

5-14-2010

# The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches as Perceived by School Administrators, Classroom Teachers, and Literacy Coaches

Celeste C. Dugan  
*University of New Orleans*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.uno.edu/td>

---

## Recommended Citation

Dugan, Celeste C., "The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches as Perceived by School Administrators, Classroom Teachers, and Literacy Coaches" (2010). *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*. 1134.  
<http://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/1134>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. The author is solely responsible for ensuring compliance with copyright. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uno.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uno.edu).

The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches as Perceived by  
School Administrators, Classroom Teachers, and Literacy Coaches

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Literacy and Language

by

Celeste Corbin Hester Dugan

B.S. Nicholls State University, 1970  
M.Ed. Nicholls State University, 1985

May 2010

copyright 2010, Celeste Corbin Dugan

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my family, dissertation committee, friends, and co-workers for their continuous support in my efforts to attain a doctoral degree.

Special thanks to my three daughters and son-in-law, Laurie and Toby Prosperie, and Natalie and Jane Hester for encouraging me every step of the way.

To my granddaughters, Alexis and Ashlie, I promise to make up for all of the weekends I was too busy to play.

To my sisters and brother and their families, thanks for your support and concern, especially Lynn who helped me in more ways than she will ever know.

To Dr. Richard Speaker, Dr. April Bedford-Whatley, Dr. Claire Thorenson, and Dr. John Barnitz, a special thank you for the years of support and help.

And to my friends and coworkers, thank you for your friendship and encouragement.

# Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Chapter 1.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Teacher Quality and Student Achievement.....	3
The Role of the Literacy Coach.....	5
Effectiveness of Professional Development.....	6
Standards and Qualifications of the Literacy Coach.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	12
Research Questions.....	13
Definitions of Terms.....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Overview of Methodology.....	18
Assumptions.....	20
Delimitations.....	20
Overview of Chapter 2 through Chapter 5.....	20
Chapter 2.....	22
Literature Review.....	22
Impact of Effective Professional Development.....	22
Impact of Literacy Coaching.....	26
Conceptual Framework.....	37
Chapter 3.....	41
Methodology.....	41
Procedures.....	41
Participants.....	42
Dropouts, Exclusions, or Missing Data.....	42
Instruments.....	44
Methods Used to Develop Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches and Literacy Coach Effectiveness Scale.....	44

Chapter 4 .....	59
Results.....	59
Characteristics of the Sample.....	59
Literacy Coach Effectiveness Scale.....	63
Assigning Points to Questions According to Importance.....	68
Findings on the Properties of the Total Perceived Effectiveness Score .....	70
Measurement Validity.....	75
Measurement Reliability.....	75
Research Question 1 .....	76
Research Question 2 .....	79
Research Question 2 .....	79
Bonferroni Post Hoc Test.....	85
Summary of Findings.....	87
Chapter 5 .....	90
Discussion.....	90
Implications for Theory and Practice.....	95
Recommendations for Future Research .....	95
Limitations .....	98
Summary of Findings and Conclusions .....	98
References.....	101
Appendix	
A. Literacy Coaching Survey Pilot Study.....	107
B. Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of the Literacy Coach.....	112
C. UNO IRB Letter and Human Subjects Approval Form.....	121
D. Introductory Letter for Participants.....	122
Vita.....	124

## List of Tables

Table 1. Indicators of Literacy Coaches Perceived Effectiveness.....	46
Table 2. Questionnaire Provided to Panel of Raters.....	55
Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample According to Type of Position.....	61
Table 4. Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale: Rating of the Importance of Questionnaire Items on Effectiveness by Four Raters.....	65
Table 5. Missing Data Needed for Perceived Effectiveness Scores (N=487).....	72
Table 6. Differences in Total Perceived Effectiveness Scores for Literacy Coaches According to Educational Role in 487 Participants.....	78
Table 7. Effect Size of Demographic and Professional Factors on the Perceived Effectiveness Score.....	82
Table 8. Post Hoc (Bonferroni method) Analysis of the Effect of Position Type on Literacy Coach Total Perceived Effectiveness Ratings.....	86

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.....	39
Figure 2. Average Rating of panel on Literacy Coach Perception of Effectiveness Scale.....	68
Figure 3. Distribution of Total Perceived Effectiveness Scores in 487 Participants.....	74
Figure 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Perceived Effectiveness Scores for Three Groups of Participants.....	77



## **Abstract**

### ***The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches as Perceived by School Administrators, Classroom Teachers, and Literacy Coaches***

School districts are hiring literacy coaches to provide professional development and follow-up support for teachers as a means to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement in reading. A paucity of research exists reflecting a clear analysis of the factors which can be used to determine the effectiveness of a coach. According to a survey conducted by Roller (2006), few districts follow standards developed by the International Reading Association (2003) related to qualifications and experience. This lack of consistency in the training required could influence the effectiveness of the coach.

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of coaches as perceived by administrators, teachers, and the coaches themselves, and to understand the factors that contributed to this effectiveness. In this study, coaches, teachers, and school administrators completed a survey entitled Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of the Literacy Coach (SPELC) to determine how the effectiveness of the coach was perceived by all three groups. Factors predicting the self-rated effectiveness of the coaches were determined. The coaches were also surveyed to collect information on their background and the extent of training they received in the area of literacy coaching to examine the influence these factors had on their perceptions of effectiveness.

The sample of participants (n=487) consisted of 54 administrators, 242 teachers, and 191 coaches. The Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale (LCES) was developed to measure perceptions of effectiveness using scores derived from 22 items. The SPELC was used to collect data from the participants to compare the effectiveness ratings of literacy coaches. Teachers

rated the effectiveness of coaches significantly lower (score of 42) than administrators (score of 50.6). Literacy coaches' perception of their effectiveness was similar to that of the administrators (score of 52.2)

The self-reported effectiveness of coaches was used to determine the factors that predicted high perceptions of effectiveness. The two factors of overriding importance were years of coaching experience and university-level training in topics related to literacy coaching. Overall, the findings show the importance of advanced education in reading education in determining the perception of effectiveness of a literacy coach.

Key Terms: Literacy Coach, Reading Coach

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

A literacy coach offers continuous support to teachers as they attempt to develop and perfect new teaching strategies in the classroom. In increasing numbers, literacy coaches are being hired by school districts across the nation as one solution to the problem of providing professional development and follow-up support for teachers. Much controversy exists concerning the training that these coaches should receive, how effective they are perceived to be when examined in a school setting, and how to measure their effectiveness. There is a lack of consistency in the amount and type of training required by school systems and in factors used as a basis for examining their effectiveness. Few districts appear to follow the IRA's Standards and Guidelines (2004) related to the qualifications and experience needed for hiring. Even though literacy coaching has been used by districts for several years, there is little published research which clearly supports the concept. A small number of studies show that literacy coaching has little or no effect on improving teacher practices or improving student achievement.

Literacy coaches evolved from the work of mentors and peer coaches. Mentoring and peer coaching have become increasingly popular in schools and districts as a means of delivering high quality professional development to teachers. Joyce and Showers (1980) pioneered work in the study of mentoring and peer coaching by showing that coaching was an integral part of effective professional development. Their vision was to train teachers to work in pairs, coaching each other as they worked towards proficiency in new methods. The authors described mentoring as a strategy to assist teachers in learning new curriculum. A coaching relationship between teachers is more likely to encourage teachers to engage in practice and become proficient with new

methodology. They recommended that teachers have support when adding new teaching strategies to the methods they currently used.

Like literacy coaching, mentoring is based on the concept of building on the strengths of the teacher by providing a model for teaching. Mentors can also assist in planning for the teacher's attempts at incorporating new methodology into classroom lessons. This type of assistance can accelerate a teacher's thinking and learning (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Boreen, 2000; Trubowitz, 2004).

A literacy coach is a specific type of mentor. The terminology used to define the position of the literacy coach is not specific. A literacy coach may be described in the literature as an instructional coach, content coach, cognitive coach, peer coach, change coach, mentor, lead teacher, etc. In the area of reading and literacy, the terms most often used are reading specialist, reading coach, or literacy coach. In this study, the term "literacy coach" will be used for clarity.

A literacy coach is a teacher who is employed by a district to help teachers strengthen their teaching ability to improve student achievement (Walpole & McKenna, 2004). The literacy coach can provide job embedded professional development. The literacy coach is usually assigned to one or two schools, either full-time or part-time, and works daily with teachers in and out of their classrooms by providing job-embedded professional development. The coach attempts to increase a teacher's knowledge of effective teaching strategies by such things as conducting model lessons, observing lessons, organizing study groups, encouraging reflection on teaching experience, and promoting high-quality professional development. The coach can support teachers as they increase their knowledge and attempt to use new strategies in the classroom.

Joyce and Showers (2002) reported that one variable that influenced student achievement was the knowledge and expertise of the teacher (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Swartz, 2001). By providing a literacy coach in the classroom, educational systems are attempting to increase teacher performance and student achievement, sometimes with little thought as to how the qualifications and the extent of training these coaches receive can relate to effectiveness and performance in the school setting. Literacy coaching may be one method of improving the classroom effectiveness of teachers which may influence student achievement.

To foster an increase in teacher performance, schools and school districts have traditionally provided professional development opportunities for teachers. Typical models of professional development used in schools often do not provide the ongoing support needed to improve or change classroom instruction (Lieberman, 1995; NSDC, 2001). Many educational systems believe that by providing individualized assistance and on-going support from a literacy coach in the classroom, teacher quality and by extension, student achievement will improve. What teachers know and do in the classroom influences what the student learns.

### ***Teacher Quality and Student Achievement***

Mounting research evidence indicates that the quality of the teacher has the most influence on variance of student achievement test scores (Guskey, 2002; Lyons, 2002). In an attempt to address teacher quality, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) mandated that teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. This mandate, in reality, was a challenge for school districts to meet due to the unavailability of highly qualified teachers. The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2004) noted that NCLB's requirements for highly qualified teachers were unable to be fulfilled as expected. Districts were

scrambling to find strategies to put in place which would enhance teaching and learning to meet the demands of the law and at the same time, improve the quality of teaching. As reported by Garmse, Bloom, Kemple, and Jacob (2008), districts qualifying for Reading First funding were required to hire full-time literacy coaches for each school as an attempt to meet the mandates of the law. According to “What Matters Most: Teaching for American’s Future” (1996):

We have finally learned in hindsight what should have been clear from the start:

Most schools and teachers cannot produce the kind of learning demanded by the new reforms – not because they do not want to, but because they do not know how, and the systems in which they work do not support them in doing so. (p. 5).

There are several interesting school reform models currently implementing the use of a literacy coach to assist with teacher training. One such model is the Literacy Collaborative school reform model which originated at the Ohio State University and Leslie University and was designed to increase the literacy skills of elementary students by focusing on extensive professional development for teachers. In this model, ten essential characteristics were developed including the use of research-based approaches in reading, writing, language, and word study, time protected for teaching and learning, reading and writing, the use of a trained literacy coordinator (literacy coach) at each school, a school-based literacy team, ongoing training and coaching for teachers, adequate materials and supplies, the use of Reading Recovery® for struggling first grade readers, and parental involvement. Several independent studies researching the Literacy Collaborative model were conducted and show promising results of the literacy coach (Biancarosa, 2008; Hough, 2009).

## ***The Role of the Literacy Coach***

The International Reading Association (2004) reported rapid growth in the number of literacy coaches in schools in the United States. These coaches served as leaders in a school's overall plan for school improvement by developing and implementing a long-term staff development plan designed for a specific school. According to IRA (2003), the role of the reading specialist in a school was traditionally to work with the most struggling readers in an attempt to improve their reading ability. This role has expanded to include time to work with teachers as well.

By working with school leaders and teachers, literacy coaches provide on-site assistance on a daily basis. They plan professional development sessions to address the needs of their schools and provide follow-up consultations to assist teachers in incorporating new learning into their lessons. This is accomplished through modeled lessons for specific teachers conducted by the literacy coach (Toll, 2005). After the teacher has observed the coach using the new methods in the classroom, the coach can provide different levels of support. The coach may need to continue to model parts of the lesson or have the teacher assist during the lesson. When the teacher has become confident in the technique or strategy being used, the coach can observe the teacher conducting the lesson and provide reflective feedback to the teacher. By providing this type of high quality professional development follow-up, coaches assist in improving instruction that extends to reforms in state and national standards while acting as mentors to new and experienced teachers. Well-respected researchers in the field of literacy coaching report that perhaps coaches can help improve student achievement (Bean, Beclastro, Hathaway, Risko, Rosemary, and Roskos, 2008; Joyce and Showers, 2002; Neufeld and Roper, 2006).

## ***Effectiveness of Professional Development***

Since one of the major responsibilities of the literacy coach is to provide professional development for teachers, it is important to review the findings related to the role that professional development plays in school improvement and teacher effectiveness. In one study, “The CIERA School Change Framework: An Evidence-based Approach to Professional Development and School Reading Improvement”, Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2005) reported six key elements related to high-performing, high-poverty schools: improved student learning, strong building leadership, strong staff collaboration, ongoing professional development, sharing of student assessment data, and parental involvement. One finding of particular interest in the CIERA School Change Framework was that coaching (positively related) accounted for 11% of the between-teacher variance as reflected in students’ scores. The authors also found that when the amount of coaching in classrooms increased, students’ mean writing scores increased. Schools with more growth also had a teacher who was respected by colleagues and helped the other teachers focus during weekly staff meetings. In most instances, this teacher leader was the literacy coach.

Several studies demonstrated the importance of supporting teachers. Darling-Hammond (1996) discussed two important features that must be addressed to increase teacher quality: increasing teachers’ knowledge to meet the demands they face and redesigning schools to support high-quality teaching and learning. The report from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) also recommended high quality professional development, rewards for teachers who improved their practice, planning time to consult together or to learn new teaching strategies and methods, and mentoring programs for new teachers to improve teacher quality. The effectiveness of high quality professional development



as related to school improvement has been well documented in many studies (American Educational Research Association, 2005; Guskey, 1989; National Staff Development Council, 2001). Due to statewide standardized tests in nearly every state, more funds are being dedicated for professional development. The education of teachers does not stop once they earn a teaching certificate, but continues on as they enhance their methodology to address the needs of all learners (Blase and Blase, 1999; Kelleher, 2003).

In the past, opportunities for teacher training provided little follow-up for participants (AERA, 2005; Joyce and Showers, 2002). On staff development days, teachers were traditionally offered little or no choice of topics. Districts assumed that to some extent, the teachers would implement any new methods presented. Workshops or in-service trainings were usually held during summer break, after school, or on a few staff development days during the school year. These meetings were sometimes conducted by outside consultants who came in for a short time and sometimes offered little follow-up consultation.

The professional development of today needs to be more than a hit and miss one-shot stab at introducing teachers to the latest fad (Hesketh, 1997). It should be on-going and embedded in the daily activities of the teacher and include well planned follow-up (Guskey, 1989; Joyce and Showers, 1996; Lyons and Pinnell, 2001). Instead of a model that lacks follow-up and does not address specific needs of a teacher or school, some research studies prove that site-based professional development related to teachers' efforts to try new teaching methods with their students is effective (Blase and Blase, 1999; Taylor, 2002).

The literacy coach can serve as a professional in the school to organize and plan opportunities for teachers to learn new and effective methodology. In order to make knowledgeable decisions, teachers must be provided with a supportive network which

encourages continuous learning. Neufeld and Roper (2003) support the use of a literacy coach and state that "...while not yet proven to increase student achievement, coaching does increase the instructional capacity of schools and teachers, a known prerequisite for increasing learning" (p. v) and call for more extensive research on the effectiveness of the literacy coach. They examined the effectiveness of literacy coaches in two San Diego middle schools. Through interviews with teachers, coaches, and administrators, they found that the implementation of the coaching plan worked best when teachers understood that a part of their job was to improve their own practices and that they should share their knowledge to assist other professionals in improving their teaching ability.

### ***Standards and Qualifications of the Literacy Coach***

The International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) are addressing the issue of standards for literacy coaches while at the same time examining how training relates to qualifications. Due to inconsistencies of the qualifications and responsibilities of literacy coaches, IRA (2003) revised the "Standards for Reading Professionals – A Reference for the Preparation of Educators in the United States." This revision included changes in the standards for the paraprofessional, classroom teacher, reading specialist, reading teacher educator, and school administrator.

IRA developed minimum requirements for literacy coaches based on the research of Pogliinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, and Supovitz (2003) which documented that the effectiveness of the literacy coach was affected by training and prior experience. The authors advised schools and school districts to require literacy coaches to meet these requirements and to:

- 1) be excellent reading teachers teaching at their level.
- 2) have in-depth knowledge of processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction.
- 3) have expertise in working with teachers to improve their practices.
- 4) be excellent presenters and leaders.
- 5) have experience or preparation that enables them to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction for classroom teachers.

IRA (2004) suggested in *The Role and Qualifications for the Reading Coach in the United States* that literacy coaches have previous teaching experience, a master's degree with a concentration in reading education including a minimum of 24 graduate credit hours in reading and related courses which include a 6 credit-hour supervised practicum experience. In addition, IRA proposed that coaches should have several years of outstanding teaching, some graduate-level coursework in reading, and coursework related to presentation, facilitation, and adult learning. The organization also recommended that reading specialists supervise coaches who did not have reading specialist certification. In spite of these standards, when Toll (2005) surveyed coaches in the field to find out what qualifications they were required to have, it was determined that there were only two clear requirements being met in the field: *a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate*.

In response to the survey, Allington (2006) authored an article for the *Reading Teacher*. He stated that in many of the schools today, there are reading educators who are not reading specialists even though they could obtain the certification through their state departments of education. He expressed his amazement at the fact that NCLB requires highly qualified teachers in the classroom, but reading specialists and literacy coaches do not need any additional credentials above those of a classroom teacher. Allington stated "I find it particularly frustrating

that so many school personnel who work with struggling readers seldom seem to have completed a program of graduate study focused on developing advanced expertise in reading” (p. 17).

The literacy coach provides scientifically-based professional development opportunities tailored to the specific needs of the school in the areas of specialized reading and writing instruction, assessment in conjunction with other educational programs to the school, monitoring and assessing reading progress, and improving reading achievement. Some coaches serve as a resource for other school employees, such as paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators. IRA (2004) recommended employing reading coaches in schools to provide professional development for teachers where they can provide assistance for teachers trying to implement new strategies in the classroom. Given all of these responsibilities, it is imperative that literacy coaches be highly qualified.

