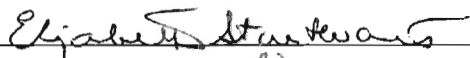
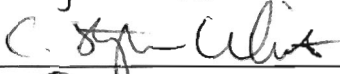
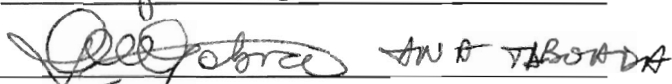
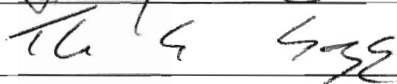
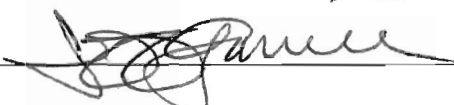


AN EXPLORATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACHING
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

by

Kristine Miller Calo
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

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Date: April 28, 2008

Spring Semester 2008
George Mason University
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my friends and family who wholeheartedly supported me throughout this process. It is especially dedicated to my husband, Jerry, for his never-ending encouragement and ability to make me laugh no matter what life throws our way. It also is dedicated to my mother, Tena, who has always supported me in everything that I have done throughout my life. Additionally, it is dedicated to my adorable daughter, Emily, and our special “assistants” KC and Liza.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my friends and family who encouraged my pursuit of this degree, especially my husband, my parents, my grandmother, Terrell Juth, Anne Pollard, Lisa Lynch, Catherine Amelink, Caryn Cole, and Debbie Messman. I also would like to thank Carly Fuhrman, my fellow doctoral student, who was a lifeline throughout this process. A special thank you to my mentor, Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant. I greatly appreciate her advice and encouragement throughout the completion of my doctoral program. Thank you also to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant, Dr. C. Stephen White, and Dr. Ana Taboada for their support and guidance. I have learned a great deal from each of them. I hope our paths cross again in the future.

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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY COACHING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

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George Mason University, 2008

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This study explores the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches around the United States, specifically looking at how these coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts. A survey was mailed to 125 randomly selected middle school literacy coaches across the continental United States. Interviews were used to gather information about the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of literacy coaches. Seven coaches representing different regions of the country were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of what literacy coaching at the middle school level actually looks like in schools and districts across the country. All interviewees were experienced educators, having been in education for 10 to 30 years. The findings from this study indicate that the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches are diverse and multifaceted, and currently there is not one consistent view of literacy coaching at this level. Instead, the roles and responsibilities fall along a

continuum, influenced by the school and community contexts within which coaches work and the experiences and backgrounds of each individual coach. Satisfaction with various job aspects also was explored. The prediction of literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support by satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers was found to be statistically significant. Recommendations to principals, district administrators, and schools of education for providing support to middle school literacy coaches are included. Advice from current middle school literacy coaches to future literacy coaches also is discussed.

1. Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Currently there is a crisis in adolescent literacy (Conley & Hinchman, 2004). U.S. drop out rates are high and the numbers of adolescent struggling readers are growing. One key issue is that some adolescents have difficulties accessing information in their content-area classes. For some students textbooks may be too difficult while other students may not have the skills or strategies necessary to comprehend the increasingly difficult expository text they encounter in middle school and beyond. Yet, the life-long value of high literacy skills is clear. In April 2007, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. The study found that “adults with higher literacy levels were more likely to be employed full-time and less likely to be out of the labor force than adults with lower literacy levels. Adults with lower literacy levels also generally earned lower incomes” (NCES, 2007, p. vi).

Recently, as a response to the crisis in adolescent literacy, there has been a push to incorporate literacy coaches at the secondary level to work with content-area teachers to ensure that students are better able to access critical core information in science, social studies, English, math, and other content-area classrooms. Literacy coaches are in a unique position to work directly with content-area teachers in their own classrooms to

help these teachers support students' literacy needs. According to Nancy Shanklin of the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse, literacy coaching is an ongoing "job-embedded form of professional development tailored to an individual teacher's need" (International Reading Association [IRA], 2007, ¶ 3). The International Reading Association (2007) states that literacy coaching includes the following:

Collaborating with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals in a variety of ways, such as demonstrating lessons, assisting teachers in selecting best practices, designing programs that motivate all students, training classroom teachers to administer and interpret assessments, presenting professional workshops, conducting study groups, assisting classroom teachers in preparing curriculum materials (including technologically based information), assisting with assessment, and coplanning appropriate instruction. (Paradigm Shift Section, ¶ 2)

For several years, literacy coaches have worked successfully in the primary grades focusing on early intervention for students who lack foundational literacy skills. Although there have been reading professionals at the secondary level for many years (Anders, 2002), there is increased interest in literacy coaching at the middle school level to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to access core information in content-area classrooms. According to Market Data Retrieval, an education list management company, there were approximately 500 middle school literacy coaches around the country at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. In the previous school year, there was nearly half that number in U.S. school districts. One reason that literacy coaching at the middle level has only begun to take hold in schools and districts may be

due to a lack of previous attention to adolescent literacy issues and, in turn, a lack of funding for dealing with these issues. Yet, as federal and state funding becomes available at the secondary level and attention focuses on meeting the diverse literacy needs of adolescents across content areas, there seems to be a greater push for literacy coaching at the middle school level and beyond.

Despite the call for increasing the number of literacy coaches at the secondary level, presently, little is known about *what* middle school literacy coaches actually do as well as *why* and *how* they do their jobs. Even less is known about how to support them in their endeavors. In the foreword of Burkins' book about literacy coaching, Michael Fullan noted that while there is a fair amount of literature written about the general topic of coaching, there is limited information available that depicts what literacy coaches actually do and ways in which they can become more effective in their roles (Burkins, 2007). This study sought to explore middle school literacy coaching to add to this limited research base.

This study included surveys and interviews and had three main goals. The first goal was to find out who these middle school literacy coaches are who are currently working in middle schools across the United States. Another goal was to find out what their roles and responsibilities are in order to move beyond the assumptions of what people think literacy coaches *should* be doing to examine what is actually happening in diverse schools and districts. The third goal was to discover how literacy coaches work with content-area teachers, specifically with helping students learn how to comprehend the multiple texts they encounter in the middle grades.

Participants in this study included 51 middle school literacy coaches who were part of a randomly selected group of 125 literacy coaches from across the United States. These 125 middle school literacy coaches received a mailed survey. Seven literacy coaches also were interviewed for this study. These open-ended interviews added depth to the quantitative survey results and to help tell the stories of literacy coaches working in vastly different school contexts around the country. By combining the qualitative results with the quantitative results, this study strives to present a descriptive picture of middle school literacy coaches, their primary roles and responsibilities, and how they work with content-area teachers.

Background of the Problem

In today's high-speed, globally connected world, literacy demands are daunting. This is particularly so in light of the explosion of electronic text and the proliferation of available information. It is more important than ever for adolescents to have the literacy skills and strategies they need to be successful in school and beyond. However, our nation is facing a crisis in adolescent literacy (Conley & Hinchman, 2004). According to the 2002 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) approximately 25% of our nation's eighth and twelfth graders read at a "below basics" level. That translates to one in four adolescents who is unable to do the following: identify the main ideas in passages read, understand expository passages, and/or extend the ideas they read in grade level texts (Kamil, 2003).

Although national tests do not necessarily show a decline in reading comprehension over the past 20 years, there does seem to be an increase in the

expectations of reading over the years (Alvermann, 2002). In light of these increased demands, it is estimated that some eight million students in grades 4-8 are considered to be struggling readers (Alliance for Excellent Education [AEE], 2006). The statistics for U.S. adults are grim as well. In fact, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (2003) federal study found that some 11 million adults in the United States are not literate in English and some 30 million have low literacy skills. And, equally as startling, the Journal of the American Medical Association (California Literacy, 2003) reports that some 46% of American adults are unable to even understand the labels on their prescription medicine bottles. The crisis is daunting but must be tackled. The literacy needs of adolescents must be addressed to stem the tide of low literacy in the United States and ensure that our youth are equipped to take on the challenges of the 21st century. For years focus has been on early intervention to identify and prevent reading failure of young children with the hope that this early intervention will give students the support they need to develop effective literacy skills and strategies that will benefit them as content demands increase and text become more challenging in upper grades. With the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* a significant amount of funding and attention has been focused on kindergarten through third grade, particularly through Reading First grants aimed at early intervention in the primary grades. Many schools and districts across the United States have used literacy coaches or reading specialists for early intervention.

