. Through a series of connections and flows what it means to be/belong in the world is expanded beyond the body, beyond a bounded moment of a particular time and place (p. 15).

Thoughts, like memories are not fixed, but rather can be invoked through our senses and material environment. Teri’s intra-action with her former classroom produced a sensation of sadness and fondness. Teri’s face was full of longing and when I asked if she missed being in the classroom, she said,

Teri: The biggest thing I am missing are those relationships that you form. Like, you are a little family in your classroom. And with kids, they automatically like you for the most part. They automatically want to hear what you are teaching them and they automatically are going to be receptive to it.

But with teachers it takes a lot longer to notice, like, oh hey, maybe I am making a difference in this job. Because at first it really was hard for me. I felt like, gosh, did I make a mistake? Do I need to go back to the classroom? Like, does anyone even care what I have to share? You know?

Through this brief encounter, Teri demonstrates a complex assemblage of the material (body, classroom), discursive (questioning whether she is making a difference as a coach), and affective elements (memories, emotions)- each of which constitutes other assemblages.

I problematized and reconfigured the fixed attribute of *belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges* is as a belief-in-process, shifting and becoming with other thoughts, memories, objects, spaces, and humans.

In thinking about this encounter as an assemblage rather than an individual narrative account, I return to Murriss' (2017) question, "Now, what difference does it make to move the focus away from the human individual (either teacher or learner) and put relationality at the center..." (p. 120). Viewing this moment as an assemblage of material-discursive-affective flows allows for new and complex understandings of coaching that are unlimited in their possibilities. Assembling various elements of this intra-action and reading them diffractively could generate

innumerable combinations and thought configurations. In other words, embracing subjectivity as an assemblage of human and nonhuman opens up new worlds of connection and relationality.

Flint (2018) writes about how viewing memory as part of an assemblage shapes the posthuman subjectivity and possibilities for new kinds of relationships. She writes,

Turning to memory as unbounded and ever flowing through space and time makes possible movements of exploring and experiencing connectedness and relations with the world around us, an ecology of belonging (p. 15).

Teri's intra-action with her old classroom produced a flood of memories and sensations, which she described and negotiated discursively. Her happy memories of her time as a first grade teacher are entangled in her present work and relations as a literacy coach at Magnolia Springs. The intensity of the emotion she felt is one thread of a dense network of the nuanced relationality of teacher-coach. Teri is an "...assemblage—in the middle of vast connective assemblages, trying to make sense of the constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing entanglements" (Nordstrom, 2015, p. 167).

Teri: I still have a teacher heart the way [I] think about things. At first, people have this negative connotation, like you are there to fix them. I knew that I still felt like a first grade teacher, like completely. For me to come in as the coach I just felt like, you know, I am definitely on the same level as them. I am not above them or anything like that. I am 100% not evaluating them. I am literally here to help. I am here to support your instruction, period. Like that's it.

And you prove yourself to them over time, but at first it was so crazy to me to be thought of as a county office person because no, I just go to different schools now and I don't have a classroom, but I'm just a teacher.

The job description does not allow for the concept of subject-in-process, but the data assemblages show the multiplicity of Teri's subject positions and her constant negotiation with the material-discursive-affective assemblages that she finds herself moving with and between.

In this section, I explored various data assemblages through the concept of a posthuman subjectivity. I worked to understand literacy coach as a subject-in-process and literacy coaching as a practice that “goes beyond the boundaries of atomistic individual selves” (Murriss, 2016, p. 7). I grappled with the question, how does a posthuman subjectivity allow for new ways of thinking about literacy coaching? Moment to moment, Teri demonstrates how she constituted complex assemblages of the material, discursive, and affective elements that challenged fixed attributes listed on the state's job description. The concept of a coach-in-process allows for nuanced and intricate ways of understanding how literacy coaches are made, unmade, and remade within the shifting context. Specifically, the assemblages in this section highlight how past memories and experiences (e.g. classroom teacher) are active intensities that entangle and shape particular iterations of literacy coaching enactments and subjectivities.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Throughout this study, I explored how the multiple dimensions of literacy coaching (material, discursive, affective) produced particular coaching iterations in one K-2 school in the MidSouth, USA. I drew on posthuman theory and relevant literacy coaching research to guide my design, inquiry, and analysis. Thinking with posthuman theory (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) and concepts, I examined various data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) from object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013) and walking (Springgay & Truman, 2016) to better understand what is produced through the material, affective, and discursive practices associated with literacy coaching.