The characteristics and role of the literacy coach were discussed in a study conducted by Deussen, Coski, Robinson, and Autio (2007). The researchers studied literacy coaches in five states working in Reading First schools. Most of the coaches did not have a background in literacy coaching which supports the claim that a professional development model for training coaches is necessary. The Reading First guidelines required that coaches spend 60% to 80% of their time working with classroom teachers, but the literacy coaches in this study were averaging only 28% of their time with teachers. It was reported that many times coaches were assigned to complete tasks related to helping the school operate instead of being able to be in the classroom working with teachers. Four categories of coaches were identified: data-oriented coaches, student-oriented coaches, managerial coaches, and teacher-oriented coaches. Teachers holding these jobs all focused their time on different areas of the coaching model.

Other parts of the coach's job included assisting teachers in implementing new teaching strategies, meeting with teachers to consult about particular problem areas, mentoring teachers, conducting research studies, writing grants, and leading study groups. Some coaches in the study were required by state mandates to provide substantial documentation of these activities such as binders, implementation check lists, notes from teacher study groups, and agendas from various meetings.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

Teachers specifically serving as literacy coaches in schools to assist teachers in their learning are a recent development in the field of literacy education. Cassidy and Cassidy (2007) wrote a yearly column for *Reading Today*, a publication of the International Reading Association (IRA), entitled "What's Hot: What's Not" listing topics that are being discussed or not discussed in the field of literacy. For the past three years, the topic of literacy coaching has been on this list and identified as a "hot topic". Cassidy called attention to the use of untrained coaches, the lack of Literacy Coaches spending time working with students, and the practice in some school districts of having one literacy coach serving many schools. For a literacy coach to make a difference in a school, he recommended that districts hire certified reading specialists for the position who work with teachers and students (25% of the day), and serve only one school.

According to the IRA survey "Reading and Literacy Coaches Report on Hiring Requirements and Duties Survey" conducted by Roller (2006), it appears that many coaches have not received adequate training to be effective nor is the literacy community in agreement as to what constitutes effectiveness as related to literacy coaches. Thus, the purpose of the present study was:

- 1) to examine the perception of effectiveness of literacy coaches to determine which factors related to their roles, duties, and responsibilities determined effectiveness.
- 2) to collect data from administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches to determine differences, if any, in their perception of the effectiveness of literacy coaches based on these factors.
- 3) to determine which factors in the literacy coaches background predicted the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches.

### ***Significance of Study***

Due to a significant increase of the number of literacy coaches in schools today, more research is needed to examine the effectiveness of coaches in working with teachers. Policy makers on the national, state, and local level are searching for ways to improve student achievement in reading and are providing funding to promote the use of coaches. This quantitative study will provide information specifically focusing on the perceived effectiveness of literacy coaches and the factors used by literacy coaches to determine their own effectiveness.

The Literacy Coaches Clearinghouse (LCC) was established in 2005 by IRA and NCTE to provide current information on literacy coaching. The LCC's first National Advisory Board Meeting was held in July 2006. After reviewing current research, they compiled a list of potential research questions to provide more information on literacy coaching. Several of the LCC's potential research questions were considered by the author when formulating the research questions for this study. The LCC was concerned about effective ways to prepare literacy coaches, identifying characteristics of highly effective literacy coaches, examining how

professional qualifications, prior experiences, and training were related to success of the literacy coach, and identifying what data could be used to develop a definition of effectiveness.

The author provided recent data concerning professional qualifications, prior experiences, and training related to success in the coaching role and examined how effectiveness was defined by administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches through the development and use of the LCES.

### ***Research Questions***

Since Literacy Coaching is a recent development in reading and writing instruction, trying to determine specific factors related to their effectiveness is crucial. After a review of the literature, the author of the current study determined three groups of educators who were in contact with Literacy Coaches in educational settings. As a group, administrators (including principals and assistant principals), classroom teachers and Literacy Coaches themselves were aware of the duties and responsibilities related to a literacy coach. These three groups could provide information crucial to how they perceived the effectiveness of Literacy Coaches.

While the Literacy Coaches' self-perceptions of effectiveness, they could also provide information concerning previous educational experiences and background information. From this information, the author of the current study could attempt to determine if these factors influenced the self-perception of effectiveness.

Based on this information, the research questions which were answered in this study are:

- 1) How did administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches differ, if at all, in their perceptions of the effectiveness of literacy coaches?
- 2) What factors predicted the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches?

## ***Definitions of Terms***

Literacy Coach - The International Reading Association (2003) defined the reading coach or literacy coach as:

A reading specialist who focuses on providing professional development for teachers by providing them with the additional support needed to implement various instructional programs and practices. They provide essential leadership for the school's entire literacy program by helping create and supervise long-term staff development process that supports both the development and implementation of the literacy program over months and years. These individuals need to have experiences that enable them to provide effective professional development for the teachers in their schools (p. 5).

Reading Specialist - The International Reading Association (2000) addressed three roles of the reading specialist in the school: instruction, assessment, and leadership. The position of literacy coach relates to the leadership role of the reading specialist.

Instructional Coach - In 2006, the International Reading Association stated that at the middle and high school level, a coach is often called an instructional coach rather than a literacy coach, reading coach, or reading specialist. The concept is that the coach assists teachers to develop instructional strategies which will help students use and continue to build their literacy skills through content learning.

Mentors or Peer Coaches - These positions are known by many different titles in the literature such as math coaches, mentor teachers, lead teachers, instructional coordinators, instructional coaches, content specialists, technical coaches,



academic coaches, or staff development teachers. The most popular titles in the literature for coaches who work with teachers to improve literacy instruction are literacy coach or reading coach. Since literacy includes both reading and writing, in this study, the term “literacy coach” will be used for clarity instead of "reading coach".

Literacy Coaches Clearinghouse – This organization was created as a joint project between NCTE and IRA in 2005 to collect and distribute information about literacy coaches. Nancy Shanklin was appointed the first Director of the Clearinghouse in April of 2006. On the Literacy Coaches Clearinghouse website, current studies examining literacy coaching are posted for easy access.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Constructivist theorists state that learning is active. Learners construct knowledge based on personal experiences and continuously test this knowledge through social interactions. Learning involves using past experiences and cultural factors to interpret and construct knowledge. It is not the teacher who can transmit the learning to the student simply by directly telling them information. The learner must participate and bring previous knowledge to the situation.

Lev Vygotsky (1978) was a Russian psychologist (1896-1934) whose work is one of the foundations of constructivist theory. There are three major themes of his work which all apply to the current study:

- 1) social interaction
- 2) the more knowledgeable other
- 3) the Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky focused on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they acted and interacted in shared experiences. His theory promotes learning contexts in which students play an active role. The teacher is no longer the transmitter of knowledge, but works with the student to help promote learning. This collaboration process becomes a reciprocal experience for the teacher and the learner.

Vogotsky's theory included the value of the "More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)". This term refers to anyone involved in the student's learning process that has a deeper understanding than the learner regarding a particular task. This MKO is thought of as a teacher, a coach, or an older adult, but could also be peers, a younger person, or even a computer. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the zone in which the student is able to perform a task with the support of the more knowledgeable other. This is the zone where Vygotsky believed most learning occurred.

Vygotsky is included in the theoretical framework of this study because the three major themes of his theory apply directly to the work of the literacy coach. When applying this theory to adult learners, the coach's work evolves around social interaction with the school community members, especially with classroom teachers. The coach operates as the "more knowledgeable other" as she assists teachers in understanding, learning, and using new teaching strategies in the classroom and helps them to operate in their ZPD. The coach helps the teachers to construct meaning by being available to interact with them on a social cultural level.

The current study is also based on the Costa and Garmston's (2002) Theory of Cognitive Coaching which focuses on the cognitive processes coming into use when learning occurs. These factors include consulting, mentoring, peer assistance, catalyst, supervision, coaching, and evaluation. Teachers should have the opportunity to receive assistance from a coach, collaborate

by working together to improve their teaching skills, and consulting. This model focuses on the coaches' ability to assist teachers in reflecting on their own knowledge and helping teachers determine if new goals need to be set as a prerequisite to changing behavior.

Bandura's (1975) Social Learning Theory is also important to the current study because this theory focuses on the fact that people learn through observing others. Social learning theory explains human behavior through the learner's combination of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors. Conditions for effective modeling include: (a) attention, (b) retention, (c) reproduction, and (d) motivation. These conditions all need to be in place for learning to occur. In relationship to literacy coaching, the attention factor is involved when the literacy coach encourages the teacher to be aware of the importance of learning new strategies to use in the classroom to improve student learning. The teacher must then retain the new learning and be able to reproduce this learning, in this situation, in the classroom. The coach and the teacher must also be motivated to begin and continue this learning relationship.

Another theory important to this research is Jerome Bruner's (1960) Scaffolding Theory. It can be explained by Bruner's example of how children learn to speak when applied to adult learners. When attempts at speech are made by the child, the parents immediately intervene with the correctly spoken word while at the same time celebrating the attempt. Bruner explains scaffolding as the intervention which assists someone to do something beyond their independent means. The difficulty of the task remains at the same level and it is through scaffolding that the task can be accomplished with assistance until that scaffold is no longer needed by the learner to complete the task successfully.

Like Vygotsky's ZPD, Bruner's scaffolding theory can be related to the work of the literacy coach as the coach works with teachers to develop new strategies in the classroom. The coach is

available to help the teacher attempt new methods, scaffolding the learning, and then to remove the scaffolding as the teacher no longer needs it.

As related to these theories of learning, the literacy coach should not appear as a distant, more knowledgeable person transmitting new information to the teacher. The literacy coach must learn to develop the social skills needed to encourage the teacher to construct new learning. By being available to the teacher and assisting in attempts to incorporate new teaching pedagogy into teaching methods, the literacy coach may be an effective partner.

### ***Overview of Methodology***

First, a scale was developed to determine the factors describing the perceptions of effectiveness. This was accomplished while reviewing the literature for this study. The researcher compiled a list of factors contributing to the effectiveness of the literacy coach from important authors and researchers in the field. By combining items from this list and examining results from the Literacy Coach Pilot Study (LCPS) (Appendix A), the LCES was designed. This scale was used by a panel of experts to rate items according to their importance to the concept of effectiveness. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to determine agreement between the members of the expert panel. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the items or scores. The measurement validity and internal reliability of the effectiveness instrument was tested to determine if it was accurate, consistent, and suitable for use in research on literacy coach effectiveness.

By identifying factors on the LCES, administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches would be able to describe their perceptions of effectiveness and these scores could be compared to determine any differences in these perceptions based on the three groups. Using the LCES as

a guide, the SPELC (Appendix B) was developed using SurveyMonkey which is an online survey tool that assists researchers in creating and distributing surveys.

Surveys were distributed through email to three groups of participants: school administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches. Participants were able to complete a section of the survey designed specifically for them describing their backgrounds and were able to answer survey questions related to the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach. The coaches completed a section of the survey on their educational background, training, and qualifications regarding their preparation for becoming a literacy coach in order for them to self-rate the perceptions of their effectiveness.

The first research question (RQ 1) of this study was “How do administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches differ, if at all, in their perception of the effectiveness of literacy coaches?” The answer to this question was determined by comparing the total effectiveness scores of all three groups as derived from the survey. A Bonferroni Post Hoc Test was used to compare sample means to see if evidence showed the corresponding population distributions differed.

The second research question (RQ2) was “What factors predict the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches?” Spearman’s (non parametric) correlation was used and the statistical significance was calculated from the  $t$  value. For multinominal factors, such as type of undergraduate degree, a one-way ANOVA was used and the statistical significance was calculated from the  $F$  value. A Bonferroni Post Hoc Text was also used to compare sample means.

## ***Assumptions***

This study was based on administrators, classroom teachers, and administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of literacy coaches. It was assumed that participants answered survey questions honestly and that their responses reflected their personal perceptions of the effectiveness of literacy coaches in a school setting.

## ***Delimitations***

In this study, only administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches of grades kindergarten through eight were surveyed. The study was also delimited by the number of literacy coaches in schools. Schools that employ coaches usually have only one or two coaches employed whereas the number of classroom teachers is larger.

The number of participants participating in the study was delimited by the requirement of some school districts to access the administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches. If permission to survey employees was required by the school board, it was difficult and time consuming to obtain permission forms. Only those participants replying to the online survey were included.

## ***Overview of Chapter 2 through Chapter 5***

In Chapter 2, the literature review addresses three specific areas of research including teacher effectiveness, profession development, and literacy coaching and how these findings play a role in student achievement. Results of studies in the literature review cover a range of studies with results of the effects of literacy coaching ranging from positive findings to studies showing negative impacts of literacy coaching. The methodology chapter includes procedures used to collect and analyze data, a description of participants, and instruments designed and used to

collect data for the research. The creation of the Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of Literacy Coaching and the Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale is explained. In Chapter 4 the results of the study are discussed and include demographic characteristics of the sample, the results of SPELS and LCES, and answers to RQ1 and RQ2. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings, implications for theory and practice, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

The purpose of the current study was to examine the perceptions of effectiveness of the literacy coach to determine which factors related to their roles, duties, and responsibilities determined effectiveness. Data was collected from administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches to determine differences, if any, in their perception of effectiveness of a literacy coach based on these factors. Another purpose was to determine which factors in a literacy coach's background predicted the self-rated perception of effectiveness of the literacy coach.

The review of the literature for this study encompassed three main areas of research: the impact of teacher effectiveness on student achievement, the impact of effective professional development in successful schools, and the impact of effective literacy coaching on the teaching strategies of teachers and student achievement. In order to connect these areas, the literature selected for review also reflected information and findings regarding how the effectiveness of literacy coaching was perceived. Groups selected to assist the researcher in this study included school administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches. Literature was reviewed examining the question of how the literacy coach's effectiveness impacted teaching skills in the classroom and resulted in increased student learning. The factors gauging a literacy coach's effectiveness were noted by the researcher to be used later in the development of the LCES.

#### ***The Impact of Effective Professional Development***

One goal of educational systems is to increase student achievement by addressing the needs of all students at all levels and moving them from where they are to a higher level of academic performance. This may be accomplished by effective professional development which provides



the teacher with research-based practices along with the assistance of the literacy coach to assist in the mastering of new methods of instruction. The importance of high quality professional development was discussed throughout the literature (American Educational Research Association, 2005; Guskey, 1989; National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Research on effective schools reflected specific factors that needed to be in place for student achievement to improve. The effectiveness of high quality professional development was included in many studies. In “The CIERA School Change Framework: An Evidence-based Approach to Professional Development and School Reading Improvement”, Taylor et al. (2005) reported six key elements related to high-performing, high-poverty schools: improved student learning, strong building leadership, strong staff collaboration, ongoing professional development, sharing of student assessment data, and parental involvement (p. 44). This reform effort was implemented in thirteen schools. The authors explained the results in three main areas: comprehension scores, fluency scores, and writing.

The goal of the CIERA project was to assist schools in translating research-based practices into effective teaching strategies. They also wanted to determine the factors present in classrooms and schools that accounted for students’ improvement in reading and writing. The authors based the study on certain theories of professional development and effective reading instruction and described research in two particular areas: research on effective schools (schools that have higher achievement levels than other schools with the same demographics) and research on effective school improvement in general. By taking the research one step further than just focusing on reading growth at the school-level or classroom-level, the authors examined the impact of professional development as a part of school level reform.

The CIERA study was published by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) and referenced the Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read (2000). The NRPR recommended that specific areas of reading instruction needed to be included in every curriculum to assist children in learning to read. The report recommended that children receive instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency; however, the authors contended “that to significantly improve students’ reading achievement, teachers must also consider the broader scope of research summarizing the pedagogical practices of effective teachers of reading – the how of reading instruction” (p. 44). The authors expressed concern that leaders in the field of reading instruction may be focusing only on those five areas and excluding other important areas, especially the reading of authentic text.

In the CIERA study, one finding of particular interest was that coaching (positively related) accounted for 11% of the between teacher variance (p. 55). They also found that “for every 10% increase in the coding of coaching within a classroom, students’ mean writing scores (based on a 4-point rubric) increased by 0.08” (p. 54). In their findings, the authors clearly listed the classroom-level and school-level variables that accounted for growth: (a) higher level questioning, (b) coaching, and (c) students’ writing growth (p. 64). They also found that the reform model accounted for between- school variance in reading growth when examined for one year. Over a two year period, comprehension scores accounted for substantial differences in between-school variance in comprehension.

Another finding was that schools with more growth had a teacher leader who was respected by colleagues and helped the other teachers focus on important topics during weekly staff meetings. The teacher leader proved to be effective even when the school administration was not

participating in staff development but supported the teacher leader's efforts to provide staff development for the teachers.

Other researchers reported the need for well planned professional development as a way to improve student achievement. Kelleher (2003) found the following:

With the increasing expectations for students manifested through statewide standardized tests in nearly every state and the development of curriculum frameworks throughout the country, a heightened interest in both spending for professional development and the effect of adult learning on student learning has emerged. (p. 1).

Kelleher recommended that schools develop plans that addressed specific learning goals and needs of teachers. The report for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) also recommended high quality professional development, rewards for teachers who improved their practice, planning time to consult together or to learn new teaching strategies and methods, and mentoring programs for new teachers to improve teacher quality.

Another study by Blase and Blase (1999) discussed six essential parts of effective staff development including the study of teaching and learning, collaboration, coaching, inquiry, resources to support improvement, and applying principles of adult learning. In the findings of their report, they stated that instructional leaders used staff development to create certain conditions that assisted teachers in learning about teaching strategies and that useful support to develop these strategies was provided by peer coaches. The survey administered indicated that teachers reported modeling instructional techniques for other teachers led to an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

## ***Impact of Literacy Coaching***

In addition to the CIERRA study, there are several school reform models implementing the use of literacy coaches as a way to increase teacher effectiveness. The goal of the Literacy Collaborative of the Ohio State University and Leslie University is to improve student achievement in literacy for elementary school students. The Literacy Collaborative model includes these essential elements offering long-term professional development, research-based practices focused on literacy, a professional development plan which offers continuous support to teacher, and the use of a Literacy Coordinator (literacy coach). Literacy Coordinators are assigned to schools and provide high-quality professional development to teachers in the use of research-based strategies. Students are taught in whole groups, large and small groups, and individualized lessons. To provide individualized tutoring, the Literacy Collaborative, Reading Recovery® must be in place. Reading Recovery is a short term tutoring program for first grade students struggling with reading and writing.