One possible means of attacking the crisis in adolescent literacy is to extend the use of literacy coaching to secondary schools (IRA, 2007; Kamil, 2003; Sturtevant,

2003). Not only can literacy coaches provide job-embedded staff development, but they also can play an instrumental role in promoting literacy in the school community.

Although some middle schools across the United States have added literacy coaches, more needs to be understood about their roles and responsibilities. While understanding all aspects of the role is important, the increased demands of informational reading in today's world have made it especially important to know more about how middle school literacy coaches support content-area teachers with comprehension instruction. It is particularly important to understand how coaches support content-area teachers as these teachers help students comprehend the complex multiple texts that they encounter in science, social studies, and other content-area classrooms.

The increased literacy expectations for U.S. students is a cause of concern to many educators in middle and high schools because low literacy rates have been linked to poor performance on high stakes tests and low graduation rates. The Alliance for Excellent Education found that more than 1.2 million students do not graduate on time from U.S. high schools (AEE, 2006). In fact, it has been estimated that students who are in the bottom quartile academically are 20 times more likely to drop out of school than their peers in the top quartile (Carnevale, 2001). Sadly enough, on any given day, it is estimated that some 3,000 children drop out of U.S. high schools (Joftus, 2002; AEE, 2007). For those who do graduate from high school, a significant percentage do not graduate with regular diplomas. In 2002 alone, only 71% of the nation's high school seniors graduated with a regular diploma, according to a study by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research (Greene & Winters, 2005). This report, *Public High School*

Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002, also found that only “34% of students who entered ninth grade in public schools left school with both a regular diploma and the abilities and qualifications required to even apply to a four-year college” (Green & Winters, 2005, p. 1). Graduation rates are and should continue to be of increasing concern to our nation as a whole. The impact on individuals and the greater society as a whole is astounding. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2007) estimated that “dropouts from the Class of 2007 alone will cost the nation nearly \$329 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over their lifetimes” (p. 3). As our nation looks to the future, this is a startling figure that our society can no longer continue to ignore.

Clearly the cost of low literacy to the nation and our children is too high. More needs to be done to support adolescents who are struggling with reading and writing to give them the skills that they will need to be successful in school and beyond. Adolescents require instruction that provides them with the tools they need to comprehend complex texts across a variety of content areas; think critically and creatively; utilize technology as a tool for learning; connect reading, writing, and learning to their in-school and out-of-school lives; and monitor their growth as readers, writers, and learners (Sturtevant et al., 2006). These skills and strategies can be taught as part of an effective secondary school literacy program when content-area teachers are given the support they need to help themselves and their students be successful (Alvermann, 2002). One of the supports that students need is to learn how to comprehend a range of texts in science, social studies, and math since accessing information from complex texts is important to student success in school and work. Students need instruction on research

supported strategies to help them access and comprehend texts in the content areas, particularly informational texts as those are the ones that they are most likely to be exposed to in school and the workforce (Harvey & Goudvis, 2008; Kamil & Lane, 1997). Science, social studies, math, and other content-area teachers need support in helping their students develop these literacy skills and strategies in the context of their content-area instruction.

The Purpose of This Study

This study is aimed at providing information about literacy coaching at the middle school level as one response to alleviating the crisis in adolescent literacy. In particular, this study focuses on the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches from around the country. Not only does the study explore what literacy coaches at the middle school level do, but it also delves more specifically into how middle school literacy coaches support content-area teachers as they work with students to comprehend multiple texts. The study provides information about *who* these coaches are, *what* they do, and *how* they do their jobs. This study will add to the limited research base on middle school literacy coaching.

The research questions that guided this study include the following:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches?
2. How satisfied are middle school literacy coaches with different aspects of their roles and responsibilities? Does satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support?
3. What are the challenges and rewards identified by middle school literacy coaches?

4. How do middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts?
5. What advice do current middle school literacy coaches have for future middle school literacy coaches?

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted using a sociocultural lens (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1992, 2000) and by drawing on leadership and organizational development theory (Covey, 2001; Fullan, 2001). Literacy coaches do not work in a vacuum. They work in diverse school communities. From a sociocultural perspective, literacy coaches' work is socially situated in different school settings. Their actions are influenced by dynamic social and cultural factors of schools and communities, as well as by the daily social interactions that they have with teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, students, and parents. Content-area teachers are influenced by the social dynamics of working with a job-embedded professional developer. As mentioned, this study also draws on leadership and organizational development theory as it pertains to literacy coaches as literacy leaders within their schools and districts (Covey, 2001; Fullan, 2001). Literacy coaches are considered by many to be instructional leaders at their school sites. The study explores how coaches work as literacy leaders to build capacity and drive literacy learning within and outside the walls of their middle schools.

2. Review of Related Literature

Three main areas of literature were consulted for this study, including (a) literacy coaching, (b) comprehension, and (c) multiple texts. The primary area of focus was literacy coaching at the secondary level. Within this area of research literature, literacy coaching as a form of professional development was explored, as well as the roles and responsibilities of coaches and the effectiveness of coaching. The second line of research consulted was literature regarding comprehension instruction. Since the participants in this study work with content-area teachers not as *content* coaches but as *literacy* coaches to help teachers infuse literacy skills and strategies into their content instruction, literature on comprehension instruction in content-area classrooms was reviewed. This research literature provided an understanding of what comprehension instruction looks like in content-area classrooms and how literacy coaches may work with content-area teachers to help students comprehend what they read in these classrooms. The third area of focus for this literature review was on the use of multiple texts in content-area classrooms. This body of research literature was selected to gain further understanding of the types of materials that teachers may use in content-area classrooms that students would be expected to read and understand. In turn, it provided additional insights into how literacy coaches might work with content-area teachers to help students comprehend a range of texts, including textbooks and other forms of text. The three core areas of

literature reviewed also were drawn upon when adapting the survey instrument for this study, as will be discussed in chapter 3. In summary, the three main areas of focus in this review of related literature are (a) literacy coaching, (b) comprehension instruction in content-area classrooms, and (c) multiple texts in content-area classrooms.

Literacy Coaching

Literature focusing on literacy coaches as well as reading specialists were reviewed for this study. It is important to note that in some studies, as may be the case in practice, there was no clear distinction between the use of the term literacy coach or reading specialist, while in other studies or documents the term literacy coach referred to an educator who works primarily with teachers providing job-embedded staff development and reading specialist referred an educator who works primarily with struggling readers to provide extra literacy support.

Coaching at the secondary level. Anders (2002) detailed how reading professionals at the secondary level were commonplace during the 1960s and 1970s when “a critical mass of knowledge, interest, and concern about secondary students’ reading achievement had accumulated, and local and national law and policy makers provided financial support for reading programs in the secondary schools” (p. 82). Her study consisted of interviews of 12 participants who shared their experiences with reading programs at the secondary level during those two decades. The goal of the study was to inform secondary programs today by learning from the past experiences of secondary reading professionals. Anders noted, “After about twenty years of diminishing resources and personnel, few secondary reading programs exist today, but interest in adolescent

literacy seems to be reemerging” (p. 82). She discussed the importance of funding for secondary literacy programs, the importance of considering the contexts of secondary schools, and the importance of preparing reading specialists. Anders found that “reading specialists lacked the training and instruction that they thought would have helped them to do their jobs well” (p. 92). She called for a resurgence of theory and development in the preparation of secondary reading professionals by stating, “As reading/literacy educators, we are called to think through the knowledge base that should be provided to secondary reading specialists and design curricula to meet their needs” (p. 92).