In this chapter, I discuss my findings in relation to the three research questions I detailed in chapter one. I give a brief overview of my findings for each research question, situating them within the larger body of literacy coaching research. By reading and theorizing the data assemblages through the posthuman concepts of entanglement, intra-action, agency, and subjectivity, certain assumptions about teaching and learning were made visible. I share how the data assemblages helped to make visible these assumptions and how they make possible new ways to think about and understand the entangled and intra-active enactments of literacy coaching. I conclude this chapter by identifying my study's limitations, contributions to current research, and recommendations for future research.

Overview of Findings

How does the entanglement of time, space, and objects produce conceptions and expectations of literacy coaching in a school context?

Within the coaching literature, descriptions of school spaces in which literacy coaches work are often overlooked and decontextualized (Hunt, 2013). Everyday objects and common

school spaces are seen simply as backdrops. However, from a posthuman perspective, space and place matter differently and are understood to work with humans to manifest specific outcomes. By reading the data assemblages through the posthuman concepts, the assemblages made visible how the everyday materiality of literacy coaching matters and produces particular ways of doing coaching. For example, in cultivating a “homey” space for teachers, Teri saw her office as integral to how she enacts literacy coaching at her school. Teri’s office space was also the collective meeting place for each weekly grade-level PLC, of which she leads.

The entanglement of time-space-people-objects within the office-PLC also made visible how a traditional humanist agency reinforces notions of “teacher resistance”, shedding light on how the concept of teacher resistance is understood by teachers, coaches, and administrators in a school setting. The data assemblages highlight how “teacher resistance” to coaching is produced through discourses, objects, documents, etc. that position teachers and coaches as separate and opposed.

The teachers’ “resistance” to attending the weekly PLC meetings was characterized as a giving up of instructional time and sense of autonomy (humanist agency) to participate in the PLC in “Teri’s space”. The teachers asserted that they would choose not to attend the meeting if they were given the choice. The discourses surrounding attending the PLC were focused on whether or not the teachers were willing to give up their time in their classroom to participate in the literacy coach’s agenda. Teachers did not view the PLC as time-space of mutual production with the coach and each other. The teachers, coach, and principal positioned the PLC meeting as a time of compliance and adherence to specified norms and policies, which they viewed as a giving up of personal agency. Research on teacher resistance is well-documented and often defined as resisting change or participation in coaching activities, like attending PLC meetings,

lesson planning, and reflecting on test data. In fact, teacher resistance is consistently cited as one of the most difficult challenges coaches face in their work (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Jacobs, Boardman, Potvin & Wang, 2017; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010).

The Magnolia Springs teachers' "resistant" actions and feelings reflect the kind of teacher resistance represented in the research literature. underlying assumptions inherent in current models of professional learning communities. Specifically, the concept of the PLC relies on the assumption that teacher practice needs to be improved and teachers' compliance and willingness are essential for change to occur (Riveros, Newton, and Burgess, 2012). When considering teacher agency using a human-centric frame, one where individual power is negotiated and one person must give up some amount of their agency, possibilities are limited to reorganizing existing structures (e.g. PLC meetings, observation cycles, etc.) and/or dialogic undertakings designed to open communication between the teachers and coach.

The data assemblages made possible ways to think of space as agentic, pushing against the conventional understanding of human agency and allows for a deeper analysis of material dimensions within literacy coaching enactments. A posthuman orientation of agency changes the question of whether the teacher's agency is increased or decreased in a PLC meeting to what is produced through the enacted agencies of teachers-coach-space-discourses in a PLC meeting. This perspective generates new questions. For example, what possibilities emerge when the focus is on the intra-activity of affective encounters? What could happen if the PLC could be reconfigured to highlight these possibilities?