One of the most recent research studies examining the effects of the Literacy Collaborative is a four year study (2004-2008) funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) through the United States Department of Education. Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2008) examined the model to determine if there was a correlation between professional development and changes in teacher instruction resulting in student gains. Literacy Collaborative teachers were evaluated and substantial improvement was observed in literacy teaching which correlated with the amount of professional development and one-to-one coaching the teachers received. These factors were the strongest predictor of implementation. The IES study evaluated the skills of K-2 students using results of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (2003) and Terra Nova results. The

study showed large and statistically significant gains in student achievement. In the first year, student growth increased by 18% and by the third year, it increased by 38%.

Hough, Bryk, Pinnell, Kerbow, Fountas, and Scharer (2008) conducted a study specifically examining whether a variance in teacher practices was associated with the amount of time the literacy coach assisted a teacher. In a paper presented at the Conference of the American Educational Research Association in 2008, the researchers reported that the amount of coaching time spent with a teacher appeared to be related to an increase in teachers' use of the Literacy Collaborative model. In the Hough study, literacy coaches received training in the model for a year while they continued to teach. The coaches were trained in model components such as read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading and writing.

In one section of the Hough study (2008), the characteristics and experiences of the literacy coach were hypothesized. These factors included the literacy coach's knowledge of effective literacy practices and familiarity with adult learners. Both teachers and literacy coaches completed surveys concerning willingness to try new methods, the extent of commitment to their school, and knowledge of literacy instruction. In addition the literacy coach completed additional questions about prior experience. Individual interviews were conducted to determine the literacy coaches previous training, experience as a teacher, and knowledge of working with adult learners. The researchers found that literacy coaches with more professional development experience resulted in a higher incidence of teachers following the parts of the Literacy Collaborative model in classrooms. Coaching was positively related to an increase in how frequently and successfully teachers implemented effective practices.

The researchers also found that the teacher's level of implementation was greater when the literacy coach had previous experience in staff development. Hough et al. (2008) discovered that

“the estimated impact of frequent coaching (i.e.) one standard deviation above the mean) by a coach with significant prior experience (i.e. also one standard deviation above the mean).” p. 32. Their research indicated that a school with a literacy coach was more likely to see teachers increase their use of literacy strategies. These researchers plan to examine possible links between improved teaching and student outcomes.

Another recent study conducted for the RAND Corporation by Marsh, et al. (2008) analyzed district reform efforts. Data was collected by distributing surveys to principals, coaches, and teachers in 133 middle schools in Florida. The researchers analyzed student achievement databases as well as used a case study design which included field interviews and focus groups. One phase of the research especially focused on supporting professional learning of teachers through the use of a school-based coach. They wanted to evaluate the impact of coaches on student achievement and designed support networks for the coaches in order to support their learning and develop their effectiveness.

The study consisted of two parts: one was the longitudinal analysis of the scores in reading and math of students on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) from 1997-2006. They also examined whether coaching produced different outcomes in student achievement (2006-2007). The evidence was mixed when the effect of literacy coaching on student achievement was examined. The results showed that having a literacy coach in the school was related to small improvement in reading for only two of the four cohorts studied.

Other interesting findings of the RAND study related to other coaching factors. The number of years a coach was employed in a school was linked to higher reading scores. The only task which could be associated with achievement was the reviewing of student test data by the coach. Several recommendations based on the study included: coaches should review assessment data

with teachers, coaches should assist school administrators in determining how to select high quality coaches, and districts and schools should continue to provide professional development for coaches. It was also recommended that administrators learn how to identify high-quality coaching candidates and that districts offer incentives to support and retain highly qualified coaches.

Kannapel (2008) stated in “The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project: Differences in Literacy Environment and CATS Scores in Schools with Literacy Coaches and Schools without Coaches” that the effectiveness of coaching should not be measured by student achievement alone even though that is the end result. A law passed by the Kentucky legislature required that students needing help in grades 4-12 receive assistance through the form of instructional modifications and interventions. Funds from the state were available for schools to hire and train literacy coaches to assist teachers. Teachers in schools with literacy coaches were required to complete a survey on the school’s literacy environment each spring and these surveys were compared to surveys from schools without literacy coaches.

State test results of scores would also be compared with comparison schools. Kannapel cautioned readers that much work, planning, and training was needed to implement a coaching model, a factor which may have affected scores. The author summarized that “though student learning and growth are the eventual goals of all coaching programs, the immediate need is to focus the coach’s role on adult learning” (p. 43). The author stated that to evaluate a coaching model, a picture of what it looks like must be created in order to analyze the impact of the literacy coach on the school and on adult learning. Later correlations between the use of the literacy coach and student achievement can be studied, but the coaches must be in place for a period of time.

When survey results between schools with literacy coaches and schools without literacy coaches were compared, several statistically significant findings were discovered. A higher percentage of schools with literacy coaches were conducting strategic literacy planning, more teachers received professional development focused on improving content area reading, more teachers used a variety of strategies in their classrooms, and requested help concerning literacy issues from others. The survey results indicated that coaches were improving the school's literacy environment and developing trust and rapport with the teachers. Even though a comparison of student test scores on the Kentucky state test did not show gains for the schools with literacy coaches, it was noted that the coaches were in the first year of their training program when the tests were administered. School districts expect to see student achievement increase on the state tests as teachers continue to use the literacy strategies introduced by the literacy coaches and as the coaches continue their training and increase their expertise in coaching.

In "Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad", Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) studied the effectiveness of teachers and their impact on student achievement and found that the most effective method of professional development was when collaborative teams were used as a foundation for understanding new learning. They reported mixed results on the effectiveness of school-based coaching and suggested that these results could be related to the quality of the literacy coach and the coaching model being used at the school. One positive finding concerning literacy coaches was that coaching worked best in getting teachers to implement new practices in the classroom because literacy coaches provided on-going assistance to teachers as they attempted new teaching strategies.



In this study, the researchers examined professional development in countries from around the world and found differences between the intensity, content, and length of professional development provided to countries other than the United States. The United States was reported to be far behind the rest of the world in the amount of time dedicated to professional development, instituting collaborative communities, and learning through mentoring or peer coaching. In spite of this finding, 46% of the teachers surveyed in the United States reported that they engaged in coaching in some form in 2003-2004.

Garmse, Bloom, Kemple, and Jacob (2008) reported in The Reading First Impact Study that schools participating in the Reading First grant did not show improvement in students' reading comprehension test scores. Reading First was an instructional piece of NCLB designed to address the 5 essential areas of reading instruction according to the findings of The National Reading Panel Report. Reading First funding could be used for professional development and coaching to assist teachers in using scientifically-based reading practices in the classroom. The researchers found that student scores did not improve in reading comprehension and had mixed effects on students' engagement with print. The percentage of students engaged with print in second grade was statistically significant while student engagement in grade one was not.

Poglinco et al. (2003) as a part of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education were contracted to evaluate the America's Choice School Design. In their study, they choose to concentrate on the relationship of the literacy coach and the teacher. Other parts of the design such as instructional leadership or the use of a school design team were not included. The researchers were interested in examining the use of a literacy coach to serve as a link between effective practices and teachers.

Like the Literacy Collaborative, in the America's Choice model, a portion of the training model was specifically dedicated to assist with the implementation of Readers and Writers Workshop and the explicit role of the literacy coach in assisting teachers in learning this new strategy of teaching. A model classroom was created where the coach could perfect skills in presenting Readers' and Writers' Workshops, build trust with the model-classroom teacher, and develop personal skills in those areas. After six weeks developing this classroom, the coach moved to a demonstration classroom where the coach spent approximately 3 weeks conducting the literacy workshops with that classroom teacher. Another responsibility of the literacy coach was to address standards-based instruction. Results of the study showed that those teachers being assisted by literacy coaches incorporated more use of the standards in actual lessons taught to students, although the effect of these lessons on student achievement in reading and writing were not reported.

Although the American's Choice study was not developed to examine the effectiveness of the literacy coach, the authors did consider responses from teachers and principals regarding the value of the literacy coach. From this, they were able to compile a list of factors to gauge effectiveness. Several indicators from that list were: the ability to develop human relationships, working with adult learners, having effective teaching skills, working with resistant teachers, and establishing support and rapport with the principal. The researchers also stated that "There is no single, detailed job description for coaches, and our interviews picked up a great deal of uncertainty...about the role and responsibilities of the coach (p. 13)."

Not all studies reported positive results from the addition of a literacy coach to assist teachers. In 2008 the National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance commissioned a study to be conducted examining professional development provided to teachers

for two early reading interventions including one program which used in-school coaching to help teachers integrate new learning into classroom instruction. An experimental design was used in developing “The Impact of Two Professional Development Interventions on Early Reading Instruction and Achievement.” The focus of this research was to examine improvement of teaching skills of second grade teachers in core reading programs being used in the classroom.

Treatment A consisted of eight days of training in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) developed by Louisa Moats (2006). This program consisted of modules that aligned with the NRP’s essential components of reading instruction. Treatment B provided in-school coaching in addition to the 8 days of training received in the summer. A coach was assigned for a half-day at each school and was available to provide support for teachers implementing new teaching strategies in their second grade classrooms. Teachers were expected to receive approximately 60 hours of assistance from the coach during the entire school year. The coaches received extensive training also. In addition to being trained in LETRS, the coaches received an additional three days of coaching instruction and four on-site follow up trainings throughout the school year.

The study was designed to include 90 schools and 270 second grade teachers and measured outcome in teachers’ knowledge about reading instruction and use of research-based instructional practices, and in students’ reading achievement based on the average reading score on the district assessments. The scales scores reported by different districts were able to be compared and examined for growth.

The additional professional development delivered to teachers by the literacy coach did not produce a statistically significant effect on Treatment B teachers. Teachers who received Treatment A or Treatment B scored significantly higher on overall teaching knowledge when

compared to the control group. The addition of the coach did not produce a significant gain in teaching knowledge when comparing Treatment A teachers to Treatment B teachers. Even in areas where teachers' knowledge of the modules and instruction improved, student achievement did not as measured by the district's standardized tests. Neither Treatment A nor Treatment B had an impact on students' standardized scores in reading.

Other research examined the effectiveness of literacy coaches. Richard (2003) compiled a report for the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation called "Making Our Own Road: The Emergence of School-based Staff Development in America's Public Schools." Richard based the report on interviews and observations with literacy coaches and reported that the implementation model for coaches needed improvement including provisions for more training, support of administrators, and needed resources for the classroom teacher. Many times, districts introduced a coaching model without explaining the purpose or providing specific goals for those involved in the model and were not aware of what the schools wanted the literacy coaches to accomplish. School leadership may not be prepared to reorganize their schools to support the addition of a coach. Richard found that few school systems were systematic in assessing the impact of these programs and stated that school-based staff developers had the potential to help schools improve.

Based on the emergence of school-based staff developers and questions of their effectiveness, Richard reported that

School-based staff developers share many encouraging anecdotes about their successes, and sporadic evaluations show some evidence of higher student achievement in schools with staff developers in place. But few districts of schools are systematically assessing the impact of these programs using

sound research methods (p. 5).

Richard reported that there was not a definite cause and effect relationship between coaches and improved test scores, although preliminary results obtained from schools in Long Beach and San Diego, California suggested that staff development could help schools raise test scores.

Walsh-Symonds (2002) examined literacy coaches in a descriptive study and reported on how a district could support coaching as a long term strategy to improve classroom instruction. In this study, Walsh-Symonds described how literacy coaching was used in three California school districts. The study did not address the impact of coaching on student achievement, but based the study on the fact that research showed that improving the quality of teaching improved classroom instruction. The study used interviews and focus groups with administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches.

Literacy coaches in the Walsh-Symonds study assisted teachers individually by observing and demonstrating effective strategies in classrooms, assisting teachers in using research, and offering staff development. The main benefits of coaching were reported to be: an increase in the amount and quality of the use of new instructional strategies and teachers' improved reception of change. The study acknowledged coaching as an effective practice and reported on how districts should organize, fund, and support literacy coaches in schools. The author also included recommendations for implementation at the district level. As in other studies in the literature review, Walsh-Symonds called for the development of a clear job description, coordination with administrators, and providing professional development for coaches.

The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (ALCP) was created by the Kentucky legislature. In this study, Kannapel (2008) examined how literacy coaches were selected and trained for their position and what type of continuous support was provided. The author also attempted to

describe the work of the literacy coaches and identified how the coaches influenced teacher practices and student learning. The project modeled their support of literacy coaches on IRA's Standards for Middle School and High School Literacy Coaches. The results of the study indicated that teachers felt that literacy coaches did help them to improve instruction in areas of new practices.

To address the need for more research about literacy coaching, Walpole and McKenna (2004) suggested that more research be designed to examine coaching as a way to improve student achievement and called for research specifically related to the effects of literacy coaches on student achievement. In a qualitative study conducted by Edwards and Green (1999), the authors found that as coaches became more proficient, they were more able to assist teachers in improving student learning. They determined this outcome by examining audiotapes of conferences between coaches and teachers conducted twice during a three year period and reported an improvement in student learning based on the interviews with teachers.

Neufeld and Roper conducted several studies which addressed the effectiveness of literacy coaches in the Boston Public Schools. In the 2002 study "Off to a Good Start: Year 1 of Collaborative Coaching and Learning in the Effective Practice Schools", the researchers analyzed interviews with administrators, teachers, coaches, and other staff members involved with the implementation of the model, and attended principals' and coaches' meetings. They found that teachers needed many on-site opportunities to improve classroom instruction and collaborative learning enabled teachers to share and learn together to generate new learning.

Literacy coaches should receive extensive training. Bach and Supovitz (2003) reported in their study that "coaches with shallow understanding... can seriously impede the implementation of the America's Choice design. Not surprisingly, as goes the coach, so go the teachers" (p. 11).

Bach and Supovitz also reported that the literacy coach was a key player in building instructional capacity in the school and training for the literacy coach should address three areas in particular: understanding effective literacy instruction, learning how to build learning communities, and developing mentoring and coaching skills.

The goal of the Correnti study (2006) was to compare student achievement in reading across 3 programs: Accelerated Schools, Success for All, and America's Choice. Literacy coaches were used in both Success for All and America's Choice. The researchers did not specifically study improvement in teacher quality as related to the use of coaches but they did conclude that some instructional programs which are supported by on-site facilitators produced changes.

In the results section, the three Comprehensive School Reform programs were examined and it was confirmed that innovative instructional programs used in schools can produce change and improve student achievement. The America's Choice and Success for All programs did, in fact, produce higher achievement. The use of an on-site facilitator in the implementation of these two programs was not examined. However, the researchers did find that these two programs were successful in changing instruction. They attributed this positive change to a focus on specific areas of literacy instruction, a challenge to teachers to make changes in their instruction, written materials available for use by teachers as a reference source, and the assistance and guidance to teachers in the form of a knowledgeable on-site facilitator.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

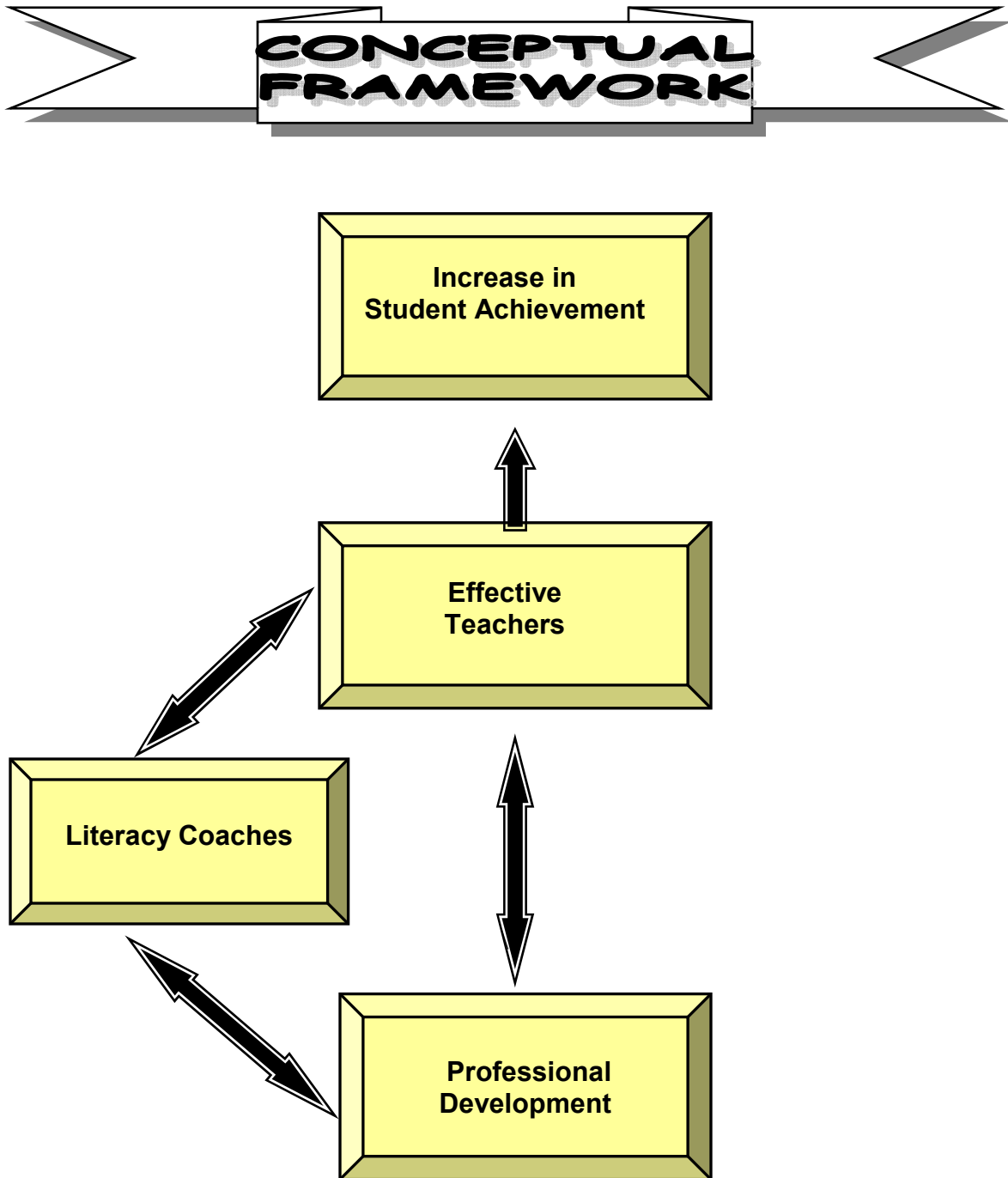
The Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) explains the basis and organization for the current study. Based on the literature review, improvements in student achievement can be produced by an effective teacher. Well-designed professional development can provide teachers with

information concerning the most recent and research-based methods of instruction. The literacy coach can assist teachers in implementing these strategies in the classroom by providing professional development and follow-up meetings with classroom teachers to assist teachers in implementing new techniques.

The perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach will be evaluated by 3 groups: administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches themselves to determine which factors are indicators to base these perceptions of effectiveness on and to determine if the perception of effectiveness differs among the three groups.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



In order to make more knowledgeable decisions, teachers must be provided with a supportive network which encourages continuous learning. The literacy coach can serve as a professional in the school to organize and plan for opportunities for teachers to learn new and effective methodology. The problems associated with literacy coaching are similar to problems seen in other reform efforts: insufficient training, limited funds, and the lack of research showing effectiveness as related to student achievement. The purpose of this synthesis of the literature on literacy coaching was to examine how the literacy coach can assist the teacher through assisting with effective professional development and increasing student learning. Literacy coaches are included in many school reform models.

The current study differed from previous research studies because it addressed the need for determining factors which contribute to the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach. As shown in the literature review, the majority of studies located suggest that a literacy coach is effective in improving teaching strategies along with the use of high quality professional development; however, there is little agreement discussion or agreement on the factors which define the effectiveness of the literacy coach. The author's study provides a basis for the examination of effectiveness and could lead to more effective training and preparation for the literacy coach in those areas identified.

The following chapter includes an explanation of the methodology of the study. A description of participants, the instruments used to collect data, procedures used for survey distribution, and a description of how data were analyzed are explained.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to determine which factors related to the roles, responsibilities, and duties of literacy coaches determined perceptions of effectiveness. The study also was used to determine if administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches differed, if at all, in their perceptions of the effectiveness of the literacy coach. The factors in the literacy coaches' background were examined to determine which factors predicted the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches. The methodology section of this study includes a description of the participants, the instruments which were used to collect data, the procedures which were used to distribute the survey, and an explanation of how the data were analyzed.

#### ***Procedures***

Because the purpose of the study was to examine the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach, the researcher designed the LCES to assist in creating the SPELC. After approval of the proposal for the study by the researcher's Dissertation Committee, permission to begin collecting data was given from the University of New Orleans (UNO) Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) (Appendix C). Once approval from the HSRC was received, the SPELC was distributed through email to participants. The survey was designed using SurveyMonkey which is an online tool that assists researchers in creating and distributing surveys.

An introduction to the survey (Appendix D) was created to inform the participants of the purpose of the survey and to invite them to participate. The message included a link to the survey on SurveyMonkey. Surveys were distributed directly from the author to: Annenberg Institute, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, selected faculty members

and graduate students from two universities, Reading Recovery teacher leaders, and selected faculty members affiliated with one university, members of the Reading Recovery Council of North America, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Council Teachers of English, National Staff Development Council, and various school districts by locating email addresses on school sites.

### ***Participants***

There were three groups of participants in the study: administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches. The school administrators were certified as school principals or assistant principals in schools consisting of grades kindergarten through eight. In the classroom teachers' group, participants had to be certified to teach and work in grades kindergarten through grade 8. In addition to being employed in schools with the same grade levels, the participants in the literacy coaches' group consisted of certified teachers who worked with teachers on a daily basis. Some teachers performing the work of literacy coaches were listed by other titles, such as instructional coach, peer coach, academic coach, master teacher, or lead teacher. The main criteria for selection were that survey respondents be a teacher based in a school working with teachers to improve literacy instruction.

### ***Dropouts, Exclusions, or Missing Data***

The link to the first page of the Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches was opened by 709 participants. A total of 511 participants started answering the first set of questions in the survey and 198 did not begin the survey. The 198 brought it up on their computer screen, looked at the first page or two of the survey, but did not make it through even

the first few demographic questions. Of the 511 participants that started the survey, 22 dropped out before the survey was completed in its entirety, that is, before all of the critical questions were answered (mostly on effectiveness). The final questions on the survey were critical because they were on the topic of literacy coach effectiveness. Regarding survey completion rates, 492 answered the first effectiveness questions (Question v33 - Do you believe that the literacy coach in your school is effective? Question v52 - I believe the literacy coach in my school is effective, and Question v73 - Do you believe that the literacy coach in your school is effective?), but the number of participants dropped to 489 by the last effectiveness question. This question (v77) included the following subparts: I believe the literacy coach is effective in the following ways: (a) knowledge of effective literacy practices, (b) collecting, interpreting, and distributing data, (c) modeling and observing lessons, (d) providing feedback on teachers' lessons, (e) working with teachers as adult learners, (f) knowledge of literacy assessments, (g) assisting with Response to Intervention models, (h) applying literacy to content areas, (i) working with resistant colleagues, (j) increasing high stakes testing scores, (k) increasing students' grades in the classroom, and (l) working with groups of at-risk students.

Thus, the participants who did not complete the survey stopped responding before the first effectiveness question was asked. Of the 489 participants who completed the survey, two skipped the question of whether they were an administrator, teacher, or coach. Due to the importance of this question, these two participants were excluded from the sample for a final sample size of  $n=487$ .

## ***Instruments***

In the present study a survey instrument was designed called the SPELC. Questions from the LCPS (the original pilot study) were expanded to include more questions designed for obtaining information concerning the perception of effectiveness and the background of the literacy coach. Feedback from the pilot survey provided additional information from participants concerning the wording of questions. As discussed in Chapter 1, the LCES was also reviewed by a panel of experts. The input from the panel was used to determine which factors defined the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach.

Inferences were obtained from the panel concerning the background, training, and qualifications of the literacy coaches and how these factors influenced perceptions of effectiveness. An advantage of using a self-administered questionnaire for data collection was the economy of design and possibility for fast distribution and response. Using a cross-sectional survey, the data were only collected from each individual participant one time.

## ***Methods Used to Develop Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches and Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale***

The survey used in the pilot study (Appendix A) was created by the researcher to gain information on the background, training, and hiring practices related to literacy coaches. In this pilot study, twenty-two surveys were received from literacy coaches in five states. This survey was used as the basis for the survey constructed for this study.

While reviewing the literature, a list of indicators to determine the perceived effectiveness of a literacy coach was compiled. As shown in Table 1, indicators of perceived effectiveness were listed from various sources and used as a basis for determining indicators to include on the

Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale. For example, the ability to develop lesson plans with teachers was developed as Indicator #16 on the scale "Providing feedback to teachers on teacher's lesson." Another indicator was developed from resources reporting that the literacy coach should have a certain type of personality to be in that position. Information from those 7 resources was combined to develop Indicator #17: Working with adults as learners and Indicator #21: working with resistant colleagues. Indicator #22: Increasing high stakes testing scores and Indicator #23: Increasing students' grades in the classroom were developed from resources reviewed. As shown in Table 1, the importance of modeling lessons was discussed in 15 sources. In most of the literature concerning literacy coaching, the importance of modeling lessons, observing lessons, and providing feedback to teachers were discussed. Since much information stressed these areas, they were combined to create Indicators #14, #15, and #16. The importance of using data was also found in several sources and was give high priority by the author of the current study. These produced Indicators #11: Collects data, #12: Interprets data, #13: Distributes data.

Table 1

*Indicators of Literacy Coaches Perceived Effectiveness Derived From a Review of the Literature*


---

Indicator	Sources
Ability to create model classroom	Killion & Harrison, 2006 Neufeld and Roper, 2003 Poglinco et al., 2003
Ability to develop lesson plans with teachers	Bean, 2004 Casey, 2006 Neufeld & Roper, 2003 Poglinco et al., 2003 Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Background and training	Bean, 2004 Burkins, 2007 Richard, 2003
Classroom observations	Bean, 2004 Burkins, 2007 Casey, 2006 Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005 IRA, 2004 Richard, 2003 Shanklin, 2006 Walsh-Symonds, 2002
Conducts professional development	Bean, 2004



(Table 1, cont.)

	Blase & Blase, 1999
	Burkins, 2007
	Casey, 2006
	Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005
	Knight, 2007
	Marsh et al., 2008
	Shanklin, 2006
	Toll, 2005
	Walsh-Symonds, 2002
Displays personality for position	Casey, 2006
	Knight, 2007
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Richard, 2003
	Taylor, 2005
	Toll, 2005
Experience	Bean, 2004
	IRA, 2004
	Marsh et al., 2008
	Poglinco et al., 2003
Has presentation skills	IRA, 2004
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004

(Table 1, cont.)

Increases student achievement	Casey, 2006
	Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005
	Richard, 2003
	Rodgers & Rodgers, 2007
	Toll, 2005
Knowledge of reading strategies and curriculum	Bean, 2004
	Burkins, 2007
	Casey, 2006
	IRA, 2004
	Killion & Harrison, 2006
	Knight, 2007
	Neufeld & Roper, 2003
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Richard, 2006
	Toll, 2005
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Knowledge and use of assessments	Bean, 2004
	Casey, 2006
	Knight, 2007
	Neufeld & Roper, 2003
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Mentors teachers	Killion & Harrison, 2006

(Table 1, cont.)

	Neufeld & Roper, 2003
	Poglinco et al., 2003
Models Lessons	Bean, 2004
	Blasé & Blasé, 1999
	Burkins, 2007
	Casey, 2006
	Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005
	IRA, 2004
	Lyons & Pinnell, 2001
	Neufeld & Roper, 2003
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	IRA, 2004
	Shanklin, 2006
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004
	Walsh-Symonds, 2002
Provides feedback to teachers	Bean, 2004
	Casey, 2006
	Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005
	Lyons & Pinnell, 2001
	Neufeld & Roper, 2003
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Rodgers & Rodgers, 2007

(Table 1, cont.)

	Shanklin, 2006
	Toll, 2005
	Walpole & McKenna, 2003
Uses reflection with self and others	Knight, 2007
	Rodgers & Rodgers, 2007
	Shanklin, 2006
	Toll, 2005
Uses data for student and teacher learning	Burkins, 2007
	Casey, 2006
	Knight, 2007
	Marsh et al., 2008
	Killion & Harrison, 2006
	Shanklin, 2006
	Toll, 2005
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Works with adult learners	Bean, 2004
	Blase & Blase, 1999
	Casey, 2006
	IRA, 2004
	Knight, 2007
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Richard, 2003

(Table 1, cont.)

	Toll, 2005
	Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Works with resistant colleagues	Burkins, 2007
	Casey, 2006
	Knight, 2007
	Poglinco et al., 2003
	Richard, 2003
	Toll, 2005
Works with struggling students	Bean, 2004
	Toll, 2005

The SPELC was designed specifically for this study to collect data from administrators, literacy coaches, and teachers which reflected these roles and responsibilities. Examples of these selected areas of interest were: planning and organizing professional development for teachers, identifying and demonstrating instructional strategies and programs, reflecting with individual teachers after a modeled lesson, and mentoring new teachers. The survey consisted of statements reflecting the participants' view of the coaches' perceived effectiveness measured using a 5-point Likert-scale. Responses ranged from 1=Extremely Ineffective to 5=Extremely Effective. The statements on the survey were developed to address 15 areas of effectiveness.

In addition, the coaches completed a section on their educational background, training, and qualifications regarding their preparation for becoming a literacy coach. Examples of topics included in the choices were: years of experience in education and in literacy coaching, major

and minor subject areas in undergraduate and graduate degrees, areas of certification listed on teaching certificates, reading certification at the undergraduate and graduate level, certification as a literacy coach through undergraduate coursework or a masters degree in literacy coaching, completion of university courses addressing the needs of adult learners, and planning and conducting effective professional development sessions.

The author of the present study selected four raters to serve on an expert panel for the purpose of assessing the importance of 24 questionnaire items (Table 2) concerning effectiveness. The LCES allowed the panel to rate and weight the questions according to their importance to the concept of the effectiveness of literacy coaches, giving more weight to those that were more central to, or more critically evaluative of, effectiveness. In addition to the expert panel, the author of the present study also rated the questions, for a total of four raters.

The four raters had the following characteristics:

**Rater 1** is a Title 1 Coordinator in a school district and conducts training in literacy practices for Reading Recovery teachers, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches. Rater 1 is also an adjunct professor at a university teaching graduate courses in the reading department. Several of the graduate courses taught recently are: Teaching of Reading: Developmental, Teaching of Reading: Content Areas, Analysis of Reading Difficulties, Clinical Analysis and Correction of Reading Disabilities, Theoretical Models of Reading I and II, Clinical Internship, Correction of Reading Difficulties, and Advanced Methods of Language Arts in Elementary School. Courses taught also included two classes specifically designed to prepare literacy coaches completing a master's degree in reading: Literacy Teachers as Leaders in School Communities and Supervision and Literacy Coach Practicum. Rater 1 also trains literacy coaches working

in Kindergarten through Third Grade in a school district.

**Rater 2** is a literacy coach for part of the school day working with teachers in grades kindergarten through third. Rater 2 has 11 years of teaching experience, a master's degree in School Leadership, and assists teachers in developing effective literacy teaching strategies for part of the school day. For the other part of the school day, Rater 2 teaches first grade readers needing additional support. Rater 2 assists teachers in such things as setting up literacy centers, modeling teaching techniques, conducting guided reading groups, and organizing classrooms for efficient use of space.

**Rater 3** has a BA in Elementary Education, a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in reading and received National Board Certification in Early to Middle Childhood Literacy in Reading and Language Arts. Rater 3 is also certified in Administration and Supervision and has been an elementary school principal for two years. Rater 3 has 9 years of teaching experience including work as a master teacher helping teachers to incorporate effective literacy practices in the classroom. Rater 3 is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership focusing on the principal's effectiveness as a literacy leader in the school.

**Rater 4** is a Reading Recovery teacher in an elementary school with 36 years of teaching experience. For the last 13 years, Rater 4 has worked as a first grade teacher helping struggling readers and writers in first grade.

The raters were all in the education profession; however, they contributed knowledge from their respective areas of expertise. Educational positions for the raters ranged from a school principal, a literacy coach, a teacher, and a trainer of literacy coaches. The author sought breadth

and diversity in experience in considering the selection of an expert panel to rate the effectiveness of literacy coaches.

The questionnaire for rating of items according to their importance to the concept of effectiveness is shown in Table 2 below. Included in the questionnaire was a column for explanations or thoughts about the reasons for any of the ratings. Several comments recorded by the four raters were:

1. "Modeling and monitoring teacher strategies as well as working with teachers during grade level meetings have a great impact on student learning."
2. "A literacy coach has the ability to raise classroom morale, individual self-esteem, and offer intangible rewards for tasks completed in or out of the classroom."
3. "A literacy coach can work with teachers to improve effective teaching strategies in the classroom through individual or whole group professional development activities as well as modeling for the teacher how to implement more effective teaching strategies."
4. "I think that literacy coaches are effective in working with teachers and do have an impact on learning. By working with teachers, sharing trends, and teaching strategies, modeling lesson, and conferencing with teachers, literacy coaches can strengthen weaknesses where needed."
5. "Literacy coaches must be trained!"

The level of agreement across the four raters was good, so it was not necessary to try to determine any reasons for differences.



Table 2.

*Questionnaire Provided to the Panel of Raters.*

Read each statement below and rate it according to how good of an indication it is of literacy coach effectiveness (in your opinion or best judgment). *Rate it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “not really an indicator of effectiveness” and 10 means “a near-perfect indicator of effectiveness.”* A rating of 5 would be interpreted as “a fair or partial indicator of effectiveness”.

Statement	Your Rating*	Thoughts or explanations for the rating given (continue on another page, if needed)
<i>General:</i>		
1 Do you feel /is the Literacy Coach is effective?		
2 Do you believe /does Literacy Coaches have impact on learning?		
<i>Beliefs about impact on:</i>		
3 Student grades		
4 Standardized test scores		
5 Motivation of students		
6 Time spend on independent Reading		
7 Student-centeredness of classrooms		
8 Improved teaching strategies		
9 Any <i>other</i> factors considered by participant		
<i>Beliefs about LC effectiveness in:</i>		
10 Literacy practices		
11 Collecting data		
12 Interpreting data		

(Table 2, cont.)

13	Distributing data		
14	Modeling lessons		
15	Observing lessons of teachers		
16	Providing feedback on teachers' lessons		
17	Working with teachers as adult learners		
18	Knowledge of literacy assessments		
19	Assisting with response to intervention		
20	Applying literacy to content areas		
21	Working with resistant colleagues		
22	Increasing high stakes testing scores		
23	Increasing student's grades in the classroom		
24	Working with groups of at-risk students		

Overall effectiveness was obtained by combining items into a single item producing a single variable using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 18.0 (SPSS). This method of combining items is called “scoring the survey” and produced scores representing the concepts of overall effectiveness. Points were assigned to each of the items and subareas and an overall effectiveness score was obtained by adding up the points. The overall effectiveness variable was used to answer the research questions. These measures are in the form of scores and are interval level variables, also called continuous variables which are likely to have a quasi-normal distribution. Each measure was correlated or compared to a list of predictors.

There are three major types of variables in this study:

***interval level variables.*** Examples of questions related to this variable are

Question v14 - How many years of educational experience (including this year) do you have? Question v15 - How many years of coaching experience (including this year) do you have?

***ordinal level variables.*** Examples of questions related to these variables would be

Question v28 - How often do you conduct or participate in the following meetings or activities? Study groups – never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, very frequently.

***nominal level variables.*** Examples of questions related to these types of variables are questions v11 - Gender and v12 - Race.