Through Reading First and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* the most recent surge of funding for literacy has centered primarily on kindergarten through third grade classrooms with the goal of intervening early to help struggling readers learn how to read. Much attention has been given to early reading for many years. In fact, reading specialist positions at the elementary level have existed in the United States for many decades (R. M. Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003). Position titles and specific responsibilities may have changed over time, but the consistent primary focus of these reading professionals has been the elementary grades and early intervention. Although attention and intervention in students’ early school years is essential, it is becoming increasingly clear that many students need explicit reading comprehension support in fourth grade and continuing through high school (Snow, 2002). As schools wrestle with ways to deal with students who struggle with reading in middle schools and beyond, some schools have decided to attack this problem through the use of literacy coaches at the middle and high school levels. While funding has focused for early grades through *No Child Left Behind* and

Reading First, budgets have been tighter in middle schools and high schools for these types of initiatives. However, increased funding for adolescent readers through federal grants such as President George W. Bush's *Striving Readers* discretionary grant program (2005), along with other funding sources aimed at adolescents and literacy, have helped middle and high schools begin to fund literacy coach positions.

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), literacy coaches at the secondary level focus their attention on working with teachers, not students. In their report *NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform* (2006), they stated that literacy coaches at the secondary level can help teachers across content areas learn how to:

...provide a bridge between adolescents' rich literate backgrounds and school literacy activities; work on school-wide teams to teach literacy in each discipline as an essential way of learning in the disciplines; recognize when students are not making meaning with text and provide appropriate, strategic assistance to read course content effectively; facilitate student-initiated conversations regarding texts that are authentic and relevant to real life experiences; create environments that allow students to engage in critical examinations of texts as they dissect, deconstruct, and reconstruct in an effort to engage in meaning making and comprehension processes. (p. 14)

As states and districts grapple with how best to meet adolescent student needs, some initial research has been done on effective programs at high school and middle school levels. Several reports (e.g., National Governors Association, 2005; Sturtevant,

2003) highlighted examples of effective reading initiatives that are designed to meet the needs of struggling adolescent readers. These examples demonstrate the valuable contributions that literacy coaches can make to help schools create effective literacy plans and provide ongoing, substantive professional development for staff.

Kamil (2003) also emphasized the positive role that literacy coaches can play at the secondary level, particularly when attending to the current structures of secondary schools today. He stated,

One vehicle for remedying the infrastructure problem in middle and secondary schools would be to provide high-quality, ongoing professional development in literacy. The most popular and promising solution to this problem seems to be coaching—literacy specialists who work with content teachers to assist them in infusing literacy instruction in their teaching. (p. 27)

Despite the increased attention to coaching and the implementation of programs in various districts across the country, there still remains little research about the actual effectiveness of literacy coaching, particularly at the middle school level (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Although there is a lack of research related specifically to the effectiveness of middle school literacy coaching, there is research that emphasizes the overall benefits of literacy coaching. According to a study conducted of literacy coaching in America's Choice schools, Poglinco et al. (2003) listed the following as some of the benefits of literacy coaching:

Coaching provides ongoing consistent support for the implementation and instruction components. It is nonthreatening and supportive—not evaluative. It

gives a sense of how good professional development is. It also affords the opportunity to see it work with students. (p. 42)

Roles and responsibilities. Professional organizations in the education arena have played a significant part in defining the role of literacy coaches at the middle and high school levels. The International Reading Association, in collaboration with other disciplinary organizations, identified the essential responsibilities of middle and high school literacy coaches in their *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* document (IRA, 2006). This document “outlines the ideal of what a literacy coach should know and be able to do—in delivering both leadership and support in individual content areas” (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2006, p. 24). These roles include guiding instruction through modeling, observing, facilitating inquiry groups, problem solving, and disseminating information, as well as acting as a liaison among teachers and administrators through, among other things, reviewing assessment data, creating literacy plans, and mediating among stakeholder needs (IRA, 2006). This document is important for literacy professionals not only because it focuses on literacy coaching at the secondary level, but also because the document was created in collaboration with other influential professional organizations representing teachers of various content areas including the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, the National Council for Social Studies, and the National Council for Teachers of English. This collaboration amongst leading content-area educator associations signals an increased awareness of and support for literacy coaching across all content areas at the middle school and high school levels.

Much of the research that has been conducted on literacy coaching has occurred at the elementary level. Several studies have focused specifically on exploring and/or defining the roles and responsibilities of elementary literacy coaches (e.g., R. M. Bean et al., 2007; R. M. Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003; Dole, 2004; Poglinco et al., 2003). A recent diary study by R. M. Bean and her colleagues (2007) found that elementary literacy coaches took on varying roles and approaches to coaching including being a resource, a mentor, a manager, a helper, or a responder. The researchers found that the approaches undertaken by the coaches were heavily influenced by the context of the schools in which they worked. They also found that the lack of a consistent job description for coaches in their state may have also influenced the roles and responsibilities assumed by the coaches in their study.

There is far less research about literacy coaching at the secondary level than there is research on coaching at the elementary level. This may be, in part, due to the use of Reading First or Title I funds by districts to pay for literacy coaching at the primary grades and the need to provide evaluations of the use of these funds.

Darwin (2002) conducted one of the few studies of literacy coaches or reading specialists at the high school level. She interviewed 11 reading specialists from districts across the Commonwealth of Virginia to explore their roles and responsibilities. Through individual interviews, Darwin found that the participants' roles and responsibilities were greatly impacted by the context of the schools in which they worked. She also found that all 11 participants primarily worked with students. Furthermore, their roles and responsibilities were greatly influenced by the state's assessment system as these reading

specialists spent a significant amount of time preparing students for state assessments. Two of the reading specialists worked with content-area teachers to help students read textbooks or to integrate reading with other classes, including a Driver's Education class. All of these high school literacy coaches/reading specialists participated in and helped provide staff development for their school sites whether the professional development offerings were held after school or on staff development days, or were informally provided during teachers' preparation periods. Darwin found that much of what these literacy coaches/reading specialists did with teachers including planning, scheduling, coordinating activities, and providing resources was done on a casual or "informal" basis.

A recent study by A. T. Smith (2006) sought to expand the research base of literacy coaching at the secondary level by providing information about the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches in middle schools. This multiple case study explored the roles, responsibilities, and contexts within which three middle school literacy coaches from the upper Midwest worked in an effort to explore how context affects the roles undertaken by these literacy coaches. Smith found that the roles these middle school literacy coaches assumed fell into two distinct categories: classroom instructional and school-related. According to Smith, "Classroom instructional roles were comprised of tasks such as planning with a teacher, co-teaching, or observing lessons" (p. 58). Smith defined school-related roles as "a broader range of roles and tasks connected to school issues or events in general but not necessarily to the issues of daily classroom work" (pp. 57-58). Within school-related roles, Smith included the following roles: professional developer, principal assistant, lunchtime librarian, tour guide, and office worker. All three

coaches in his study were influenced to different degrees by the contextual factors of the schools within which they worked. In turn, these factors, according to Smith, influenced the roles and responsibilities performed by the literacy coaches.

A. T. Smith (2006) formed two propositions about literacy coaching based on the findings of his study. His propositions included the following: “Proposition one: Multiple coaching roles, influenced by a range of school contexts, fragment the coaching process” (p. 63). He suggested the need for clearly delineating coaches’ roles and responsibilities and “carefully considering how much time and energy should be spent on teacher mentoring and literacy advocacy” (p. 63). Smith’s second proposition claimed that “the coaching process only partially aligns with teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes” (p. 63). He explained that:

...observing a teacher, for instance, would be considered a classroom instructional task. But it only aligns with the in-classroom place if the teacher and coach have the opportunity to meet and discuss the observation, connecting to instruction. Otherwise the observation is a stand-alone task that does not affect teacher knowledge. (p. 64)

Another research study that included middle school literacy coaches was a study conducted by The Center for Professional Excellence. This study included 27 schools: nine middle schools and 18 elementary schools, and focused on literacy coaching in America’s Choice schools (Poglinco et al., 2003). Each of the nine middle schools in this study had one literacy coach at each school site. Poglinco et al. found that:

...there is no single, detailed job description for coaches, and our interviews picked up a good deal of uncertainty in the minds of principals, teachers, and coaches about the role and responsibilities of the coach. In particular, there was a perceived tension regarding whether the coach was more of a teacher/colleague or an administrator. This tension was particularly acute in California, where coaches rotated between coaching and a normal teaching position. (p. 13)

A concern identified in Poglinco et al.'s report (2003) was that simply because a teacher is a good teacher and is good with children does not automatically mean that this person will be able to perform the roles and responsibilities of a literacy coach because of a potential lack of experience as a facilitator of teacher professional development. The report also emphasized what they called "implicit tradeoffs in the selection of coaches" in that "although the choice of a respected teacher in a school may diminish teacher resistance, it is also less likely that such a person has a strong background in standards and/or staff development" (p. 13). It is interesting to note that of the 27 schools in their study, the middle schools as a whole made the least progress in implementing the sought-after reforms. Only one of the nine middle schools in Poglinco et al.'s study fully implemented the reform, while all 18 elementary schools implemented the reform. This may underscore the complexities inherent in literacy coaching at the middle school level.