Through the analysis of the Teri-office-Leslee assemblage, I demonstrated how the concept of enacted agency can be applied and intra-actions among humans-objects-space-discourse-etc. can be made visible, viewing these encounters as mutually productive. This

approach considers the material-discursive-affective entanglement to investigate what entities are working together to produce particular outcomes. Additionally, more elements may be brought into the assemblage to increase the complexity and deepen the understanding of the encounter.

While many researchers have acknowledged that literacy coaching is contextually situated, few have explored how space (for exception see Hunt, 2013), time, and objects work together to produce understandings, expectations, and priorities of literacy coaching. This study deepens and proliferates the understanding of how objects, space, and time are active agents with people producing specific discourses and perspectives on literacy coaching roles, positioning, and enactments.

How does the historical/political context of the school shape the perceived priorities and expectations of the coach?

The data assemblages made visible ways that documents, discourses, and past policies work together to reinforce a causal and linear view of teacher learning. The assemblages also highlight how documents, like the Solution Tree's PLC questions, went unchallenged and were viewed as politically neutral. Through the concept of posthuman entanglement, the political and historical context of Magnolia Springs is viewed as intra-active, shaping how the role of literacy coach is conceptualized and how expectations are produced. In this study, policy implementation, viewed through the entanglement of material-discursive assemblages, demonstrated a rich web of intra-action among the principal, policy documents, teachers, literacy coach, among other entities such as time and space.

The legacies of past events and policies (Title I funding, the paradigmatic shift from reading specialist to literacy coach, district restructuring and hiring practices) are made visible during coaching encounters (PLCs, dominant discourses on teacher learning and student

achievement). For example, the principal's widely circulated Solution Tree PLC document combined with various people, objects, and discourses reproduced and reinforced assumptions of teacher learning and student achievement as linear. Through the PLC document-principal-coach assemblage, among others, a linear view of teacher learning was made visible, highlighting the expectation that the literacy coach will be the catalyst for teacher learning, "trickling down" and ultimately affecting student achievement.

These assumptions are entangled with the paradigm shift of moving from a reading specialist model (working with children) to a coaching model (working with teachers). The coaching model, more so than the specialist model, focuses on and assumes reform for ineffective teachers (Finkelstein, 2019). The historical and political origins entangle with the everyday practices of the coach, teachers, and principals at Magnolia Springs, generating complicated and nuanced relations, often documented as teacher resistance in the literature (Di Domenico, et.al., 2018; Hunt, 2016; Jones & Rainville, 2014; Wilder, 2014). Understanding the ways in which past policies and events are enmeshed within the present offers some insight into the messages that are communicated to teachers through literacy coaching-related practices.

The intersection of various policies, initiatives, and other factors simultaneously adopted make it difficult for scholars to pinpoint how coaching directly influences teacher practice (Kruse & Zimmerman, 2012). However, the intersection of the shifting data assemblages helps make visible ways that the combination of documents, discourses, and past policies worked together to reinforce a causal view or chain of teacher learning. The assemblages also highlight how documents, like the Solution Tree's PLC questions, went unchallenged and were viewed as politically neutral.

Through the concept of entanglement, the PLC document-coach-teachers-curriculum standards assemblage makes visible how the standards are neither impartial nor apolitical. The state standards are viewed as entangled in the political and cultural perspectives of the authors and the work of the literacy coach cannot be teased out from the material-discursive intra-actions with these documents. Viewing the curriculum standards as a system of thoughts and values (Sonu and Snaza, 2015) brings critical awareness to the authors' political and cultural positions as well as their underlying assumptions about knowledge production.

Examining various assemblages of documents, spaces, and humans through the concept of entanglement allowed for new understandings of how these documents produce particular discourses, reinforcing what counts as knowledge and for whom it counts. Documents like the PLC document from Solution Tree and state curriculum standards were accepted as neutral and apolitical by the teachers at Magnolia Springs Elementary. Discourses related to the standards reinforced the notion that you “learn the standards” and then you “know them”, whereby not needing the assistance of a PLC for lesson planning. By viewing curriculum standards and other policy documents as entangled (and intra-active) within the political and historical dimensions of the school, educators can more easily recognize what these documents are doing in specific contexts and identify assumptions that these policies and texts produce (and reproduce).