Three different types of statistical analysis were used to address the research questions according to the data type for the variable. For the interval variables, Pearson's or Spearman's correlation coefficient was used. For ordinal variables, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used. For nominal variables, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. For continuous, binary, or ordinal factors (independent variables), such as years of teaching or the Likert-scale, Spearman's correlation was used and the statistical significance was calculated from the  $t$  value. Pearson's was not used because it required parametric data. For multinomial factors, such as type of undergraduate degree, a one-way ANOVA was used to calculate  $\eta^2$  and the statistical significance was calculated from the  $F$  value. A factor was considered to be statistically significant and the effect size as valid if the  $p$  value was below 0.05.

Items were included which basically reworded the same questions so that these items could be used for reliability assessment using the method called Cronbach's Alpha. This type of reliability assessment is known as parallel forms of reliability and also internal reliability. The

reliability (alpha) was 93.1% which is extremely high and means that respondents answered consistently.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### *Characteristics of the Sample*

The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in *Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample According to Type of Position*. There was a high predominance of females (96%) in all three groups (coach, teacher, and administrator). The administrator group had more males (12%), but they were still a small proportion of the cases. There were three times as many blacks in administrative positions than among the teachers or coaches. The distribution of undergraduate and graduate degrees by type was nearly identical between the coaches and teachers; however, the administrators had more graduate degrees. All administrators had graduate degrees in the present sample. In particular, the administrators had more doctoral degrees and more masters plus 30 additional hours of graduate study. Educational experience was almost the same across all three groups, and not greater in the administrator group.

The areas of certification were similar between coaches and teachers, except that more coaches were certified in pre-kindergarten and literacy coaching. Administrators were not very similar to the coaches and teachers with regard to areas of certification. The most common area of certification for teachers and coaches was elementary education, but for the administrator group, it was administration and supervision, unremarkably. The administrator group tended to have a much lower proportion of certifications in reading-related areas (reading, literacy, or English as a Second Language). The administrator group almost seemed to be the opposite of coaches in this regard. Areas in which the coaches tended to have more certifications than the other groups were areas where administrators seemed to have the fewest. Overall, the

administrative group appeared more likely to be black, male, possess an advanced degree, and have certifications in areas not related to reading or literacy.

Table 3

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample According to Type of Position.\**

	<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>
	<b>(n =</b>	<b>(n =242)</b>	<b>(n = 54)</b>	<b>(n = 487)</b>
	<b>191)</b>			
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	97.4	96.7	88.2	96.0
Male	2.1	1.7	11.8	3.0
<i>Race</i>				
White	93.7	90.1	83.3	90.8
Black	4.7	8.3	14.8	7.6
Hispanic	.5	1.7	0	1.0
Other	1	.4	0	0.6
<i>Undergraduate Degree</i>				
Bachelor of Science	53.4	54.5	-	54.0
Bachelor of Arts	42.9	41.3	-	42.0
Other	3.1	3.3	-	3.2
<i>Graduate Degree (Select all that apply)</i>				
M.Ed.	30.4	31.0	29.6	30.6
M.S.	5.2	5.8	5.6	5.5
M.A.	13.6	12.8	3.7	12.1

(Table 3, cont..)

M.A. plus 30 or more graduate hrs.	41.9	24.4	38.9	32.9
Specialist degree	17.8	10.7	13.0	13.7
Ed. D.	1.0	1.2	7.4	1.8
Ph.D.	2.1	0.8	3.7	1.6
Other	6.8	6.2	5.6	6.4
None	5.2	13.6	0	8.8

*Areas of Certification**(Select all that apply)*

Administration and Supervision	11.5	6.6	87	17.4
Counseling	1.0	1.2	1.9	1.2
Early Childhood	24.6	26.4	14.8	24.4
Education Technology	1.0	0.8	3.7	1.2
Elementary Education	87.4	80.6	63	81.3
English	7.3	6.2	9.3	7.0
English (Second Language)	3.7	5.4	1.9	4.3
Literacy Coach	8.9	2.9	1.9	5.1
Pre-Kindergarten	8.4	2.9	9.3	5.8
Reading Endorsement	22.0	16.1	7.4	17.4
Reading Specialist (Masters Degree)	41.4	36.8	18.5	36.6
Special Education	10.5	13.6	13.0	12.3
Other	11.0	12.4	25.9	13.3



(Table 3, cont.)

Asked by Principal	26.7	-	-	
Chosen by a Committee	7.8	-	-	
Responded to District Announcement	37.8	-	-	
Other	27.8	-	-	
Educational Experience (yrs.)**	20.1 ±	19.4 ±	21.7 ±	19.9 + 9.1
	8.4	9.6	8.7	
Coaching Experience (yrs.)**	5.4 ±	-	-	
	4.1			
Administration Experience (yrs.)**	-	-	10.9 ±	
			<u>7.5</u>	

---

\*The values may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding and/or because subjects could select more than one choice. A hyphen ( - ) indicates that the question was not asked for participants in that type of employment position.

\*\*The data with a ± sign are for continuous variables and show the mean and standard deviation.

### ***The Literacy Coach Effectiveness Scale***

The results of the ratings are shown in *Table : Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale* and *Figure 2: Average Rating of Penal on Literacy coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale*. The findings were that the best agreement between any two raters was between Rater 2 and Rater 3 (Spearman's correlation coefficient of  $r = .62$  or 62% agreement). Spearman's Correlation Coefficient indicates the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the independent

and dependent variables. The least agreement between any two raters was between Rater P and Rater H (Spearman's correlation coefficient of  $r = -0.05$  or -5% agreement).

The overall agreement among all four raters was Cronbach's alpha = .64. This indicated a *consistency in rating of 64%*. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to assess the internal consistency reliability of several items or scores that are going to be used to create a summated scale score. Cronbach's alpha is also used for Likert-type questions to get reliability which is used to examine the extent to which items, measures, or assessments are consistent and to see if each measure has no measurement errors. A correlation of .40 plus is moderately high to high.

Table 4: *Literacy Coach Perceived Effective Scale: Rating of the Importance of Questionnaire Items on Perceived Effectiveness by Four Raters.*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Rater D</b>	<b>Rater P</b>	<b>Rater B</b>	<b>Rater H</b>	<b>Average Rating</b>	<b>Points Assigned</b>
1 Do you feel /is the LC effective?	7	10	10	8	8.75	3
2 Do you believe /does LC have impact on learning?	10	10	10	8	9.50	4
3 Student grades	9	9	8	7	8.25	3
4 Standardized test scores	9	9	8	7	8.25	3
5 Motivation of students	6	10	10	8	8.50	3
6 Time spend on independent Reading	4	9	5	8	6.50	1
7 Student-centeredness of classrooms	6	10	8	6	7.50	2
8 Improved teaching strategies*	10	8	8	8	8.50	3
9 Any other factors considered* by participant*	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 Literacy practices	10	10	10	7	9.25	4
11 Collecting data	8	9	7	7	7.75	2
12 Interpreting data	8	9	7	7	7.75	2
13 Distributing data	8	8	7	8	7.75	2

14	Modeling lessons	10	10	8	8	9.00	4
15	Observing lessons of teachers	10	9	9	8	9.00	4
16	Providing feedback on teachers' lessons	10	10	9	8	9.25	4
17	Working with teachers as adult learners	6	10	8	8	8.00	3
18	Knowledge of literacy assessments	7	10	10	9	9.00	4
19	Assisting with response to intervention	4	9	7	8	7.00	2
20	Applying literacy to content areas	5	9	10	8	8.00	3
21	Working with resistant colleagues	8	9	5	8	7.50	2
22	Increasing high stakes testing scores	9	10	8	7	8.50	3
23	Increasing student's grades in the classroom	9	10	8	7	8.50	3
24	Working with groups of at-risk students	6	9	7	9	7.75	2
		7.46	9	7.79	7.38	7.91	2.9344

\*These items, although rated by the panel, were not used in the computation of the effectiveness scores because these items were not rated by the raters or were not given to all three groups of participants (administrators, teachers, and coaches).

The level of agreement between Rater 1 (who was the author of the present study) and the *Average* rating was  $r = .73$  or 73%. This is generally considered to be a moderately high or high correspondence and supports the idea that the effectiveness scale measures literacy coach effectiveness as intended by the author.

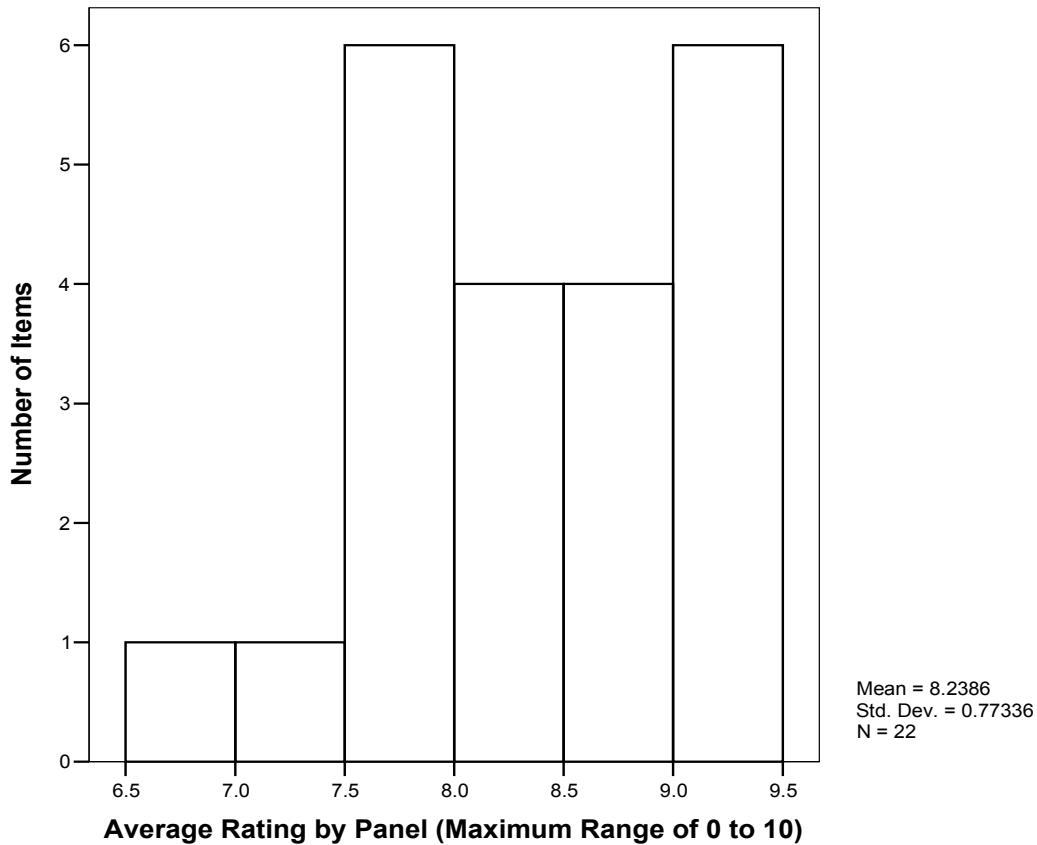


Figure 2. Average Rating of Panel on Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale

### ***Assigning Points to Questions According to Their Importance***

The author of the current study did not give all of the 22 items equal weight in the effectiveness score because some questions were considered "partially important" (scores under 7.5 or 8) while others were considered "highly important" (scores above 9) by the four raters. Partially important questionnaire items were given less weight than those that were considered highly important by the expert panel and the author. This resulted in a total score for effectiveness where highly important questions were given more weight than partially important questions. Three possible methods of assigning points to score the individual items were considered:

1. Scoring Method 1. If the average rating was 9.0 or higher, that question would be given a weight of 3 points. If the average rating was 8.00 - 8.99, that question would be given a weight of 2 points. If the average rating was below 7.99, that question would be given a weight of 1 point.
2. Scoring Method 2. If the average rating was 9.0 or higher, that question would be given a weight of 4 points. If the average rating was 8.00 - 8.99, that question would be given a weight of 3 points. If the average rating was 7.00 - 7.99, that question would be given a weight of 2 points. If the average rating was below 7.00, that question would be given a weight of 1 point..
3. Scoring Method 3. Each question would be given a weight that corresponded to its score on the above table. For example, Question 2 would have a weight of 9.5 points, Question 6 would have a weight of 6.5 points, and so forth.

The advantage of Methods 1 and 2 was simplicity and conventionality. That is, many of the scoring systems use whatever information is available to give more points to some items than other items using whole numbers. Method 1 was more conventional and more common than Method 2, and was easier to understand and compute. Method 2 was however more refined and more accurately reflected the average ratings of the four raters.

The advantage of Method 3 was accuracy and objectiveness. The point values came directly from the importance ratings of the four raters, so there was no extra transformation involved. The disadvantage was complexity and unconventionality. In particular, it could be confusing that none of the questions had a point value below 6.5 and many items had fractional point values, such as 9.25 instead of just 9 or 7.75 instead of just 8.

The author of the present study decided on the first scoring method because of the conventionality of the method. Thus, to calculate a score from the point values in the rightmost column of the above table (Table 4), participants were given three points if they answered “Yes” to item 1 and 4 points if they answered “Yes” to item 2 in the above table. For all remaining items, which used a 5-point Likert-scale, the participants were given the number of points shown in the table if they responded that they “Strongly Agree” with the item. The participants were given 0 points if they indicated that they “Strongly Disagree” with the item. If they indicated that they were “Undecided”, they were given half of the number of points shown in the table. For example, item 19 addressed assisting with response to intervention which was rated and assigned to be worth 2 points. If a participant responded with “Agree”, they were assigned 0 points, if “Strongly Disagree, 1/2 point, if they responded “Disagree”, 1 point for “Undecided”, 1-1/2 points for "Agree", and 2 points for “Strongly Agree.” The point values for all 22 items were summed up to obtain the total effectiveness score, which could never be lower than 0 or higher than 62, regardless of how the participant responded.

### ***Findings on the Properties of the Total Perceived Effectiveness Score***

As described in Chapter 3, participants who dropped out of the survey before it was completed (n=22) or did not identify their role (n=2) were removed from the sample, leaving 487 participants that were included in the study. Within these 487 participants, the author assessed the number who did not answer the items in the questionnaire that were used to compute the total effectiveness score such as question v33 – Do you believe that the literacy coach in your school is effective?, v 52 – I believe the literacy coach in my school is effective, v 73 – Do you believe the literacy coach in your school is effective?, and question v 77 – I believe the literacy coach is



effective in the following ways: (a) knowledge of effective literacy practices, (b) collecting, interpreting, and distributing data, (c) modeling and observing lessons, (d) providing feedback on teachers' lessons, (e) working with teachers as adult learners, (f) knowledge of literacy assessments, (g) assisting with Response to Intervention models, (h) applying literacy to content areas, (i) working with resistant colleagues, (j) increasing high stakes testing scores, (k) increasing students' grades in the classroom, and (l) working with groups of at-risk students. If this number was high, it would be necessary to exclude them from the study as well because this essential data was missing. The assessment showed that there was a very small amount of data missing from the items in *Table 5: Missing Data Needed for Perceived Effectiveness Scores (N=487)* below that were used to compute effectiveness scores.

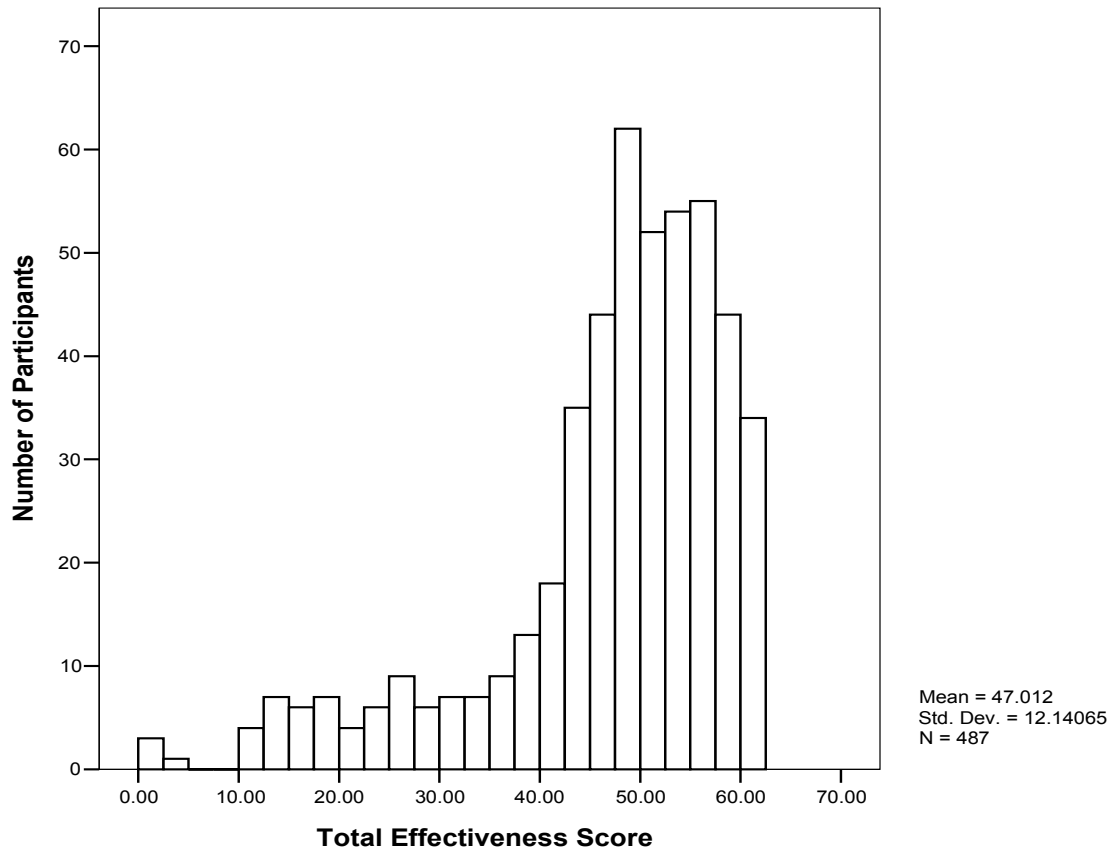
Table 5:

*Missing Data Needed for Perceived Effectiveness Scores (N=487)*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
eff Coach is Effective	477	10
imp Coach has Impact on Learning	476	11
impa Improved grades	477	10
impb Improved standardized test scores	482	5
impc Increased motivation of students	479	8
impd Increased time spent on independent reading	481	6
impe More student centered classrooms	483	4
effa Effective Literacy Practices	484	3
effb Collecting Data	484	3
effc Interpreting Data	484	3
effd Distributing Data	484	3
effe Modeling Lessons	485	2
efff Observing Lessons of Teachers	487	0
effg Providing Feedback on Teachers' Lessons	486	1
effh Working with Teachers as Adult Learners	487	0
effi Knowledge of Literacy Assessments	485	2
effj Assisting with Response to Intervention (RTI) Groups	482	5
effk Applying Literacy to Content Areas	486	1
effl Working With Resistant Colleagues	485	2
effm Increasing High Stakes Testing Scores	484	3
effn Increasing Students' Grades in the Classroom	483	4
effo Working with Groups of At-risk Students	481	6
Average	482.82	4.18

The number of subjects who skipped questions needed for the effectiveness score ranged from 0 to 11 with an average of 4.18. Thus, the average percentage of questions that were skipped was only 0.9%, which was very small. The missing data was handled using the method of replacement by serial means. That is, by replacing the missing data for an item with the mean for that item across all participants to the nearest choice (rounded to the nearest integer), a reasonably accurate score was computed for each and every participant included in the study, with almost no chance that the replacement would alter the findings of the study in any significant way.