Another study of literacy coaching was conducted by the International Reading Association (IRA). In November 2005, IRA conducted a survey of reading/literacy coaches to explore the duties and responsibilities of coaches. This study included elementary, middle, and high school reading coaches. The findings from this study

indicated that reading coaches in this study worked primarily with teachers. Most of their time was spent with student assessment, instructional planning, and coaching activities, including “observing, demonstration teaching, and discussing lessons taught” (IRA, 2005, ¶ 6). The IRA study yielded a 13% response rate with 140 participants. Of those 140 respondents, it is important to note that only 17% of respondents worked at the middle school level.

Professional development. The Alliance for Excellent Education’s report, *Reading Next* (Snow & Biancarosa, 2004), recommended 15 elements of effective adolescent literacy programs. One critical element is strong, substantive professional development. The report noted that effective professional development experiences are “ongoing, long-term professional development which is more likely to promote lasting, positive changes in teachers knowledge and practice...with consistent opportunities to learn about new research and practices as well as opportunities to implement and reflect upon new ideas” (p. 20). In addition, the National Council for Staff Development (NSDC) has determined that job-embedded staff development is the most effective form of professional development for teachers (Wood & McQuarrie, 1999). In the NSDC report, *What Works in the Middle: Results-based Staff Development* (Killion, 1999), the author stated:

To face the complexities of educating middle-level students, teachers must engage in staff development that increases their knowledge and skills, challenges their beliefs and assumptions about education, provides support and coaching to develop comfort with new practices, and engages them as active participants in the study and reform of the school culture. Schools and districts have an

obligation to provide a staff development program that engages education professionals in continuous renewal to ensure that all students receive the best possible education. (p. 6)

Killion went on to explain that “Teachers who are lifelong learners are more likely to adapt to the growing demands and challenges of educating middle-grade students” (p. 6). She also noted the following:

Teachers who continue to extend their content knowledge and instructional strategies are better equipped to accommodate the diverse needs of middle grade learners. Teachers and other staff who collaborate with their peers in conducting research, sharing ideas, planning together, and analyzing student work are able to solve the problems they face in educating young adolescents. (p. 6)

In looking at professional development, education leaders can learn from research in the business sector. Stephen Covey and the FranklinCovey Company work with 90% of Fortune 100 companies and 75% of Fortune 500 companies (FranklinCovey, 2008). They have worked successfully with multinational companies such as FedEx, Ford, and others to determine the most effective forms of professional development albeit in the business sector. Covey emphasized the difference between what he calls “the training event approach” and “the process approach.” The latter has been found to have a greater return on investment in terms of knowledge and performance (Covey, 2001). School districts spend large sums of money on professional development annually and should also be concerned with their return on investment. From studies of professional development in the business sector, research has found that after 30 days, 87 cents of

every training dollar is lost if there is no follow up process (Covey, 2001). Middle school literacy coaches may be in a prime position to provide the necessary follow-up to support content-area teachers and help support change in teachers' classrooms.

Through a variety of activities, middle school literacy coaches can assist in the planning of effective professional development at their school sites. Some of these activities may include one-to-one mentoring of teachers, staff book clubs, teacher study groups, and whole-faculty experiences such as workshops (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005; Knight, 2004; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Carr, Herman, and Harris (2005) described myriad types of study groups that can be put into place at schools including "book club study groups, problem-solving study groups, peer coaching study groups, looking at student work study groups, critical friends groups, action research study groups, and whole faculty study groups" (p.80).

Along with actually providing a range of professional development opportunities for teachers and other school staff, literacy coaches also can help create school plans for professional development which may be useful in helping schools create a vision of success for literacy learning within and outside of their school walls. As literacy coaches work collaboratively to develop site-based professional development plans, it is important that they keep the needs and interests of teachers at the forefront of their planning. Additionally, as middle school literacy coaches work with teachers of all content areas, encouraging reflective practice is an important component of professional development planning (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005; Sweeney, 2003).

Collaboration. Many literacy experts agree that the role of the literacy coach is at best a highly collaborative one (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005; Guth & Pettengill, 2005; Sturtevant, 2003; Sweeney, 2003; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Building trusting relationships is essential to the success of any middle school literacy coach. Literacy coaches may work with teachers and administrators to offer a range of professional development activities that best meet the individual and collective needs of the school staff. Some examples include observing peers, modeling lessons, offering constructive feedback, getting teachers to be reflective about their work, meeting with departments/teams, examining student work, providing a range of assessment techniques that teachers can use to guide their instruction, analyzing assessment data, and linking teachers with best practices supported by research (Sturtevant, 2003; Symonds, 2003). In her report of the use of coaches in the San Francisco Bay area, Symonds (2003) noted the following:

...in schools where teachers work with coaches regularly, teachers, coaches, and administrators report a growth of collaborative teacher culture marked by increased teacher willingness and ability to collaborate, peer accountability, individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms; increased levels and quality of implementation of new instructional strategies, and support for new teachers. (p. 5)

Literacy coaches also can be valuable resources in helping to develop professional learning communities. Professional learning communities foster collaboration and a focus on shared values and reflective practices (Louis & Marks, 1996). Unfortunately, Louis

and Marks also found that professional communities are less common in secondary schools than they are in elementary schools.

School-wide planning. Along with offering professional development at the school site, Neufeld and Roper (2003) also recommend that literacy coaches play an instrumental role in the creation and implementation of a school-wide literacy plan. Because coaches are seen as instructional leaders within a school, they work directly with school administrators and other teacher leaders to create and implement effective school-wide literacy plans (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2006). A key component of ensuring the success of a literacy plan is to begin by establishing a risk-taking environment in which teachers feel willing and able to improve their classroom practice. Additionally, getting teachers involved in dialogue about instructional practices helps establish a sense of community and caring about literacy learning. This, in turn, also can help build teachers' reflective practices (Sweeney, 2003).

To further a sense of collaboration within schools, coaches are encouraged to work with teachers to plan, implement, and review lessons. Not only do coaches work with English/language arts teachers, but they may also help content-area teachers implement effective strategies that help their students succeed (Allen, 2004; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). By working with teachers in the content areas, literacy coaches can help these teachers learn how to effectively and explicitly teach comprehension strategies that students need to comprehend a range of complex texts (Allen, 2004).

The increased attention on literacy across the content-areas through the use of literacy coaches continues to have a substantive impact on school reform efforts. In the

report, *Reading at Risk: The State Response to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy* (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 2005), the authors highlighted the impact that focused attention on literacy can have on student achievement. They stated, “As literacy skills improve, student achievement rises not only in reading and writing but across the curriculum spectrum, a benefit that has profound consequences for the ultimate success of standards-based reform” (p. 5). Despite statements that call attention to the effectiveness or benefits of literacy coaching, there still remains little research documenting the actual impact of literacy coaching on student achievement or teacher practices.