These findings support and extend other research on literacy coaching that has linked the political and historical origins of literacy coaching to the complex social and relational nature of the work (Dole, 2004; Deussen, et al., 2007; Hathaway, et al., 2016; Hunt, 2013; Kruse & Zimmerman, 2012). I extended this line of research by applying posthuman concepts of entanglement, intra-action, and agency to read the various data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) which provides a framework to view how multiple dimensions (material-discursive-affective)

work together to form complex and changing conceptualizations and expectations of coaches in a specific context.

How are education policies enacted through the intra-actions of the literacy coach with material objects, environments, teachers, and administrators?

My analyses have demonstrated how education policies at Magnolia Springs Elementary are enacted through various data assemblages. As mentioned before, the assemblage of PLC document-principal-coach made visible a discourse that reinforced assumptions about teaching and learning. The data assemblages also helped to deepen understandings and make visible assumptions related to literacy coaches' responsibilities, roles, and identity.

In much of the literature related to literacy coaching, coaches are defined by the roles they are assigned and the duties they perform (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Kruse and Zimmerman, 2012; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean, 2010). Literacy coaches are often described as searching for a clear identity among the myriad of expectations from teachers and administrators (Steven, 2011). Identity is theorized as something that can be directly defined, constructed, and performed and that if a coach had a clear identity (i.e. meet a specific set of expectations) the work would be less frustrating and more effective (Stevens, 2011).

In a similar way, the principal, Mr. Weber, referred me to the literacy coaches' job description (See Appendix C) as a way to understand "who the literacy coach is." The assemblage of principal-coach-job description highlighted the underlying assumptions and understandings related to a humanist fixed identity. The data assemblages, like the principal-coach-job description, made visible how the coach's job description document worked with other elements to position the teachers and coaches as an oppositional binary of expert/novice. The

descriptions of the coach's roles, beliefs and values were characterized as fixed and permanent attributes, reinforcing a humanist view of identity.

Just as the data assemblages made visible ways that traditional humanist views of agency and teacher learning were generated, there were also moments when intra-actions involving the literacy coach pushed against traditional understandings of identity. For example, I worked to understand the literacy coaches as a subjects-in-process “go[ing] beyond the boundaries of atomistic individual selves” (Murriss, 2016, p. 7). I explored the data assemblages through posthuman subjectivity to better understand how Teri could be decentered as an individual and viewed as one part of an entangled production.

Teri demonstrated how she constituted complex assemblages of the material, discursive, and affective elements that challenged fixed attributes listed on the state's job description. The concept of a *coach-in-process* allows for nuanced and intricate ways of understanding how literacy coaches are made, unmade, and remade within the shifting context. Specifically, the assemblages highlight how past memories and experiences (e.g. classroom teacher) are active intensities that entangle and shape particular iterations of literacy coaching enactments and subjectivities.

Teri also demonstrates how she, herself, constitutes a complex assemblage of the material (body, classroom), discursive (questioning whether she is making a difference as a coach), and affective elements (memories, emotions). The job description's fixed attribute of *belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges* was problematized and reconfigured as a belief-in-process, shifting and becoming with other thoughts, memories, objects, spaces, and humans. Concepts of both a coach-in-process and belief-in-process allows

for a reimagining of what literacy coaching might produce along with (not apart from) documents like the state's job description.

Limitations

During each part of this research process, I attempted to decenter the human individual in order to reject “a Cartesian dualism, subject/object, that implies the existence of an object separate from and independent of the collecting subject” (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014, p. 716). I employed methods and frameworks that have stretched my thinking beyond the binary of subject/object which have produced a multiplicity of questions and possibilities from theorizing various data assemblages. Though this study has produced generative entryways into the assemblage of material-discursive-affective dimensions of literacy coaching, it has also demonstrated how certain discourses in education are deeply ingrained in schools and me.