*Figure 3: Distribution of Total Effectiveness Scores in 487 Participants* shows the distribution of the total effectiveness score calculated from the points column of Table 5 above for all participants included in the study (n = 487).



*Figure 3. Distribution of Total Perceived Effectiveness Scores in 487 Participants*

***Testing of Literacy Coach Perceived Effectiveness Scale***

The measurement validity and internal reliability of the effectiveness instrument was tested to determine if it was accurate, consistent, and suitable for use in research on literacy coach effectiveness.

### ***Measurement Validity***

The validity was established through the use of a quantitative content validity method. An expert panel of four raters reviewed the questionnaire items that comprised the concept of effectiveness and the effectiveness score. Each item was rated according to its centrality and importance to the concept of literacy coach effectiveness on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicated that it was not really an indicator of literacy coach effectiveness and where 10 indicated a near-perfect indicator of literacy coach effectiveness. The average rating of the 22 items that comprised the effectiveness measure was 7.9 out of 10. The lowest rated item receiving a rating of 6.5. No items were rated below 5.0, which is the midpoint of the rating scale. This indicated that all of the items were considered by the panel to be of central importance to the concept of effectiveness, with about a third considered highly important (see Table 4). It was concluded that the scale had an acceptable level of measurement validity.

### ***Measurement Reliability***

The internal reliability of responses to the 22 items that comprised total effectiveness score (see Table 4) was tested using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) method. The reliability was  $\alpha = .95$ . This value was high and indicated that the individual participants were consistent in their opinions of effectiveness 95% of the time. If the responses had been inconsistent, the effectiveness score would not have been meaningful because it would have been based on inconsistent information. The reliability was however 95% and provided support for the idea that the effectiveness scores were a good measure that represented the authentic views of the participants.

In conclusion, the LCES has measurement validity and reliability, and is therefore suitable for use in the measurement and analysis of literacy coach effectiveness.

### ***Research Question 1***

The first research question (RQ1) is “How do administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches differ, if at all, in their perception of the effectiveness of literacy coaches?” The answer to this question was determined by comparing the total effectiveness scores, a measure shown to be valid and reliable above, of administrators (principals and assistant principals), teachers, and literacy coaches.

Figure 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the total perceived effectiveness score for each of the three groups. The administrator group and literacy coach group rated the effectiveness very similarly around 52 on a scale from 0 to 62. Fifty-two is about five-sixths of the way to 62, or to be more exact, 83% ( $52/62 \times 100$ ) of the way. For the purposes of this study, this score was interpreted as the literacy coaches being perceived as 83% effective. The author of the present study considered this to be a high level of perceived effectiveness. It was not perfectly effective (100%) but it was closer to this than to being half way effective (50%). The author concluded that both administrators and literacy coaches considered the literacy coaches to have a relatively high perceived effectiveness.

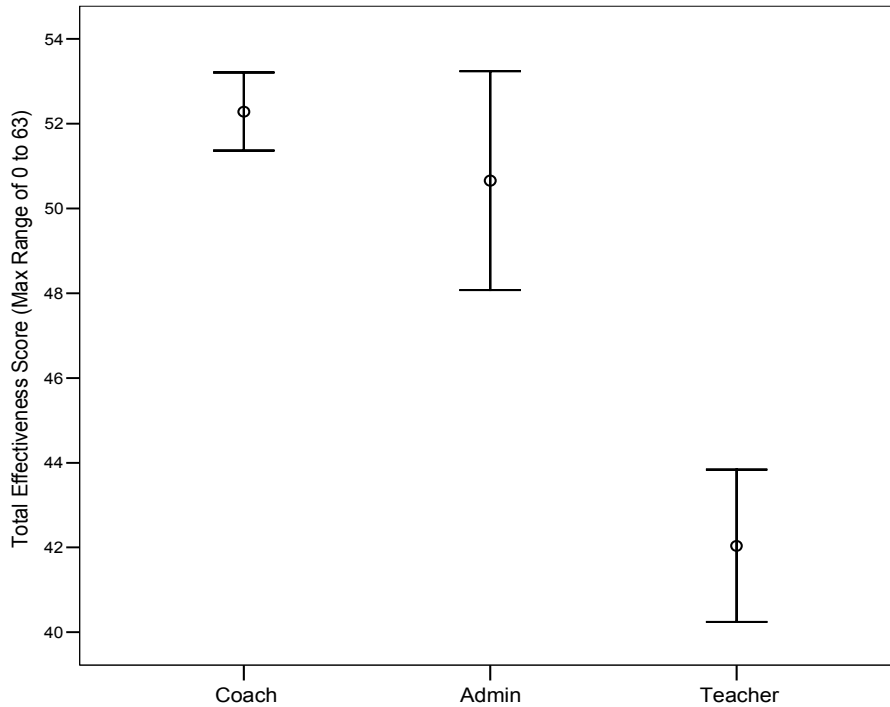


Figure 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Perceived Effectiveness Scores

The range of perceived effectiveness scores for the individual groups was high, as shown in *Table 6: Differences in the Total Perceived Effectiveness Score for Literacy Coaches According to Education Role in 487 Participants* below. The highest score was 62 for each of the groups, which is the maximum score. In other words, there was at least one member of each of the three groups that considered the literacy coaches to be 100% effective. On the other hand, the lowest scores ranged from 18 for the self-rating of the literacy coach group to 16 for the administrator group to zero for the teacher group. The teacher group again assigned a lower score than the administrator group.

Table 6.

*Differences in the Total Perceived Effectiveness Score for Literacy Coaches According to Education Role in 487 Participants*

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	S.D.	S.E.	N
Coach	52.2	53.7	18	62	6.4	.46	191
Admin*	50.6	51.0	16	62	9.48	1.29	54
Teacher*	42.0	45.5	0	62	14.0	.89	242
Total	47.0	49.8	0	62	12.1	.55	487

\*Mean scores were significantly different at  $p < 0.001$  and  $t = 5.48$  (two-tailed test, equal variances not assumed).

Table 6 also shows the result of a Student's *t*-test, a procedure that compares sample means to see if evidence shows the corresponding population distributions differ in the scores of administrators and teachers, in order to provide the critical answer to RQ1. The difference between the mean scores of administrators and teachers was 8.62 which was determined to be highly significant at the  $p < 0.0005$  level. There is no simple reason or explanation that can be given for this difference in the perceived effectiveness of literacy coaches; however, there are many possibilities with different degrees of likelihood. These possibilities will be listed and compared in Chapter 5.

To restate RQ1, the question was "How do administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches differ, if at all, in their perception of the effectiveness of literacy coaches?" The answer is unequivocal. As compared to administrators, teachers regarded the effectiveness of literacy



coaches to be markedly lower. Literacy coaches' ratings for themselves were similar to the ratings of the administrators.

### ***Research Question 2***

The second research question (RQ2) is ““What factors predict the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches?” From Table 6 above, literacy coaches rated themselves nearly the same as administrators rated them, but teachers rated them much lower than they rated themselves. This difference between teachers and coaches was statistically significant at  $p < 0.0005$  ( $t = 10.144$ , two-tailed test, equal variances not assumed). The reason for this may be as simple as professional pride or self-aggrandizement. On the other hand, it is also possible that teachers consistently underestimate the true effectiveness of literacy coaches, or perhaps downgrade the coaches for reasons that have nothing to do with effectiveness, such as professional jealousies. These issues are mostly beyond the scope of this study; however, they will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Turning to RQ2 again, RQ2 was answered by statistically comparing the self-rated effectiveness scores of coaches according to selected factors, namely the demographic and professional characteristics of the coaches. The factors were broadly grouped into three areas. The first was years of experience in teaching or coaching, the second was the nature and amount of university-level training or formal preparation, and the third was area of certification.

For continuous, binary, or ordinal factors (independent variables), such as years of teaching or the Likert-scale, Spearman's (non parametric) correlation was used and the statistical significance was calculated from the  $t$  value. For multinominal factors, such as type of undergraduate degree, a one-way ANOVA was used to calculate  $\eta^2$  and the statistical

significance was calculated from the  $F$  value. A factor was considered to be statistically significant and the effect size as valid if the  $p$  value was below 0.05.

As shown in Table 7: *Effect Size of Demographic and Professional Factors on Perceived Effectiveness Score* below, there were many factors that were significantly correlated with self-rated effectiveness by the coaches. The single most important factor by far was years of experience as a literacy coach, with a statistically-significant effect size of .43 (see  $r$  column Table 7 below). Professional education experience as a whole was also significantly related with an effect size of .17. There were many other factors that were more important than education experience as a whole. Among these were university-level training in specific literacy intervention programs, coaching and mentoring of adults, assisting teachers with classroom management, and working with resistant colleagues. Each of these had effect sizes of 30% or higher.

One of the remarkable aspects of the findings shown in Table 7 was that university-level training in any aspect of literacy coaching was beneficial to coaching effectiveness. This was indicated by the finding that each and every of the eleven topics of university-training were related to effectiveness at statistically-significant levels. This contrasts with the area of certification for literacy coaches. Educational certifications ranged from early childhood to administration. The only area of educational certification that was significantly related to effectiveness was that of a reading specialist that required a master's degree, with an effect size of 15%. Note that this certification merely confirms the findings discussed in the previous paragraph of the overriding importance of university-level training on this topic. One finding that seemed inconsistent with the importance of university-level training was the finding that the certification area of literacy coaching was not significantly related to effectiveness. However,

this inconsistency is dispelled by the observation that it is the second most closely related area (with an effect size of 14%, however it was very close to achieving statistical significant at  $p=.054$ ). This is hardly evidence that disputes the apparent importance of university-level training in each and every aspect of literacy coaching.

Table 7.

*Effect Size of Demographic and Professional Factors on the Perceived Effectiveness Score*

Factor	Effect Size	Significance	N
<i>Continuous, Ordinal, or Binomial Factors</i>			
	<i>r**</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
Educational experience (yrs)*	.17	.029	172
Coaching experience (yrs.)*	.43	< .001	174
<i>Amount of university-level training in:</i>			
Adult learning*	.28	< .001	183
Applying literacy strategies to content areas*	.28	< .001	182
Assisting teachers with classroom management*	.30	< .001	184
Coaching or mentoring adults*	.34	< .001	184
Conducting effective professional development*	.25	.001	186
Effective literacy practices*	.26	< .001	186
Learning how to manage time and job*	.24	.001	184
Meeting needs of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language Learners*	.23	.002	185
Specific literacy intervention programs*	.36	< .001	185
Use of literacy assessments*	.20	.006	184
Working with resistant colleagues*	.30	< .001	183

*Areas of Certification*

(Table 7, cont.)

Administration and Supervision	.08	.266	191
Counseling	-.10	.165	191
Early Childhood	.01	.848	191
Educational Technology	-.06	.380	191
Elementary Education	.14	.052	191
English	-.04	.584	191
English (Second Language)	.04	.591	191
Literacy Coach	.14	.054	191
Pre-Kindergarten	-.05	.481	191
Reading Endorsement	-.04	.603	191
Reading Specialist (Requiring a Masters Degree)*	.15	.045	191
Special Education	.11	.116	191
Other	.09	.245	191
<i>Formal Preparation for Literacy Coach</i>			
Undergraduate Minor in Reading	-.08	.303	191
Undergraduate Major in Reading	-.06	.418	191
Masters Degree in Reading	.06	.415	191
Masters Degree in Literacy Coaching	-.05	.521	191
Certification as a Reading Specialist*	.18	.015	191
Interest in literacy, but no formal training in coaching*	-.18	.012	191
Certification as Literacy Coach*	.15	.041	191

(Table 7, cont.)

University courses geared specifically to literacy coaching*	.17	.020	191
District training geared specifically to literacy coaching	.08	.276	191
Other	.03	.681	191
<i>Multinomial Factors</i>	<i>eta<sup>2</sup>**</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
Race or Ethnicity	.003	.91	190
Undergraduate Degree Type	.004	.68	189
Graduate/Advanced Degree Type	.09	.28	186

---

\*Statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (two-tailed test; unadjusted for multiple comparisons).

\*\* $r$  can range from 0 to  $\pm 1$ ;  $eta^2$  can range from 0 to 1. Both are estimates of the degree of association and effect size.

The last few findings shown in Table 7 reflect the importance of university-level education in literacy. A number of different factors had no effect on a literacy coach's effectiveness. These included race, type of undergraduate degree, type of graduate/advanced degree, and others. On the other hand, factors such as certification as a literacy coach, university courses geared specifically to literacy coaching, and certification as a reading specialist with a masters degree in reading were significantly effective with effect sizes ranging from 15% to 17%. One of the most elucidating findings concerned coaches who indicated that they had an interest in literacy but no

formal training. These coaches had a negative effect size of -.18. That is, the coaches who indicated that they had an interest-only (no formal training in literacy coaching) had a significantly reduced perceptions of effectiveness as compared to coaches who indicated that they had formal training.

The answer to RQ2, "What factors predict the self-rated effectiveness of literacy coaches?" is very clear. The factor of overriding importance is university-level training in any of the aspects of literacy coaching. Coaches without this training have reduced effectiveness even if they have a strong personal interest in literacy coaching.

### ***Bonferroni Post Hoc Test***

#### **Research Question 1 (RQ1)**

When the differences in literacy coach perceived effectiveness ratings between groups is compared statistically using univariate analysis of variance with a post hoc Bonferroni test, the findings are similar to that using the other methods, although greater detail can be seen (Table 8). The differences were significant at  $F_{[2,486]} = 48.8$  ( $p < .001$ ) with an adjusted  $R^2 = .164$ .

Table 8.

*Post Hoc (Bonferroni method) Analysis of the Effect of Position Type on Literacy Coach Total Perceived Effectiveness Ratings*

Group	Comparison		Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
	Group	Group			
Coach	Administrator		1.62	1.71	1
	Teacher		10.25(*)	1.07	<.001
Admin	Coach		-1.62	1.71	1
	Teacher		8.62(*)	1.67	<.001
Teacher	Coach		-10.25(*)	1.07	<.001
	Administrator		-8.62(*)	1.67	<.001

\* The mean difference is significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

The greatest post hoc test shows that the source of this difference was primarily the differences in scores between the teachers and the coaches (10.25 point difference with  $p < .001$ ), with a contribution from the difference between the teachers and administrators (8.62 point difference with  $p < .001$ ), but not from the administrators and coaches because they were largely the same (1.62 point difference and  $p = 1$ ).



## **Research Question 2 (RQ2)**

To further elucidate the reasons for the findings of a significant  $\eta^2$  in Table 8 above, a univariate analysis of variance with Bonferroni post hoc tests (where feasible) was conducted on the multinomial variables of race, undergraduate degree type, and graduate/advanced degree type. In Table 8 none of these variables were found to have an effect on self-rated perceptions of effectiveness by literacy coaches. Accordingly, the  $F$  values were  $F_{[3, 190]} = .175$  for race,  $F_{[2, 189]} = .392$  for undergraduate degree type, and  $F_{[14, 186]} = 1.20$  for graduate/advanced degree type. Post hoc tests could not be performed on the variables of race and graduate/advanced degree type because the number of cases in one or more of the categories was too low. For race, the problem was the small number of black coaches. For graduate/advanced degree type, the problem was the small number of MS, PhD, and other degrees. The post hoc analysis according to undergraduate degree type showed no significant differences between any pair of degrees for the three categories of B.A., B.S., and other degrees.

## ***Summary of Findings***

The purpose of the study was to determine the perception of effectiveness of literacy coaches in the eyes of administrators, teachers, and the coaches themselves, and to understand the factors that contributed to this effectiveness.

The sample of participants ( $n = 487$ ) consisted of 191 coaches, 242 teachers, and 54 administrators (principals or assistant principals). The sample was almost exclusively female (96%) with 91% white, 8% black, and the remainder distributed across other ethnic or racial groups. Over 90% had graduate/advanced degrees with an average experience in the profession

of education of 20 years, regardless of position type (coach, teacher, or administrator). Over a third had training in reading education specialties.

An instrument for assessing the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach was developed and tested in both an expert panel of four individuals and in the present sample of participants. The measurement validity and reliability were determined. The findings were that the instrument had sufficient content validity and internal reliability that it could be used to estimate a literacy coach's effectiveness. The perception of effectiveness was measured using scores derived from 22 questionnaire items on a scale from 0 (completely ineffective) to 62 (100% effective). The scores had a slightly-skewed parametric distribution with the participants ( $n = 487$ ) scoring literacy coaches with an average effectiveness of 47. This corresponds to an overall effectiveness of 83%, which is considered by the author of the present study to be relatively high. Literacy coaches were thus concluded to be moderately-high or highly effective overall.

The perceived effectiveness ratings of literacy coaches by teachers and administrators were compared. Teachers rated the perceived effectiveness of coaches significantly lower (score of 42.0) than administrators (score of 50.6). This difference was statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ . The lowest score given to literacy coaches by any administrator was 16; however, the lowest score by teachers was 0, the lowest score value on the scale. Literacy coaches rated their own effectiveness similar to that of the administrators (score of 52.2).