Effectiveness of coaching at the secondary level. Although there is increased attention to the potential benefits of literacy coaching at the secondary level, little actual research exists about the impact of coaching on teacher learning or student achievement (Kamil, 2003). However, two recent studies offer insights into the effectiveness of literacy coaching at the elementary level. One of the studies is an empirical study by Swartz (2005) that looked at the impact of literacy coaching in kindergarten through grade 6 on students’ reading achievement. Swartz analyzed assessment data from 47 schools in California implementing a framework for literacy learning which included the use of a literacy coordinator who took on the role as “the school-based staff developer.” In analyzing data from participating schools and comparing it to schools that did not implement the framework, the researcher found that literacy coaching did make a statistically significant contribution to students’ reading achievement. According to the researcher, this “research provides strong support for the relationship between

professional development for teachers in the literacy frameworks and gains in student achievement. Even a highly prescriptive reading program measured higher gains with the support of professional development for teachers” (Swartz, Summary, ¶ 4). Another recent study, this one conducted by Elish-Piper and L’Allier (2007), found that literacy coaching made a statistically significant impact on primary-level students’ achievement. The researchers determined that “the literacy coaching approach offers promise as a way to help all teachers provide quality reading instruction” (p. 5). Elish-Piper and L’Allier also found that literacy coaches’ conferencing with teachers, regardless of the content of the conferences, contributed to gains in students’ scores on the reading measure. Thus, literacy coaching at the elementary level is beginning to show positive impacts on student achievement. Whether or not literacy coaching impacts student achievement and/or teachers’ instructional practices at the secondary level, however, still remains unclear.

Comprehension Instruction in Content-Area Classrooms

With the large numbers of adolescents who are considered struggling readers—some 8 million according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress—comprehension instruction is an important area of consideration for any middle school teacher whose students read any text for any purpose in his or her classroom. Given the explosion of electronic text and the proliferation of information in today’s world, it is increasingly important for content-area teachers to attend to students’ comprehension of text. According to Kamil (2003), “There are approximately 8.7 million fourth through twelfth graders in America whose chances for academic success are dismal because they are unable to read and comprehend the material in their textbooks” (p. 1). Kamil also

emphasized the lackluster performance of U.S. adolescents on international reading assessments as compared to younger students' performance:

In international comparisons of performance on reading assessments, U.S. eleventh graders have placed very close to the bottom, behind students from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, and other developing nations. This poor performance contrasts with rankings in grade four, when U.S. students have placed close to the top in international comparisons. These findings confirm teachers' impressions that many students who read well enough in the primary grades confront difficulties with reading thereafter. (p. 2)

Literacy coaches may be in the unique position of working with content-area teachers to support teachers as they help their middle school students comprehend and apply what they read in content-area classes such as English, science, social studies, and mathematics.

Comprehension instruction. Identifying what constitutes effective reading comprehension instruction is a significant issue in today's world since students are exposed to a wide range of texts in both print and electronic forms. Although comprehension has been an issue in reading research for decades, simply defining reading comprehension has posed a significant challenge to reading researchers (Sweet & Snow, 2003). Sweet and Snow emphasized the debate that researchers have had in the past with regards to this issue. They noted that some researchers argue that processing print drives the process while others believe that constructing meaning is the most significant part of the process. As they explored the meaning of reading comprehension,

Sweet and Snow cited the findings of the RAND Reading Study Group (Snow, 2002) in which reading comprehension was defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning” (p. 1).

Gaffney and Anderson (2000) noted that the research on reading comprehension peaked during the 1980s and then dropped in the 1990s. However, various factors are currently encouraging a resurgence of research in this area. Some of those factors include the dissemination of the RAND Reading Study Group report (Snow, 2002); the inclusion of comprehension as one of the five core elements of reading instruction in the National Reading Panel Report (2000); the emphasis in K-12 education on high-stakes testing with the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (2001); and the realization that as we prepare students for 21st century jobs, students must read and comprehend a wide range of complex texts (Snow, 2002). As a result of these significant factors and others, reading comprehension is again becoming more prevalent as a focus of educational research.

Pressley (2000) articulated the important role that reading comprehension plays both in the field of educational research and in classrooms. Pressley noted that a student’s ability to comprehend what he or she reads is crucial to effective reading. Word-level skills, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies play a significant role in overall comprehension development (Kamil, 2003; Pressley, 2000). In looking at the impact that *instruction* can have on comprehension development, Pressley made the following recommendations:

...teach decoding skills, encourage the development of sight words, teach students to use semantic context cues to evaluate whether decodings are accurate, teach

vocabulary meanings, encourage extensive reading, encourage students to ask themselves why the ideas related in a text make sense, [and] teach self-regulated use of comprehension strategies. (pp. 551-556)

Moreover, comprehension instruction is a complex process and includes attending to a variety of important factors including vocabulary, prior knowledge, and strategy instruction (Kamil, 2003; Pressley, 1999, 2000).

Exposing students to and having them read a wide range of texts are essential components of effective reading instruction classrooms (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000). Pressley (2000) cautioned that although extensive reading and fluency building are important, they are not enough to ensure that students comprehend what they read. Like other comprehension researchers (e.g., Dole, 2000; Duke & Pearson, 2002), Pressley found that explicit comprehension strategy instruction is critical for student success. The National Reading Panel (2000) defined comprehension strategies as “procedures that guide students to become aware of how well they are comprehending as they attempt to read and write” (Chapter 4, p. 2). Pressley found that the most influential evidence for the support of the teaching of self-regulated comprehension strategies has come through experimental evaluations focusing on two sets of studies: one set from the 1970s-early 1980s and the other from the mid-1980s. The first series of studies focused on the teaching of a single comprehension strategy, while the second group of studies focused on the teaching of multiple comprehension strategies.

Pressley (2000) highlighted the following strategies as ones that have been found to impact students’ comprehension: activating prior knowledge, questioning, creating

mental representations, summarizing, and analyzing story grammar constructions. Duke and Pearson (2002) focused on prediction/prior knowledge, think-aloud (both student and teacher), text structure (both narrative and non-narrative), visual representations of text, summarization, and questioning (including student-generated questions) as being research-based comprehension strategies. Various researchers have underscored the benefits that have been found with teaching students how to use multiple comprehension strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke & Reynolds, 2005; Pressley, 2000). Reciprocal teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) is one well-known strategy tool that teachers, including middle school content-area teachers, use to teach multiple comprehension strategies including prediction, questioning, seeking clarification, and summarization.

Transactional strategy instruction, in which students and teachers interact with a text, has been an effective model of comprehension strategy instruction (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000). Explicit comprehension strategy instruction is a model based on heavy scaffolding, teaching through modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. Significant emphasis is placed on the gradual release of responsibility model as an effective way to support students as they learn to become strategic, independent readers (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Harvey & Goudvis, 2008; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Pressley, 1999, 2000; Roehler & Duffy, 1984). Throughout this process, students take responsibility for their own learning after being guided through the process by the teacher (Baker, 2001; Pearson, 1984; Pressley, 2000). Duke and Pearson (2002) advocated a model for comprehension instruction that involves the explicit *explanation* of a comprehension strategy, including details about when, how, and why the

particular strategy is used; teacher modeling; and scaffolded instruction through guided practice and independent application of the strategy.

Dole (2000) added to the conversation about comprehension instruction by noting the debates that have existed amongst reading researchers about the relative benefits of explicit instruction versus implicit instruction. Although Dole clearly supported the use of explicit instruction, she also noted that some researchers and practitioners argue for more implicit instruction of comprehension. When looking at implicit instruction, Dole highlighted the whole language movement of the 1980s. The focus on reading-writing connections, rich contexts, and purposeful activities were of the utmost importance to whole language advocates. According to Dole, when looking at comprehension through the lens of whole language supporters, “comprehension instruction, if it occurs at all, should not follow a predetermined curriculum” (p. 59). Students were given ample opportunities to read authentic literature and interact with text in various ways. Dole emphasized that as teachers moved away from using basal reading programs in favor of authentic literature, some also stopped teaching comprehension at all. This lack of attention to comprehension led, in Dole’s view, to the “fragmentation of teachers’ understandings about and teaching of comprehension in American classrooms” (p. 60). Another example of implicit instruction that Dole explored is the literary response movement. This movement, marked by the use of literature study groups and literature circles, focused on having students read and respond to literature on both a personal and social level. Dole noted that comprehension instruction in such settings is implicit in

nature. Students learn to internalize this processing of text through repeated practice and engagement with text in literary-response groups.