As St. Pierre (2000) so eloquently wrote, Humanism is everywhere, overwhelming in its totality; and, since it is so ‘natural,’ it is difficult to watch it work” (p. 478). Although I have intentionally sought to decenter the individual, because humanism is so ubiquitous, it was often very challenging to stretch my thinking outside of it. For example, walking offered an embodied method in which to imagine myself as part of an entangled production of the material, discursive, and affective dimensions of the school, neighborhood, etc. However, my field notes most often reflect a human-centric perspective. Theorizing the data assemblages through a posthuman perspective requires questioning the ontological foundations and assumptions of every part of the assemblage in order to better understand how knowledge is constructed and certain perspectives are reproduced.

This study offers entryways into the endless number of literacy coaching assemblages that can be explored to better understand the entanglement of the material, discursive, and

affective elements within a school setting. It is limited to the extent in which I was able to think and theorize possibilities and allow for a more-than-human orientation and ontology.

Significance

This study deepens and proliferates the understanding of how objects, space, and time are active agents with people producing specific discourses and perspectives on literacy coaching roles, positioning, and enactments. While many researchers have acknowledged that literacy coaching is contextually situated, few have explored how space (for exception see Hunt, 2013), time, and objects work together to produce understandings, expectations, and priorities of literacy coaching. These findings support and extend other research on literacy coaching that have 1) linked the political and historical origins of literacy coaching to the complex social and relational nature of the work (Dole, 2004; Deussen, et al., 2007; Hathaway, et al., 2016; Hunt, 2013; Kruse & Zimmerman, 2012), 2) explored how coaching intersects with multiple environmental and relational factors (Ferguson, 2014, Hunt, 2016; Killion, 2017), and 3) made visible ways in which coaches roles are entangled in the political and historical contexts (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Hunt, 2016; Jones & Rainville, 2008, 2014).

I extended these lines of research by applying posthuman concepts of entanglement, intra-action, and agency to read the various data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) which provides a framework to view how multiple dimensions (material-discursive-affective) work together to form complex and changing conceptualizations and expectations of coaches in a specific context. The theoretical framework and methodology informed by posthuman theories provided a perspective that views networks of living and nonliving as interconnected, as well as, considers space, time, and affect as vital, dynamic components of a research setting. This study extends the

field by examining the many aspects (social, linguistic, material, affective, etc.) that work together to produce knowledge in a literacy coaching context.

This study responded to the call for more critical frameworks to theorize the how countless variables intersect and interact in a literacy coaching context (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Ferguson, 2014, Hunt, 2016; Killion, 2017; Swift & Kelly, 2010). Working with various data assemblages and key posthuman concepts, I began to conceptualize the work of the literacy coach as an adaptive, dynamic organism within a vast social, cultural, political, and physical ecosystem. I developed the term *coaching ecology* as a result of “plugging in” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) the posthuman concepts of entanglement, intra-action, agency, and subjectivity into the data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) from my study of literacy coaching. Viewing coaching as an adaptive, dynamic organism and the literacy coach as a *coach-in-process* allows for a different orientation and entryway into the conversation of literacy and instructional coaching in two important ways.

Implications for a *Coaching Ecology*

First, an ecological perspective of literacy coaching assumes a different ontological starting point, one that attempts, at every opportunity, to decenter the human individual and to view relations as entangled and mutually productive. For researchers, this perspective could mean designing studies that recognize the intra-action between objects-space-time-humans. Human participants can be viewed as part of an ecology of material-affective-discursive dimensions.

Secondly, a coaching ecology makes visible widely accepted and often unexamined assumptions about teacher learning, knowledge production, and student achievement. Understanding coaching as adaptive, evolving, complex encounters reconceptualizes traditional

roles of coach as expert Moreover, a coaching ecology recognizes the political and historical entanglements that educational policies and practices reproduce and reinforce in seemingly benign ways.