The self-reported effectiveness of literacy coaches was used to determine the factors that predicted high perceptions of effectiveness. The two factors of overriding importance were years of coaching experience ( $p < 0.001$ ) and university-level training in topics related to literacy coaching ( $p < 0.001$  to  $p = 0.006$ ). Literacy coaches who had a strong *interest* in literacy coaching, but no *formal education*, had significantly lower effectiveness scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). Many

other factors were not significantly related to coaching effectiveness, including race, undergraduate degree type, graduate degree type, area of certification (if they were outside of reading and literacy topics), and undergraduate training in reading.

Overall, the findings show the importance of advanced education in reading education in determining the perceived effectiveness of a literacy coach. They also show that teachers have a markedly lower perception of literacy coach effectiveness than other groups in the professional education community. In the next chapter, the present findings will be compared to that of previous studies and the reasons for the interesting findings will be discussed.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion of Findings

Educators today are searching for tools to use to improve the quality of literacy instruction and raise student achievement. One major strategy that has some merit is successful on-site, job-embedded continuous professional development (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter, 2008; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez, 2005; and American Educational Research Association, 2005). A second strategy that has supported by research may be the use of a school-based literacy coach to plan and direct this professional development (Poglingo, et al. 2003; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson and Rodriguez, 2005; Edwards and Green, 1999). These professional development plans that include the use of a literacy coach depend on the coach to create a learning-rich environment for students as well as for teachers.

Literacy coaching is a growing development in the field of American education with the goal of allowing teachers to observe effective classroom instructional procedures taught by a more knowledgeable other and to implement these practices in their own classrooms. Dialogue and reflection between the coach and teacher encourage each to reach a higher level of understanding about how these practices are working and how effective these practices are in improving student achievement. Literacy coaches can offer support for new teachers and experienced teachers for trials in new areas. Teachers want to perform to meet higher standards and require support to do this.

In order to assist teachers, literacy coaches should serve in the capacity of a literacy leader in the school, not in a supervisory position. Teachers need to be assured that the literacy coach is there as a supportive colleague and confident that the coach is there to offer support as attempts are made at incorporating new practices into the classroom. Coaching is a different approach to

professional development and the coach should not take on the role of an expert practitioner who tells the teacher what to do, but be there to assist in learning and development.

Literacy coaching offers a powerful intervention that may well be unattainable unless more attention is paid to the training, requirements, duties, and effectiveness of the coach in schools. Successful coaches should be aware of the established literature about reading and literacy development, best practices, national, state, and local policies, and adults as learners. As IRA (2004) reports, “reading coaching and reading coaches are potentially powerful interventions that can improve reading instruction” (p. 4).

As we have seen in the past, many ideas have been developed that promised to be the cure-all for what is ailing school systems, only to be discarded when new ideas come along. It is up to the decision makers in schools and school districts to allow adequate time for planning and implementation of a professional development/coaching model, and to assure that the model is supported. There is some evidence that together the use of a high quality professional development plan and the use of a literacy coach can improve teachers’ instructional practices. Literacy coaches can break through the isolation that many teachers feel when they attempt to implement changes in their instructional methods and can give teachers support to change their teaching.

In the research conducted by Taylor et al. (2005) in the CIERA model, it was found that literacy coaching accounted for 11% of the between teacher variance and increased writing scores. Studies done by the Literacy Collaborative also noted substantial improvement in literacy teaching which correlated to the amount of professional development and coaching the teachers received.

Even though there is some research available on literacy coaching, there is not a sufficient amount that shows its effect on teacher learning, student learning, and achievement. The power of effective literacy coaches may be that they possess the knowledge of current and effective research practices and are able to assist in sharing and developing this knowledge with classroom teachers.

In order to assist in determining the perceived effectiveness of a literacy coach, a compilation of factors related to this effectiveness must be established. One important finding of this study is the information gained from the LCES developed to identify important areas used to determine literacy coaches' perceived effectiveness. The areas are ranked in order of importance:

1. literacy practices and providing feedback on teacher's lessons (9.25)
2. modeling lessons, observing lessons, knowledge of literacy assessments (9.00)
3. motivation of students, improved teaching strategies, increasing high stakes test scores, increasing student grades (8.5)
4. increasing standardized test scores (8.25)
5. working with teachers as adult learners, applying literacy to content areas (8.00)
6. assisting with Response to Intervention (7.00)

Basing the literacy coaches' perceived effectiveness on these factors will add to the literature on literacy coaching. Few studies show specific areas to examine and lack an instrument which could be used to examine effectiveness. Establishing criteria to gauge perceptions of effectiveness can help educators determine strengths and weaknesses of a literacy coach and a literacy coaching program. As Kannapel (2008) found, it is essential that a coaching model be in place over a period of time before a determination is made of whether the model is effective or

not and that a school will not see significant gains in student achievement immediately, but will see an increase in effective teaching. (p. 35)

Another finding of the study was that administrators and coaches rated perceptions of effectiveness similarly, while teachers' ratings were markedly lower. There are several reasons to consider when exploring the differences in opinions between the administrators' and the teachers' ratings of the perceived effectiveness of the literacy coach. Some principals may require that the literacy coach serve as an evaluator of teachers instead of working in a supportive role. Some principals may assign literacy coaches to work with specific teachers who are having difficulties in the classroom causing teachers to view the literacy coach as a person who works with less effective teachers. Teachers themselves may view the literacy coach as an "expert" who comes into their classroom to observe their lessons and then model the "perfect" lesson which sets the literacy coach up for criticism.

Other possibilities for the different rating of teachers and administrators may be that teachers may not have had any input into planning for the literacy coaches' duties. Perhaps the principal planned the coaching model with little knowledge about what the literacy coach was actually supposed to do during the school day. Some teachers may see coaches as having an easier job than the regular classroom teacher. In the past, seniority was often established by years of teaching instead of by expertise in the knowledge of literacy instruction. Perhaps some classroom teachers view the position of the literacy coach as less demanding than a classroom teacher's workload. Due to training sessions and meetings, the literacy coach may be out of the school too often and teachers may have feelings of resentment. Teachers have a tendency to become isolated in their classrooms and resent the fact that the literacy coach will visit classrooms frequently as one of the most important aspects of their job description. When

considering all of these factors, it is easy to understand why teachers may also have underestimated the true effectiveness of the literacy coach.

In a study sponsored by the Institute of Educational Science, Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2008) examined the impact of the Literacy Collaborative from the Ohio State University. Teachers working in Literacy collaborative schools were asked to provide the names of people in school and out of school who they approached to discuss teaching issues with. In research conducted on the Literacy Collaborative, findings were that during the first year of implementation of Literacy Collaborative model in a school, teachers rarely if ever consulted with the Literacy coach. After four years of participation in the model, more teachers approached the Literacy coach about teaching issues. By 2008, the Literacy Coach was the central person in the communication network and more cross-grade level communication was occurring.

To create more positive perceptions of effectiveness of literacy coaches by teachers, several recommendations are designed to address this discrepancy. The administrators of the school should consider designing a plan for a coaching model and include a cross section of employees from the school community to assist. In that way, teachers and others would feel that they had more input on the job description of the literacy coach and could help in developing the use of the literacy coach to the fullest potential. By including others in this process, teachers would be more aware of how the coach could assist them and recognize the possible benefits that the literacy coach could bring to their instructional practices. The partnership could promote change by setting goals for the literacy coach and for the other teachers which would be beneficial to all. The literacy and teacher must develop trust and mutual respect for each other.



### ***Implications for Theory and Practice***

The findings of this study support the growing theory concerning the effectiveness of literacy coaches. IRA argues that literacy coaches should have previous teaching experience and a master's degree specializing in reading education. They also call for a minimum of twenty-four graduate hours in reading, language arts, and related courses and a six-hour supervised practicum. In this study, there was no doubt that literacy coaches who had higher self-ratings had more teaching and/or literacy coaching experience and had more training at the university level. This finding supports the results of research conducted by Marsh et al. (2008) for the RAND Corporation. The researchers stated that the number of years a coach was employed in a school was linked to higher reading scores.

### ***Recommendations for Future Research***

The current study examined the perceptions of effectiveness of the literacy coach based upon the connection to high-quality professional development and teacher quality. The author of the current study developed recommendations for future research. The literacy coach can assist the teacher in perfecting new literacy strategies which may result in higher student achievement. As reflected in the research, achievement is measured in many different ways. Some studies have examined student grades or performance on district, state, or standardized tests. Student achievement is most important and increasing that is the goal.

More experimental design studies and longitudinal studies with large data sets need to be designed and conducted to examine the effectiveness of the literacy coach on student achievement. Factors determining student achievement need to be clearly defined. These

studies must be linked to student achievement since these types of studies could more clearly determine effectiveness.

Future research studies are called for to help find ways to measure the impact of the literacy coach on student achievement. To build on the author's study of perceptions of effectiveness by administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches, the literacy community needs to examine the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a literacy coach that promote effectiveness?
2. What are the specific behaviors of a literacy coach that produce effectiveness?
3. What kind of training is needed to develop a successful coach?
4. What are the effects of various literacy coaching training programs?
5. What are the costs and benefits of employing a literacy coach?
6. What are the long term effects of literacy coaching on student achievement?
7. Why do classroom teachers perceive literacy coaching as being less effective than the perceptions of effectiveness of administrators and coaches?
8. What is the role of the literacy coach as determined by administrators?

Literacy coaching must be linked to student achievement without a doubt. Using perceptions of effectiveness is not enough. By determining the factors measuring effectiveness, we can better prepare and train literacy coaches for their roles. Studies should measure an increase in teachers' understandings of instructional practices. Without more research to substantiate the current research, we cannot definitely say whether literacy coaches are having an impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

People often have contempt for university-level education, regarding it as an investment of time and money that has very little practical value. Concerning the perceptions of effectiveness

of literacy coaches, the present findings show the real story is quite the opposite. Factors such as university courses geared specifically to literacy coaching, certification as a reading specialist with a master's degree in reading, and certification as a literacy coach were significantly effective.

An unusual finding of the research was that there was a tendency for school administrators to have no reading-related certifications. Administrators have a much lower proportion of certification in reading related areas such as reading, literacy, or English as a Second Language. Are reading related areas a certification that administrators would not have a chance to obtain, or could reading related people be selected "against" for whatever reason? To become an administrator in a school system, educators are required to have a master's degree in such areas as "School Leadership" or "Administration and Supervision". Perhaps in some cases this leaves little time for the pursuit of another degree or certification. Another factor supporting the correlation to IRA standards was that a Reading Specialist certification requiring a master's of education degree was also related to a higher self-rating and the study found that the value of university level training was significantly related to a coach's self-rating. The results of the study should be helpful in creating and defining positions for literacy coaches and in focusing training based on indicators taken from the LCES of the literacy coaches' effectiveness such as educational experience, coaching experience, knowledge of instructional practices, working with adult learners, knowledge and experience concerning profession development, and working with resistant colleagues.

## ***Limitations***

This study was based on administrators', classroom teachers', and literacy coaches' perceptions of the effectiveness of literacy coaches. Limitations of the study included surveying only administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches working in kindergarten to grade 8 and omitting others at the high school level. The number of literacy coaches in schools is also limiting.

A non-experimental, correlation design was used. This means that although we imply, and sometimes assume cause-and-effect between various factors and coaching effectiveness, technically this is not possible based on the present findings alone. This study was also limited by studying the perceptions of the effectiveness of literacy coaches, not effectiveness as measured by student achievement.

Although the measurement validity was demonstrated to have content validity, the measurements of this study may not have been fully accurate. In other words, the participants may not have answered honestly to the best of their knowledge or reflected their personal perceptions of the effectiveness the literacy coach in a school setting in all cases. The degree of honesty is unknown and consequently it is a weakness of this study, as are all studies based on self-reporting.

## ***Summary of Findings and Conclusions***

The purpose of the study was to determine the perception of effectiveness of literacy coaches in the eyes of administrators, teachers, and the coaches themselves, and to understand the factors that contributed to this effectiveness.

The sample of participants ( $n = 487$ ) consisted of coaches, teachers, and administrators and was almost exclusively female. Over 90% had graduate/advanced degrees with an average experience in the profession of education of twenty years, regardless of position type (coach, teacher, or administrator). Over a third had training in reading education specialties.

An instrument for assessing perceptions of literacy coach effectiveness was developed and tested by both an expert panel of four individuals and in the present sample of participants. The perception of effectiveness was measured using scores derived from twenty-two questionnaire items on a scale from 0 (completely ineffective) to 10 (100% effective). The scores had a slightly-skewed parametric distribution with the participants ( $n = 487$ ) scoring literacy coaches with an average effectiveness of 47. This corresponds to an overall effectiveness of 83%, which is considered by the author of the present study to be relatively high. Literacy coaches were thus perceived to be moderately-high or highly effective overall.

The effectiveness ratings of literacy coaches by teachers and administrators were compared. Teachers rated the perception of effectiveness of coaches significantly lower than administrators. Literacy coaches rated their own effectiveness similar to that of the administrators.

The self-reported effectiveness of literacy coaches was used to determine the factors that predicted high effectiveness. The two factors of overriding importance were years of coaching experience and university-level training in topics related to literacy coaching. Literacy coaches that had a strong *interest* in literacy coaching, but no *formal education* had significantly lower effectiveness scores. Many other factors were not significantly related to coaching effectiveness, including race, undergraduate degree type, graduate degree type, area of certification (if they were outside of reading and literacy topics), and undergraduate training in reading.

Overall, the findings show the importance of advanced education in reading education in determining the effectiveness of a literacy coach. They also show that teachers have a markedly lower view of literacy coach effectiveness than other groups in the professional education community.

## References

- Allington, R. (2006). Reading specialists, reading teachers, reading coaches: A question of credentials. *Reading Today*, 23(4), 16-17.
- American Educational Research Association. (2005). *Research points. Teaching teachers: Professional development to improve student achievement* (Vol. 3, Issue 1). [Brochure]. Washington, DC: Author.
- Bach, A. & Supovitz, J. (2003). *Teacher and coach implementation of writer's workshop in America's Choice schools, 2001 and 2002*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.
- Bandura, A. (1975). *Social learning and personality development*. New Jersey: Holt, Rineholt and Winston, Inc.
- Bean, R.M. (2004). *The reading specialist: Leadership for the classroom, school, and community*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Bean, R.M., Beclastro, B., Hathaway, J., Risko, V., Rosemary, C. & Roskos, K. (2008). *A review of the research on instructional coaching*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, New York.
- Biancarosa, B., Bryk, A., & Dexter, E. (2008). *Assessing the value-added effects of literacy collaborative professional development on student learning*. New York, New York: Paper presented at the 2008 Conference of the American Educational Research Association.
- Blase, J. & Blase, J. (1999). *Leadership for staff development: Supporting the lifelong study of teaching and learning*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, College of Education. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED439123).
- Boreen, J. (2000). *Mentoring beginning teachers: Guiding, reflecting, coaching*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Bransford, J., Darling-Hammond, L., & LePage, P. (2005). Introduction. In J. Bransford and L. Darling-Hammond (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What Teachers should learn and be able to do*, (p. 1). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bruner, J. (1960). *The process of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burkins, J. (2007). *Coaching for balance: How to meet the challenges of literacy coaching*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Casey, K. (2006). *Literacy coaching: The essentials*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Cassidy, J., & Cassidy, D. (2005-2006). What's hot, what's not for 2006. *Reading Today*, 23(3), 1, 8.
- Costa, A. L. & Garmston, R. (2002). *Cognitive coaching: A foundation for renaissance schools*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Correnti, R., & Rowan, B. (2006). *Changing literacy instruction in schools: Consequences of CSR program participation on teachers' classroom practice*. School of Education, University of Michigan, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). What matters most: a competent teacher for every child. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(3).
- Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). "Coach" can mean many things: Five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First. (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007- No.005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>
- Edwards, J. & Green, K. (1999). *Growth in coaching skills over a three-year period: Progress toward mastery*. Montreal, Canada: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.
- Gamse, B.C.; Bloom, H.S.; Kemple, J.J.; Jacob, R.T. (2008). *Reading 1<sup>st</sup> impact study: Interim report*. (NCEE 2008-4016). Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Educational Sciences, USDE.
- Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R.A. (2003). *DIBELS: Dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Longmont, Colorado: SOPRIS WEST.
- Guskey, T. (1989). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, 15(5), 5-12.
- Guskey, T. (2002). Does it make a difference? Evaluating professional development. *Education Leadership*, 59(6), 45-51.
- Hasbrouck, J. & C. Denton. (2005). *The reading coach: A how-to manual for success*. Boston, MA: Sopris West Educational Services Cambium Learning Company.
- Hesketh, B. (1997). Dilemmas in training for transfer and retention. *Applied Psychology: An international review*, 46(4), 317-386.
- Hough, H., Bryk, A., Pinnell, G., Kerbow, D., Fountas, I., and P. Scharer. (2008). *Measuring change in the practice of teachers engaged in literacy collaborative professional development: Preliminary results from a four year study*. Paper presented at the 2008 Conference of the American Educational Research Association. New York, New York.