Along with looking at the role of implicit instruction in comprehension development, Dole (2000) also explored the role of explicit instruction. Her discussion of explicit instruction is similar to that of other researchers (e.g., Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke & Reynolds, 2005) in that it builds on a gradual release of responsibility model and it does not focus on mastery, but rather on development that changes as the reader matures. In comparing the present state of implicit and explicit comprehension instruction in American classrooms, Dole found the following:

- (a) Despite a significant body of research in the 1980s suggesting the effectiveness of strategy instruction, especially for lower-achieving readers, strategy instruction has not been implemented in many American classrooms...(b) Many teachers who have abandoned basal reading programs have also abandoned comprehension instruction...(c) Many teachers want to learn more effective ways of instructing... (d) Some teachers want easy answers in the increasingly complex world of teaching and learning...(e) Regardless of the theoretical and instructional approach, many advocates of that approach seem to think they have the answer.
- (pp. 62-65)

Dole advocated finding a way to carefully balance the best of explicit instruction with the best of implicit instruction. This notion of balance is similar to that supported by Duke and Pearson (2002). Implicit and explicit comprehension instruction can occur not only in reading classrooms, but in content-area classrooms as well.

Along with thinking about *how* comprehension should be taught, it is also important to consider *when* comprehension should be taught. The report of the RAND Reading Study Group (Snow, 2002) emphasized the importance of comprehension at *all* levels of instruction from primary grades through middle school and high school. This finding is important in that it flies in the face of the learning-to-read and reading-to-learn sequence that some educators place on reading development in which primary students are merely taught to read while intermediate-grade students and above read to learn. Kamil (2003) discussed the disconnect between secondary educators and reading researchers with regard to this issue:

For much of the history of reading in this country, the attitude of middle and high school teachers has been that their job was not to teach reading. They view themselves as content specialists and believe that the job of teaching reading belongs to elementary school teachers. And they feel that, if only those elementary school teachers would do a better job of teaching these students to read, the problems at the secondary level would be solved. But for decades, reading education experts have disagreed with that analysis. (p. 4)

Duke, Bennett-Armistead, and Roberts (2003), among others, have found that comprehension instruction must begin in the primary grades so that students are provided opportunities early on not only to learn to read, but to simultaneously read to learn. Furthermore, comprehension instruction must continue throughout a student's educational career to ensure that the child's comprehension development continues as he or she matures and texts become increasingly complex. Additionally, comprehension

instruction should occur continually throughout all grade levels as students encounter new forms and genres of text and varied purposes for reading (Snow, 2002).

Sweet and Snow (2003) built on the ideas found in the RAND report (2002) in an attempt to impact classroom practice. They noted that the interactions among the reader, the text, and the activity change over time due to a variety of dominant factors including the maturity of the reader, the cognitive development of the reader, and the influence of instruction on the reader. They emphasized the important role that instruction has on the reader's development. Instruction begins in the home and neighborhood prior to a child entering school, and then builds throughout a child's life. Therefore, it is important to recognize the sociocultural context within which instruction takes place. The classroom environment obviously plays a crucial role in a reader's development as well. Sweet and Snow emphasized the context that classrooms reflect including that of the cultural influences, socioeconomic status, as well as the economic disparities of the neighborhood and of society in general. With regards to the effect of context, they found:

Effects of contextual factors, including economic resource, class membership, ethnicity, neighborhood, and school culture, can be seen in oral language practices, in students' self-concepts, in the types of literacy activities in which individuals engage, in instructional history, and, of course, in the likelihood of successful outcomes. The classroom learning environment (e.g., organizational grouping, inclusion of technology, and availability of materials) is an important aspect of the context that can affect the development of comprehension abilities. (pp. 9-10)

Like Sweet and Snow (2003), Duke and Pearson (2002) emphasized the critical role that context plays in comprehension instruction. Duke and Pearson focused on the classroom context and defined the features of a supportive classroom environment in the following way: time engaged in reading, the reading of authentic texts for authentic purposes, the exposure to and reading of a wide range of genres, a vocabulary-rich environment, time spent writing to develop reading-writing connections, and opportunities for quality discussions about text. They also found that supportive classroom environments and knowledgeable teachers can have a significant impact on students' development as self-regulated learners. Students need to be supported in their use of comprehension strategies so that they can eventually learn to apply strategies independently and efficiently (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Harvey & Goudvis, 2008; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

Many factors impact students' reading comprehension development, thereby making the process a complex one. Understanding the complexity of this process is critical for both researchers and practitioners (Snow, 2002). Duke and Pearson (2002) noted the critical role that research on effective readers has played in the field of reading comprehension. They highlighted the importance of teaching all students the productive behaviors that good readers (i.e., strategic readers) employ when they read. When looking at comprehension instruction, Duke and Pearson discussed the relevance of balance. Balance, they noted, should include both the explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies, as well as actual interaction with a wide variety of texts through reading, writing, and purposeful discussion. Duke and Pearson also identified

additional considerations for effective reading instruction. Specifically, they stated that teachers need to choose appropriate texts, pay particular attention to student motivation, and understand the value of ongoing informal assessment that informs instruction.

In summary, comprehension instruction is an important element of classroom teaching across content areas, especially in light of the increased demands of reading on students as a result of the explosion of electronic text and the proliferation of information in today's world. English, math, science, and social studies texts all can pose challenges for middle school readers. For example, in *The New Science Literacy* (as cited in IRA, 2006) the authors discussed the complexity of science readings:

...scientific reading is concept-laden and how one concept often builds on another, so students cannot skip over a concept and expect to understand or catch up later. Diagrams, concept-laden vocabulary, abbreviations, equations, and processes also pose challenges. Moreover, it is not unusual for students to find an array of articles and studies on a scientific issue with conflicting messages. To interpret the materials' collective meanings, students must learn how to evaluate the information and presentation strategies of the various selections. Students also need to understand how to analyze different kinds of evidence and their relative weight and importance. (p. 27)

As noted earlier, numerous studies in the recent years have focused on the value of explicit explanation of comprehension strategies as a tool for helping students comprehend text (e.g., Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke & Reynolds, 2005; Pressley, 2000; Snow, 2002; Sweet & Snow, 2003). There are many significant implications that this

research has for classroom practice. First, teachers must recognize the complexity of comprehension including the connections between the reader, the text, and the activity. Second, teachers need to understand the value of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies as a tool for comprehension development, as well as how, when, and why to teach them. Third, teachers must know how to create supportive classroom environments that foster students' comprehension development. The explicit instruction of comprehension strategies combined with supportive classroom routines and contexts can have a direct and powerful impact on developing students as self-regulated, strategic readers (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Increasing students' awareness and independent use of comprehension strategies across content-areas may help give struggling adolescent readers the tools they need to be productive, successful members of a global society. Literacy coaches at the middle school level can work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of a range of texts.

The Call for Multiple Texts in Content-Area Classrooms

Given that we live in a world in which the Internet provides us access to up-to-the-minute information from around the world almost instantaneously, it is important to expose middle school students to a variety of genres, including informational texts, and not simply rely on a textbook as the sole source of information. Not only do informational texts have the potential to ignite students' innate curiosities about the world around them, but their use prepares students for their futures as much of what they will be exposed to throughout their schooling and beyond will be of an informational nature (Kamil & Lane, 1997). Despite the need for exposing students to a range of forms and

genres of text, many teachers still include a preponderance of fiction in their classrooms and there is a lack of attention to informational text in the elementary grades (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). When students come in contact with informational passages on standardized tests or in textbooks in the intermediate grades or middle school, they may not have the skills or strategies to comprehend what they are reading due, potentially, to a lack of exposure to informational texts. This difficulty with reading, even by students who had been successful readers in earlier grades, is sometimes referred to as the “4th grade slump” (Snow, 2002, p. 7).

Given this increased exposure to a wide range of information in both print and electronic forms, numerous researchers and practitioners in the education arena have called for the inclusion of multiple texts in classrooms. For instance, the *Standards for the English Language Arts* (IRA & NCTE, 1996) claim that in order for students to become proficient, knowledgeable readers, they should be exposed to a broad range of texts. The position statement from the International Reading Association’s Commission on Adolescent Literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) stated that “adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read” (p. 101). Alvermann (2003) suggested that educators “treat adolescents’ interests in a wide range of texts as a plus...[and] incorporate multiple forms of print and nonprint media” (p. 14).