During the study, unexpected questions came up surrounding curriculum standards, PLCs, teacher resistance, and assumptions related to teacher learning and student achievement. For example, what possibilities emerge when the focus is on the intra-activity of PLC encounters? What could happen if the PLC could be reconfigured to highlight these possibilities? What does this mean for teacher agency and resistance? These questions are possible openings to explore coaching practices in school settings in ways that embrace a posthuman understanding of entanglement, intra-action, agency, and subjectivity.

Future Research

Because of the documented complexities and challenges of literacy coaching, further research needs to consider posthumanist and postqualitative approaches that aim to decenter the human individual as the source of all knowledge and explore how material, affective, and discursive dimensions constitute one another. Concepts like a *coaching ecology* and *coach-in-process* have the potential to open up new ways of conceptualizing literacy coaching and literacy coaches as entangled and evolving with the people-spaces-objects in which they work.

Moreover, these concepts, and posthumanism more broadly offers an orientation to research that critically examines how power operates through language, materiality, and affective intensities. Through this critical approach, policy documents, curriculum standards, spaces, and materials can be viewed as political and agentic- helping to draw the attention and critical thinking of teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders to examine how these seemingly innocent documents and policies reproduce and reinforce systems of oppression.

Final Thoughts

In this study of a K-2 school setting in the MidSouthern United States, I examined a variety of data assemblages (Nordstrom, 2015) generated from walking (Springgay & Truman, 2016) and object-interviews (Nordstrom, 2013). Thinking with these data assemblages and key concepts from posthumanism make more visible traditional humanist understandings of teaching and learning while simultaneously allowing for novel ways of conceptualizing literacy coaching subjectivity, enacted agency, and intra-actions with space-time-objects.

It was my aim to highlight how objects, space, time, people, discourses, policies, etc. produce particular expectations, priorities, and perimeters for literacy coaching enactments. The findings from this study demonstrate how expectations are created through the entanglement of people, objects, discourses, space, time, etc. Moreover, the findings from this study illuminate ways that literacy coaching defy reductive categories of roles, duties, and models to illustrate new possibilities and conceptualizations of coaching that occur in specific contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Interview Protocols

Interview Protocols
“Iterations of Literacy Coaching: A Walking Inquiry”
Leslee Tarbett (Principal Investigator) & Susan Nordstrom (Faculty Advisor)
2019

Thank you for participating in a study about how a school environment can produce a particular variation of literacy coaching through policies, practices, spaces, materials, and interactions with people. If possible before our first interview, please look over this guide to help familiarize yourself with the focus of our conversation. Apart from these guidelines, I am happy to discuss anything that you would like to share about literacy coaching.

In order to understand how objects help create a specific iteration of literacy coaching in this context, our conversation will center on objects that you associate with your experience of and with literacy coaching. An “object” could be communications (emails, memos, texts, notes, social media), curriculum materials (i.e. teacher manual, standards, pacing guides, books) or other materials (phone, photographs, videos, office supplies, food, clothing, etc.). Additionally, “object” could also be a space or a place.

I would very much like to audio-record the interview and to photograph the objects we discuss. I will remove any identifying information from documents/photos of objects. Please feel free to jot notes or questions you have about the interview guide below.

- For each object, please tell me
 - about the object (e.g. What is it? Where did you get it? Where do you keep it?)
 - why did you choose this object?
 - what does this object make you think about and/or feel?
 - if this object could talk, what do you think it would say?
 - how this object works with other things/people?
- How does this object (these objects) help you understand literacy/literacy coaching?

Appendix B: IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

May 10, 2019

PI Name: Leslee Tarbett
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Susan Nordstrom
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Iterations of Literacy Coaching: A Walking Inquiry
IRB ID : #PRO-FY2019-618
Exempt Approval: May 9, 2019

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at citiprogram.org every 2 years

For any additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.