- International Reading Association. (2000). *Excellent reading teachers: a position statement of the International Reading Association*. Newark, DE: Author.
- International Reading Association. (2003). *Standards for reading professionals, revised 2003*. Newark, DE: Author.
- International Reading Association. (2004). *The role and qualifications of the Reading coach in the United States*. Newark, DE: Author.
- International Reading Association. (2006). *Standards for middle and high school coaches*. Newark, DE: Author.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1980). Improving in-service training: The messages of research. *Educational Leadership*, 37(5), 379-385.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1995). *Student Achievement through staff development*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1996). The evolution of peer coaching. *Educational Leadership*, 53(6), 12-16.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Kannapel, P. (2008). *The adolescent literacy coaching project: Differences in literacy environment and CATS scores in schools with literacy coaches and schools without coaches*. Lexington, KY: Collaborative Center for Literacy Development.
- Kelleher, J. (2003). Professional development that works: A model for assessment-driven professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(10). Retrieved November 20, 2006 from Questia database:  
<http://www.questia.com?PM.qst?action=print&docId=5001940472>
- Killion, J. & C. Harrison. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Washington, DC: National Staff Development Council.
- Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Liberman, A. (1995). Practices that support teacher development: Transforming conceptions of professional learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(8), 591-596.
- Lyons, C. & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education: A guide to professional development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Lyons, C. & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). Teacher development: The best investment in literacy education. In J.S. Gaffney & B. Askew (Eds.). *Stirring the waters: The influence of Marie Clay* (p. 302-331). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lyons, C.A. (2002). Becoming an effective literacy coach: What does it take? In E. Rodgers, S. Pinnell, *Learning for teaching in literacy education* (p. 93-118) Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Marsh, J., McCombs, J., Lockwood, J., Martoreel, F., Gershwin, D., Naftel, S., Le, V., Shea, M., Barney, H., & Crego, A. (2008). *Supporting literacy across the sunshine state: A study of Florida middle school reading coaches*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Moats, L.C. (2005). *Language essentials for teachers of reading and spelling (LETRS)*. Longmont, Colorado: SOPRIS WEST.
- National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance \*2008). *The impact of two professional development interventions on early reading instruction and achievement*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996, September). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: Author.
- National Institute of Child Health and Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.
- National Staff Development Council (2001). *NSDC standards for staff development*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 1, 2006 from <http://www.nsd.org/standards>
- Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2002). *Off to a good start: Year I of collaborative coaching and learning in the effective practice schools*. Cambridge, MA: Education Matters, Inc.
- Neufeld, B., & Roper, D. (2003). *Expanding the work: Year II of collaborative coaching and learning in the effective practice schools*. Cambridge, MA: Education Matters, Inc.
- Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2003). *Growing Instructional Capacity in Two San Diego Middle School*, Cambridge, Mass.: Education Matters.
- Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2006). Summary of the report: Instructional improvement in the Boston Public Schools: 1996-2006. Available at [www.renniecenter.org/research\\_docs/Summary-Instruction.pdf](http://www.renniecenter.org/research_docs/Summary-Instruction.pdf)

- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).  
Retrieved November 19, 2006 from  
<http://www.edgov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html> .
- Poglinco, S., Bach, A., Hovde, K., Rosenblum, S., Saunders, M., & Supovitz, J. (2003).  
*The heart of the matter: The coaching model in America's Choice schools*.  
Pennsylvania: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education.
- Richard, A. (2003). *Making our own road: The emergence of school-based staff developers in America's public schools*. Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.
- Rodgers, A & E. Rodgers. (2007). *The effective literacy coach: Using inquiry to support teaching and learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Roller, C. (2006). *Reading and literacy coaches report on hiring requirements and duties survey*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Shanklin, N. (2006). *What are the characteristics of effective literacy coaching?*  
Retrieved July 3, 2008, from  
<http://www.literacycoachingonline.org>
- Southeast Center for Teaching Quality. (2004). *Unfilled promise: Ensuring high quality teachers for nation's schools: No Child Left Behind: A status report from Southeastern schools*. Chapel Hill, NC: Author.
- Swartz, S. (2001). *The foundation for comprehensive early literacy learning research report*.  
CA: Retrieved October 6, 2009 from  
<http://www.cell-exll.com/foundationresearchreport1.htm>
- Taylor, B. (2002). Effective schools-the Effective Schools Process: Alive and Well.  
*Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(5), 375.
- Taylor, B., Pearson, P., Peterson, D., & Rodriguez, M. (2005). The CIERA school change framework: An evidence-based approach to professional development and school reading improvement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(1), 40-69.
- Toll, K. (2005). *Literacy coach's survival guide: Essential questions and practical answers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Trubowitz, S. (2004). The why, how, and what of mentoring. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(1), 59.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds. And Trans.), Cambridge, MA:

Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1934).

Walpole, S. & McKenna, M. (2004). *The literacy coach's handbook: A guide to research-based practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Walsh-Symonds, K. (2002). *Literacy coaching: How school districts can support a long-term strategy in a short-term world*. San Francisco: Bay Area School Reform Collaborative.

Wei, R.C., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., Richardson, N., Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad*. Dallas, TX. National Staff Development Council.

## Appendix A

### Literacy Coaching Survey (LCPS) Pilot Study

What is the title of your position?

1. Gender:

2. Race:

3. Type of School:  Suburban  Suburban/Rural Mix  Urban  Rural

4. Number of students in school:

Grade Levels in school:

5. How many years have you been an educator?

a. What type of undergraduate degree do you hold?

b. What is your undergraduate major?

c. What is your undergraduate minor?

d. What advanced degrees do you hold?

e. What is your graduate degree major?

f. What is your graduate degree minor?

g. What areas are listed on your teaching certificate?

h. How many years have you been a literacy coach?

6. What grade level(s) do you serve as a literacy coach?

7. What percentage of your day is spent as a literacy coach?

If not 100% literacy coach, what do you do in the other part of your day?

8. How many schools do you work in?

9. How did you obtain your position?

My principal asked me.

I was chosen by a building committee.

I responded to a position announcement to work in a school.

Other:

**10. How is your position funded?**

District

Title 1

Federal or State Grant

Other:

**11. What was included in your preparation to be a coach?**

Undergraduate Minor in reading

Undergraduate Major in reading

Teacher with an interest in literacy, but no formal training in coaching

Extensive district professional development training in literacy

Masters Degree in Reading

Masters Degree in Literacy Coaching

Certification as Reading Specialist

Certification as a Literacy Coach

University courses taken geared specifically to literacy coaching

District courses taken geared specifically to literacy coaching

Other:

**12. In developing your role as a coach, the construction of the position was:**

Self-constructed

Prescribed by others

Combination of both

**13. The people you are coaching are:**

Volunteers

Mandated

Combination of both

14. Number of professional development meetings you present per month:

15. Number of study groups you organize or participate in per month:

16. Number of grade level or department meetings you conduct per month:

17. Number of lessons you observe per month:

18. Number of lessons you model per month:

19. Time spent on an individual coaching session including planning,

preconference, observation, and postconference

for one teacher:

20. Number of teachers coached per week:

21. Are you included in the planning of professional development at your school?

22. Are you in an evaluative role in your school?

23. In courses taken at the university level, have you received training in:

Coaching or mentoring of adults

Effective literacy practices

How to conduct effective professional development

Meeting the needs of ESL learners

Specific literacy intervention programs

List any specific major programs:

Working with resistant colleagues

Assisting teachers with classroom management

Learning how to manage time and job

Literacy Assessments

List major assessments:

Application of literacy strategies to content areas

Adult Learning

**24. What makes you feel effective?**

Teachers seek me out for assistance.

Observing teachers making positive changes.

Increasing test scores in the classroom.

Increasing standardized test scores.

Which specific tests?

Feedback from administrators.

Feedback from teachers.

Feedback from students.

Other:

**25. Which items are you required to use to provide accountability in your work?**

None required.

Weekly calendar listing activities.

Notes from meetings.

Evaluations from Professional Development Sessions.

Notes from coaching sessions.

Self-reflection activities.

Observations of your work by a school administrator.

Observations of your work by teachers.

Observations of your work by district personnel.

Other:

**26. How do you think you have impacted student learning?**

Increased motivation.



Increased time spent on independent reading.

More student centered classrooms.

Improved grades.

Improved standardized tests scores.

Other:

**27. In which state are you employed?**

## Appendix B

### Survey of Perceived Effectiveness of the Literacy Coach

**1. Please check the box next to your title**

**Literacy Coach**

**2. Gender**

**3. Race/Ethnicity**

**4. What are the grade levels of your school?**

**5. How many years of educational experience (including this year) do you have?**

**6. How many years of coaching experience (including this year) do you have?**

**7. What grade levels do you work with this year?**

**8. Undergraduate degree:**

**9. Advanced Graduate Study:**

**10. Undergraduate Degree - Major(s):**

**11. Undergraduate Degree - Minor(s):**

**12. Advanced Degrees - Major(s):**

**13. Advanced Degrees - Minor(s):**

**14. Areas of Certification Listed on Teaching Certificate:**

**15. How did you obtain your position?**

My principal asked me.

I was chosen by a building committee.

I responded to a position announcement from the district level.

Other:

**16. How is your position funded?**

General funds from the school district  
Title 1  
Federal or State Grants  
Other:

**17. What was included in your preparation to be a coach?**

Undergraduate Minor in Reading  
Undergraduate Major in Reading  
Masters Degree in Reading  
Masters Degree in Literacy Coaching  
Certification as a Reading Specialist  
Interest in literacy, but no formal training in coaching  
Certification as Literacy Coach  
University courses geared specifically to literacy coaching  
District training geared specifically to literacy coaching  
Other

**18. In developing your role as a coach, the construction of the position was:**

Self-constructed  
Prescribed by others  
Combination of both  
Other (please specify)

**19. How often do you conduct or participate in the following meetings or activities?**

Never  
Rarely  
Occasionally  
Frequently  
Very Frequently

Study groups  
Grade level meetings  
Department meetings  
Assisting teachers with lesson plans  
Modeling lessons  
Observation of lessons  
Feedback on lessons  
Other

**20. On average, how many hours per week do you participate in or provide professional development for the topics listed below?**

Study groups  
Grade level meetings  
Department meetings  
Assisting teachers with lesson plans  
Literacy Strategies  
Modeling lessons  
Observation of lessons  
Feedback on lessons  
Other

**21. Considering the coaching cycle to include modeling, observation, and feedback, how many teachers on average do you coach per month?**

**22. Your role as a coach is:**

evaluative  
supportive  
combination of both

**23. I received sufficient training at the university level addressing the topics listed below.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Adult learning  
Application of literacy strategies to content areas  
Assisting teachers with classroom management  
Coaching or mentoring adults  
Conducting effective professional development  
Effective literacy practices  
Learning how to manage time and job  
Meeting the needs of Second Language Learners  
Specific literacy intervention programs  
Use of literacy assessments  
Working with resistant colleagues

**24. Do you feel effective as a literacy coach?**

yes  
no

**25. How important do you believe the topics listed below are in determining your perception of effectiveness?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important  
Important  
Very Important

Feedback from administrators  
Feedback from students  
Feedback from teachers  
Increasing standardized test scores  
Increasing test scores in the classroom  
Observing teachers making positive changes  
Teachers seeking your assistance  
Other

**26. How important do you believe the following topics are in determining your perception of ineffectiveness?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important  
Important  
Very Important

Feedback from administrators  
Feedback from students

Feedback from teachers  
Lack of understanding of position by administrators  
Decreased standardized test scores  
Decreased test scores in the classroom  
Observing some teachers making little positive change  
Not enough teachers seeking you out for assistance  
Other

**27. How important are the topics listed below in inhibiting your perceived effectiveness as a literacy coach?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important  
Important  
Very Important

Resistance from teachers  
Lack of support from administrators  
Lack of understanding of your role by teachers  
Lack of understanding of your role by administrators  
Lack of support from your school district  
Other

**28. Do you believe you have an impact on student learning?**

**29. I believe I have impacted student learning in the following areas.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Improved grades  
Improved standardized test scores  
Increased motivation of students  
Increased time spent on independent reading  
More student centered classrooms  
Other:

**30. In which state are you currently employed?**

**Administrator:**

**31. Gender**

**32. Race/Ethnicity**

**33. What are the grade levels at your school?**

**34. How many years of teaching experience (including this year) do you have?**

**35. How many years (including this year) have you been an administrator?**

**36. Advanced Graduate Study:**

**37. Advanced Degrees - Major(s):**

**38. Advanced Degrees - Minor(s):**

**39. Areas of Certification Listed on Teaching Certificate:**

Administration and Supervision  
Counseling  
Early Childhood  
Educational Technology  
Elementary Education  
English  
English (Second Language)  
Literacy Coach  
Pre-Kindergarten  
Reading Endorsement  
Reading Specialist (Requiring a Masters Degree)  
Special Education  
Other

**40. How often do you believe the literacy coach conducts or participates in the following meetings or activities?**

Never  
Rarely  
Occasionally  
Frequently  
Very Frequently

Study groups  
Grade level meetings  
Department meetings  
Assisting teachers with lesson plans  
Modeling lessons  
Observation of lessons  
Feedback on lessons  
Other

**41. Considering the coaching cycle to include modeling, observation, and feedback, how many teachers (on the average) does the literacy coach in your school coach per month?**

**42. The role of the literacy coach in your school is:**

evaluative  
supportive  
combination of both

**43. I believe the literacy coach in my school is effective.**

yes  
no

**44. How important do you believe the topics listed below are in determining the literacy coach's perception of effectiveness?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important

Important  
Very Important

Feedback from administrators  
Feedback from students  
Feedback from teachers  
Increasing standardized test scores  
Increasing test scores in the classroom  
Observing teachers making positive changes  
Teachers seeking their assistance  
Other

**45. How important do you believe the topics listed below are in determining the literacy coach's perception of ineffectiveness?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important  
Important  
Very Important

Feedback from administrators  
Feedback from students  
Feedback from teachers  
Lack of understanding of position by administrators  
Decreased standardized test scores  
Decreased test scores in the classroom  
Observing some teachers making little positive change  
Not enough teachers seeking them out for assistance  
Other

**46. Do you believe the literacy coach in your school has an impact on student learning?**

yes  
no

**47. I believe the literacy coach has impacted student learning in the following areas.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Improved grades  
Improved standardized test scores  
Increased motivation of students  
Increased time spent on independent reading  
More student centered classrooms  
Improved teaching strategies  
Other:

**48. In which state are you currently employed?**

**Teachers:**

**49. Gender**

**50. Race/Ethnicity**

**51. What are the grade levels in your school?**

**52. What grade level do you teach this year?**

**53. How many years of educational experience do you have?  
(include this year)**

**54. Undergraduate degree:**

Bachelors of Arts  
Bachelors of Science  
Other

**55. Advanced Graduate Study:**

**56. Undergraduate Degree - Major(s):**

**57. Undergraduate Degree - Minor(s):**

**58. Advanced Degrees - Major(s):**

**59. Advanced Degrees - Minor(s):**

**60. Areas of Certification Listed on Teaching Certificate:**

Administration and Supervision  
Counseling  
Early Childhood  
Educational Technology  
Elementary Education  
English  
English (Second Language)  
Literacy Coach  
Pre-Kindergarten  
Reading Endorsement  
Reading Specialist (Requiring a Masters Degree)  
Special Education  
Other

**61. What type of preparation do you believe a literacy coach should have?**

Undergraduate Minor in Reading  
Undergraduate Major in Reading  
Masters Degree in Reading  
Masters Degree in Literacy Coaching  
Certification as a Reading Specialist  
Interest in literacy, but no formal training in coaching  
Certification as Literacy Coach  
University courses geared specifically to literacy coaching  
District courses geared specifically to literacy coaching  
Other

**62. How often do you believe the literacy coach conducts or participates in the following meetings or activities in your school?**

Never



Rarely  
Occasionally  
Frequently  
Very Frequently

Study groups  
Grade level meetings  
Department meetings  
Helping teachers with lesson plans  
Modeling lessons  
Observation of lessons  
Feedback on lessons  
Other

**63. The literacy coach should receive training at the university level addressing the topics listed below.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Adult learning  
Application of literacy strategies to content areas  
Assisting teachers with classroom management  
Coaching or mentoring adults  
Conducting effective professional development  
Effective literacy practices  
Learning how to manage time and job  
Meeting the needs of Second Language Learners  
Specific literacy intervention programs  
Use of literacy assessments  
Working with resistant colleagues  
Other (please specify)

**64. Do you believe that the literacy coach in your school is effective?**

**65. How important do you believe the following topics are in making the literacy coach feel effective?**

Unimportant  
Of Little Importance  
Moderately Important  
Important  
Very Important

Feedback from administrators  
Feedback from students  
Feedback from teachers  
Increasing standardized test scores  
Increasing test scores in the classroom  
Observing teachers making positive changes  
Teachers seeking assistance from the literacy coach  
Other

**66. Do you believe the literacy coach has an impact on student learning in your school?**

yes  
no

## **Literacy Coach, Administrators, and Classroom Teachers Section**

### **Perceived Effectiveness of the Literacy Coach**

#### **67. I believe the literacy coach has impacted student learning in the following areas.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Improved grades  
Improved standardized test scores  
Increased motivation of students  
Improved teaching strategies  
Increased time spent on independent reading  
More student centered classrooms

Other:

#### **68. I believe the literacy coach is effective in the following areas.**

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Undecided  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

Effective Literacy Practices  
Collecting Data  
Interpreting Data  
Distributing Data  
Modeling Lessons  
Observing Lessons of Teachers  
Providing Feedback on Teachers' Lessons  
Working with Teachers as Adult Learners  
Knowledge of Literacy Assessments  
Assisting with Response to Intervention (RTI) Groups  
Applying Literacy to Content Areas  
Working With Resistant Colleagues  
Increasing High Stakes Testing Scores  
Increasing Students' Grades in the Classroom  
Working with Groups of At-risk Students

## Appendix C

### University of New Orleans IRB Letter and Human Subjects Approval Form

### ***University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research***

University of New Orleans

---

*Campus Correspondence*

Principal Investigator: Richard Speaker  
Co-Investigator: Celeste Dugan  
Date: December 15, 2008  
Protocol Title: "The Influence of Training on the Perceived Effectiveness of the Literary Coach"  
IRB#: 04Jan09

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101 category 2, due to the fact that this research will involve the use of anonymous surveys and any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project.  
Sincerely,

Robert D. Laird, Chair  
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

## Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

**Celeste Dugan**

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 09/15/2007.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

National Institutes of Health  
<http://www.nih.gov/>

[Home](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Policies](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site Help](#) | [Site Map](#)

A Service of the National Cancer Institute



## **Appendix D**

### **Introductory Letter for Participants**

I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans and collecting data for my dissertation. I am surveying administrators, classroom teachers, and literacy coaches to determine their perceptions of the literacy coaches' effectiveness.

This survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept completely confidential. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and by completing the survey, you are giving your informed consent. The results of the survey will be included in a research study that may be published, but there is no way to link your answers to any other respondent's answers.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact:

Celeste Dugan at [ccdugan@uno.edu](mailto:ccdugan@uno.edu)

## **Vita**

Celeste Corbin Dugan was born in Thibodaux, Louisiana and received her masters degree in reading from Nicholls State University.