When looking at multiple texts, there are a variety of forms of text that can be considered. For example, there are supplemental books and electronic texts, but there also are oral texts, student-generated texts, and more (Wade & Moje, 2001). The Association

of Educational Publishers' 2006 Educational Publishing Forum focused on translating print content into digital media, rethinking the product development process in digital terms, and finding new revenue opportunities by exploring multiple outlets for content. This organization of educational publishers, both basal and supplemental, declared that "in five years, publishers will need to understand the ins and outs of digital production just in order to exist" (Association of Educational Publishers [AEP], 2005). Their expectation is that far more digital media will enter elementary and secondary classrooms as educational publishers respond to marketplace needs and rethink or broaden the definition of *texts*.

Along with the influx of digital media, other texts are being introduced into science and social studies secondary classrooms as well. T. W. Bean (2001) called for an increase in the inclusion of young adult literature in content-area classrooms. He noted that adolescents are more likely to be motivated to read when the text connects to their personal lives. One way to increase the relevance for students is to get to know students and their in-school and out-of-school interests (Hinchman, Alvermann, Boyd, Brozo, & Vacca, 2003/2004). Bean emphasized the importance of incorporating this knowledge into classrooms using multiple texts and multiple forms of representation. He also noted that "another dimension of content literacy that needs greater attention is the impact of multiple texts on students' learning, interest, critical thinking, writing, and attitudes toward reading" (T. W. Bean, 2000, p. 641).

Although nearly all U.S. schools now have access to the Internet (Williams, 2000), basal textbooks still remain a primary source of information in many U.S.

secondary classrooms (T. W. Bean, 2000, 2001; Spires & Donley, 1998). In fact, some researchers estimate that 75-90% of secondary classrooms rely on textbooks (C. Smith, 2003). Yet, some students are either unwilling or unable to access the information in these texts. The sheer difficulty of some textbooks contributes to this phenomenon (Bennett, 2003; Massey & Heafner, 2004). Even though textbooks in middle school content-area classrooms may be difficult for some students to read and understand, these students may not receive the support needed to adequately access information. While looking at motivating struggling middle school readers, Guthrie and Davis (2003) found that:

...despite the fact that these texts [textbooks] are forbidding to struggling readers, middle school students are rarely provided a diversity of materials that might enable them to learn content through texts matched to their reading ability...Thus, the texts in middle school are more formidable than texts in elementary school and students are given less support in coping with them. (p. 67)

The Use of Multiple Texts in Content-Area Classrooms

Although basal textbooks remain a mainstay in middle school content-area classrooms, the use of supplemental texts is growing (AEP, 2005). Not surprisingly, different teachers have diverse reasons for utilizing multiple texts. Some find that incorporating multiple texts that are written at a variety of reading levels provides all students access to critical core content (Kettel & Douglas, 2003; Robb, 2002). By using multiple texts students have the opportunity to read information that they may not have been able to access previously, and they also may have the chance to focus on and/or

develop areas of interest. As students' interests are tapped, their motivation for reading and learning has been found to increase (Guthrie & Cox, 2001). Recent research on motivation and engagement stresses the positive influence of classroom practices such as having real-world experiences, encouraging choice, engaging in strategy instruction, and utilizing high-interest texts (e.g., Guthrie, 2003, 2004; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Mercurio, 2005).

In addition to utilizing texts in classrooms to meet the diverse interests and reading levels of students, teachers also can use multiple texts to achieve their instructional goals. According to Wade and Moje (2001),

Uses of texts depend on differences in pedagogical approach and purpose; subject area; grade level; academic track or reading-group level; systems of assessment and accountability; content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers; teachers' and students' beliefs about knowledge, the appropriate uses of literacy, and the purpose of schooling; teachers' and students' past school, home, and community experiences; and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (§ 3)

Based on their study of three content-area teachers, Walker and T. W. Bean (2005) concluded that the use of multiple texts could be considered along a continuum from independent student use to heavily teacher-directed use. Walker and T. W. Bean found that one of their study participant's use of multiple texts was in response to a need to provide all students access to information, despite inadequate classroom resources. Another teacher focused on using multiple texts to teach intertextual connections and engage students' interests. The third teacher in their study integrated technology as a tool

and used various texts as writing models. These teachers utilized multiple texts in various ways depending on the purpose of their instruction.

An additional reason teachers utilize multiple texts, particularly in social studies, is to provide students with opportunities to understand a theme or topic from multiple perspectives (Hynd, 1999; Kettel & Douglas, 2003; Massey & Heafner, 2004; C. Smith, 2003). Students have opportunities to understand multiple perspectives when they read and critique information from a variety of sources. Massey and Heafner (2004) argued that students must develop the ability to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize content, particularly historical information. As students develop these high-order thinking skills, they also deepen their content knowledge.

Multiple texts also can be used to teach and foster critical thinking. Although Hynd (1999) specifically emphasized the benefits of using multiple texts in history, she also acknowledged the benefits for all subject areas. Hynd argued that students need to learn strategies for critically reading multiple texts because the strategies for comprehending multiple texts are different than for reading a single textbook. She stated, “When several texts are taken in concert... a teaching opportunity is present, especially when the texts contradict one another, present different information, or present the viewpoints of different groups of people” (p. 431). Along with fostering opportunities for engaging in critical thinking, Kettel and Douglas (2003) also encouraged the use of multiple texts such as the Web, magazines, trade books, and chapter books to build background knowledge. Building and extending background knowledge is particularly important in science and social studies classrooms. Kettel and Douglas noted the value of

discussion, reflective writing, questioning, and making connections across texts as effective ways to build and extend students' background knowledge.

In today's society, the purposes for reading are varied. Students must have the capacity to read between the lines in order to interpret, analyze, and synthesize information as well as read across texts by applying these skills across multiple texts (Westby, 2004). As we learn more about how multiple texts are utilized in content-area classrooms, educators will get a clearer understanding of the impact using multiple texts to teach science and social studies content can have on student learning. Robb (2002) articulated the potential power of multiple texts by stating,

Multiple texts enable teachers to offer students books they can read, improve students' application of reading-thinking strategies, build confidence, and develop the motivation to learn. By using multiple texts, all students have the opportunity to learn new information and make meaningful contributions to discussions. Moreover, varied texts provide multiple perspectives that help students rethink events and issues that impact everyone. (p. 32)

In the report *NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform* (2006), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) discussed the importance of having students read and write different types of texts. They noted that students who read and write multiple texts "develop the ability to recognize how texts are organized in different disciplines and begin to consider the various social, political, and historical contexts and purposes that surround all texts" (p. 13).

Despite the value of exposing students to a range of texts across disciplines, the RAND Reading Study Group's report (Snow, 2002) shared the bleak state of U.S. adolescents' comprehension of complex texts. The report declared,

All high school graduates are facing an increased need for a high degree of literacy, including the capacity to comprehend complex texts, but comprehension outcomes are not improving. Students in the United States are performing increasingly poorly in comparison with students in other countries as they enter the later years of schooling when discipline-specific content and subject matter learning are central to the curriculum. (p. xi)

Secondary students are struggling to comprehend the complex range of texts that they encounter in content-area classrooms. The implications of the RAND Reading Study Group's report (Snow, 2002) and international assessments, as well as NAEP results, suggest that teachers need to pay increased attention to comprehension, provide students with experiences that include exposure to and the reading of a broad range of diverse texts, and explicitly teach comprehension strategies to help students understand these texts and apply new learning. Literacy coaches at the middle school level can work with content-area teachers to help these teachers infuse comprehension instruction and the use of multiple texts into content-area classrooms so that students can learn to read, understand, and apply the content found in these texts.

Summary

Literacy coaching at the secondary level has drawn increased attention in recent years, in large part as a response to the staggering numbers of adolescents who struggle

with reading and the realization that job-embedded professional development is the most effective form of professional development. Although there is increased interest in adding literacy coaches at the middle school level, there is currently little research that shows the impact that literacy coaching actually has on students or teachers at this level. There also is little research about what middle school literacy coaches actually do in their roles or how they work with the teachers at their school sites. More needs to be known about how literacy coaches work with teachers to support students who struggle with reading, particularly in content-area classrooms. At the middle school level, students come in contact with multiple texts across content areas, including textbooks, magazines, novels, trade books, leveled books, student-generated texts, information from the Internet, and more. For students who struggle with reading, comprehension of any number of these texts may be challenging and frustrating at best. Literacy coaches may be in a unique position to work closely with content-area teachers as these teachers support students' comprehension of multiple texts, whether it be working with a science teacher to help students comprehend a science magazine article about genetically modified foods, working with a social studies teacher to help students comprehend an Internet article about genocide in Darfur or to read and respond to a political blog, working with a math teacher to help students understand a statistics problem, or working with an English teacher to help students make connections between two pieces of multicultural literature.