Appendix C – Solution Tree’s Guiding Questions for Leaders and Teams

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Figure 3.4: Guiding Questions for Leaders and Teams

Critical question one: What do we want students to know and be able to do?	Critical question two: How will we know if they have learned it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What priority standard is this planning or assessment focused on? • Are we truly planning from essential skills and concepts? • Where does this standard fit in the overall plan for the year or unit? • Let’s review the unpacked standard. What knowledge and skills are packed into the overall standard? Do we understand the standard? • Are we focused on one specific learning target or several today? • Have we discussed the prerequisite skills students need to have mastered? Are we planning to scaffold the learning? • Do we know what to expect for grade-level proficiency? Is it rigorous enough? • How do we know what level of rigor this represents? • How are we planning instruction to align with the level of rigor in the standard? • Do we need to look at the curriculum resources to find good instructional strategies or suggestions? • Are we going too slow with the instructional plan and not getting to the rigorous skills quick enough or leaving them out? • How will we share the learning expectations and goals with students? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s review the assessment plan. Did everyone assess using the same formative assessments? Summative assessments? • Did we do a preassessment? Why or why not? • Do we have grade-level proficiency clearly aligned with the rigor of the standard? Are we setting goals too low? Too high? • Did we involve students in understanding why they are being assessed this way and what is expected in the rubric and scoring guide? • Did we plan several formative checks for understanding? Why or why not? • Do our assessment questions align with the level of rigor in the unpacked standard? • What have we learned from previous formative assessments? • Did we try to assess too much? Too little? • Are our assessment data giving us information that really tells us what the students can or cannot do? • Did we really focus on essential skills and concepts? • What are we seeing as root causes for student deficits in the categories close to proficient and far from proficient? • Can you break the root causes down more? What skills are really missing? • Do we need to redo this assessment with more time? Different questions? More instruction? • Do all students need to be reassessed? Why or why not? Who does or does not? • Are we using our curriculum and state assessment resources? Exit tickets? Suggested questions? • Are we using practice assessments and questions from the state assessments? As a team?

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Critical question three: What will we do when students have not learned?	Critical question four: What will we do to extend learning when students have already learned it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific skills and concepts have we identified students are missing in each performance group? • What is an effective strategy that we could use to teach or support one of these missing skills? • How will we involve the students in owning this learning? • How will we share the data, and what do we need to do differently with students? • What actions do we need to take as a team? • How can we group students for core instructional time to support learning of skills and concepts by those who need it? • What can I find to help you do this work? • Do we need to look at resources and curriculum for different ways to teach and support this skill? • Are our lessons engaging enough for students? Are they just bored? • What can we do differently? Not just a redo? • Are we specifically discussing adult actions and instructional strategies versus things like activities, worksheets, and so on? • How quickly can we reassess? • How will students self-report on this learning? • What does the team need to do now (after a reassessment)? • How can we move on with many students but still expect other students to continue to develop these essential skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we know if students have already learned the content and skills we are about to teach? • Have we considered informal and formal ways to preassess students to gain this knowledge before instruction begins? • Do we have a common understanding of what proficiency looks like so we can accurately determine who needs extension? • Do we regularly include extension opportunities in instruction and assessment? • Do we need to learn more together about the best ways to extend learning for students in each subject? • How can we group students for core instructional time to extend learning for students who need it? • How can we use intervention time to address extension opportunities for students? • Are we specifically discussing adult actions and instructional strategies versus things like activities, worksheets, and so on?

Appendix D- Literacy Coach Job Description

██████████ Department of Education
Office of Curriculum and Instruction
Literacy Coach Criteria

General Responsibilities

Literacy coaches will work with the ██████████ Department of Education to implement the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act* and provide appropriate services to schools so that there can be a cohesive, sustained, intensive and classroom-focused approach that is rigorous, engaging, and relevant for students. Literacy coaches will provide a non-threatening, open, professional, and collaborative work relationship with district-level school personnel, school-based literacy coaches, principals, and teachers. They will be required to effectively identify the needs of assigned schools in order to prioritize, schedule, organize, and provide technical assistance so that students in assigned schools achieve grade level reading by the end of 3rd grade.

Responsibilities

School Level

- Provide daily technical support (at least 85% of the school week) to school-based coaches or lead teachers in their capacity to support instruction of the 5 components of reading, implement curriculum, administer assessments, analyze data, and utilize technology.
- Model effective coaching and conferencing techniques.
- Assist administrators, school-based literacy coaches, and teachers in addressing grade specific curriculum by developing an effective school-wide literacy plan and providing strategies for monitoring the plan's implementation.
- Design and conduct professional development to meet the varied needs of school-based literacy coaches and teachers.
- Conference with individual coaches or lead teachers to ensure that teachers assigned to them have specific goals and plans for improving practice.
- Provide clear, practical, timely, and candid written and oral feedback to school-based coaches about their coaching practices and to teachers about their instruction.
- Meet regularly with principals, school-based coaches, and teachers to review data and make recommendations for adjustments in instructional practices.
- Maintain an organized system for documenting coaching services.

District and Regional Level

- Collaborate with other literacy coaches to support the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act*.
- Assist principals, school-based literacy coaches, and lead teachers in providing regular and user-friendly data reports to their respective districts and other stakeholders.
- Provide on-going training and support for school-based educators within and across regions.
- Provide guidance for sharing data with a variety of audiences.

State Level

- Communicate a consistent message as established by the ██████████ Department of Education in support of the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act*.
- Participate in on-going training, support, and networking to promote grade-level reading.
- Maintain and promptly submit reports on progress of teaching and learning specific to literacy in K-3 schools assigned.
- Provide training to educators across the state.

Appendix D- Literacy Coach Job Description

Required Qualifications

The applicants must hold the following credentials:

- Master's Degree in Education with 3 years documented successful experience teaching reading -OR- Bachelor's Degree with 5 years documented successful experience teaching reading with a minimum of 3 years of literacy experience at the State, District, or School Level,
- Valid Mississippi Educator Professional License,
- Successful experience facilitating adult learning and delivering professional development specific to literacy instruction (e.g., professional development feedback / surveys, letters from participants, etc.),
- Experience mentoring, coaching, and providing feedback about instruction to classroom teachers,
- Experience leading others in a collaborative process,
- Experience analyzing and using student achievement data for instructional purposes, and
- Ability to travel on a daily basis.

Desired Qualifications

The following are preferred credentials, but not required of the applicant:

- Master's Degree in reading/literacy or related field,
- Minimum of 3 years documented successful teaching experience in teaching PreK-3 reading (e.g., school assessment data, principal reviews, classroom assessment data, etc.), and/or
- Successful experience designing professional development specific to literacy instruction.

Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes

- **Knowledge: A thorough understanding of the following is vital:**
 - Reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction,
 - Systematic, explicit instructional process,
 - Instructional coaching approaches and strategies for teaching adult learners,
 - Scientific reading research and its application to effective classroom instruction, structure, and practices, as well as intervention,
 - **Mississippi** *College- and Career-Readiness Standards for English Language Arts*,
 - Multi-Tiered System of Supports model, and
 - Data analysis and application.
- **Skills: Acquisition of the following expertise is crucial:**
 - Systematic, explicit, instructional delivery,
 - Ability to effectively prioritize, schedule, manage, and organize multiple daily tasks to achieve goals,
 - Ability to administer and interpret reading assessments and use data to determine professional development needs, and recommend changes to improve school-wide and/or classroom instructional practices,
 - Ability to rapidly acquire and apply new skills and information,
 - Ability to provide effective instructional feedback,
 - Ability to identify problems and develop appropriate solutions, and
 - Use effective written and oral communication skills, including the ability to engage in difficult and candid conversations with a variety of stakeholders.

Appendix D- Literacy Coach Job Description

- **Attributes: The following personal qualities are essential:**
 - Sense of urgency for literacy achievement,
 - Motivating others to perform at high standards,
 - High degree of professionalism to ensure and protect the confidentiality of educators and students,
 - Strong work ethic, self-directed and reliable, and the ability to work both independently and collaboratively,
 - High quality interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to and interact with adults exhibiting a range of abilities and dispositions,
 - Persistent in spite of obstacles,
 - Ability to orchestrate change,
 - Valuing lifelong learning,
 - Belief that a coach can make a difference, despite the nature of the challenges, and
 - Desire to grow professionally.