This study explores literacy coaching at the middle school level across the United States in order to find out what middle school literacy coaches actually do, as well as why and how they do their jobs. Because middle schools are inherently different from

elementary schools in that teachers generally work in specific disciplines and/or departments and students are exposed to increasingly complex texts, it is essential that literacy coaching at this level is studied more thoroughly to gain insights into the realities of the role and the challenges literacy coaches face. By looking specifically at the context of middle schools in which these coaches work, the study also provides insights into how middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts.

3. Methodology

This study explored middle school literacy coaching across the continental United States. Data for this study were collected in two phases. In phase one, a survey was mailed to participants. In phase two, open-ended interviews were conducted. During the initial data collection phase, a survey was mailed to 125 randomly selected middle school literacy coaches. Fifty-one participants returned the survey. Of the 51 respondents, seven coaches were then purposefully selected for open-ended interviews. The selection process will be discussed later in this chapter. These seven middle school literacy coaches were interviewed to further explore the survey findings.

The choice of collecting and analyzing both qualitative data and quantitative data was deliberately made to provide information not only about what middle school literacy coaches around the country do and how they do it, but also to gain insights into coaches' personal experiences and thoughts about literacy coaching at the middle school level. In other words, the qualitative data from the interviews was used to provide depth to the survey quantitative data.

This chapter will discuss the research questions that guided the study, the participant selection process for the survey and the interviews, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis techniques for both the quantitative analysis as well as the qualitative analysis of data.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions that guided this study. They include five research questions and one sub-question:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches?
2. How satisfied are middle school literacy coaches with different aspects of their roles and responsibilities? Does satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support?
3. What are the challenges and rewards identified by middle school literacy coaches?
4. How do middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts?
5. What advice do current middle school literacy coaches have for future middle school literacy coaches?

Participants

The participants in phase one of this study were randomly selected from a list of middle school literacy coaches from across the continental United States. The list of middle school literacy coaches was purchased from Market Data Retrieval (MDR), a Dun & Bradstreet company that specializes in marketing and sales information about the K-12 education market and other market segments. One of the core services offered by MDR is list brokering. The company maintains the names and information of approximately four million educators, including teachers, principals, and district-level staff in public and private schools/districts.

The MDR list that was created for this study used the list selects of “Reading/Literacy Coach” and “Middle School/Junior High” to ensure that only coaches who actually work with middle school teachers and/or students were included in this study. According to MDR, the universe of middle school/junior high reading/literacy coaches at the end of the 2006-2007 school year was 251. The list grew to 505 at the beginning of September of the 2007-2008 school year. While this latter number is twice that of the previous school year, it illustrates that literacy coaching at the middle school level is not prevalent across the country, considering that there are 11,405 public middle schools, 116 catholic middle schools, and 121 private middle schools across the United States and only 505 reading/literacy coaches at this level.

Of the 505 names on the Market Data Retrieval list of middle school/junior high reading/literacy coaches in September 2007, 125 were randomly selected via MDR’s computer system for inclusion in this study. These coaches resided in towns or cities all across the continental United States. The 125 literacy coaches on the list received the mailed survey. Fifty-one literacy coaches returned the survey.

Of the 51 survey respondents, seven were purposefully selected to participate in open-ended interviews. The participants to be interviewed were selected based on their years of experience both as educators as well as in their roles as literacy coaches. Only coaches with 10 or more years of experience in education were selected as potential interview candidates. From this pool of candidates, the next step was to consider the responses of the coaches on their survey forms to ensure that they were interested in discussing literacy coaching in an interview format. Then, participants were grouped into

geographic regions based on the locations of their schools. The seven participants came from seven different geographic regions across the United States: West, Northwest, Midwest, South, Southeast, East, and Northeast. This criteria was purposefully established to ensure that no one state or region dominated the findings in this study and to attempt to capture a wider view of middle school literacy coaching in schools and districts all across the country. The final seven interviewees met all of the selection criteria.

Data Collection

As mentioned, data from study participants were gathered from two primary sources—surveys and interviews. During phase one, the survey was administered. Interviews were conducted in phase two. The survey and the interviews were both used to answer the research questions that guided this study. The survey was used to answer research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, while the interviews were used to further explore research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 and to answer question 5. Table 1 illustrates each data source and its match to the study's research questions. The next two sections will explain the administration of the survey and the interview process.

Survey. Fink (2003a, 2003b) and Litwin (2003) were the primary sources of survey method information for this dissertation study. Fink emphasized the importance of having specific objectives for a survey. Objectives for this survey were identified as follows:

1. Identify background demographic data of middle school literacy coaches.
2. Identify the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches.

3. Identify middle school literacy coaches' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs.
4. Identify challenges reported by middle school literacy coaches.
5. Identify how middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers as they support students' comprehension of multiple texts.

Table 1

Data Sources Matched to Research Questions

Research questions	<u>Data collection methods</u>	
	Survey	Interviews
1. What are the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches?	x	x
2. How satisfied are middle school literacy coaches with different aspects of their roles and responsibilities? Does satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support?	x	x
3. What are the challenges and rewards identified by middle school literacy coaches?	x	x
4. How do middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts?	x	x
5. What advice do current middle school literacy coaches have for future middle school literacy coaches?		x

After careful research, a survey instrument was found that had been used previously with elementary reading specialists in 2002 and then updated and implemented again with elementary reading specialists in 2004 (R. M. Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, & Wallis, 2002; Pipes, 2004). Since this study focused on middle school literacy coaching and the survey was initially developed for use with elementary

literacy coaches, the survey instrument was adapted to meet the goals of the present research study (see Appendix A for the adapted survey instrument).

In adapting the survey instrument, validity was attended to in various ways. To begin with, content validity of the survey questions was determined. Fink (2003a) defined content validity as “the extent to which a measure thoroughly and appropriately assesses the skills or characteristics it is intended to measure” (p. 51). Fink recommends consulting the research literature and experts. To ensure content validity of the adaptations, research literature was reviewed to define the concepts of literacy coaching, comprehension instruction, and multiple texts as detailed in the review of related literature found in chapter 2 of this document. Literature on comprehension strategy instruction was consulted to create the questions on comprehension. Literature addressing the use of multiple texts and nonfiction texts were used to create the questions on multiple texts. Face validity was employed as an initial check to quickly assess whether or not the questions addressed what they were intended to address (Fink, 2003a). Along with consulting the literature, middle school literacy coaches were consulted through the use of a pilot survey. The administration of the pilot survey will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

As an additional check for validity for the adaptations, the survey instrument underwent a cognitive pretest with a middle school literacy coach to ensure that what the questions were intended to ask were aligned with the coach’s interpretations of the questions. Fink (2003a) explained that cognitive pretests occur when a survey draft is presented to potential respondents for review and those respondents give their feedback

on the questions and overall survey approach. The literacy coach selected for this cognitive pretest participated in thinking aloud while reading each survey question. Notes were taken as the coach participated in the think aloud and, at the end of the survey, questions were asked to clarify the coach's responses. Adjustments to the questions were made and additional questions were added as a result of this cognitive pretest. Specifically, the questions about comprehension strategies in content-area classrooms were added.

After the early checks for validity and subsequent revisions, the survey instrument was ready for pilot testing. The pilot test (Fink, 2003a; Litwin, 2003) of the adapted survey was conducted with a group of middle school coaches from around the country, including Texas, Florida, Virginia, and California. These literacy coaches were recommended either by their school principals or literacy educational consultants who work with schools across the country. The principals and consultants identified these individuals as being knowledgeable and experienced in coaching at the middle school level. Participants were contacted via email and agreed to participate in the pilot of the survey. The adapted survey was sent to the coaches via email along with a feedback form (see Appendix B for the pilot survey and Appendix C for the feedback form).

This pilot provided an opportunity to gauge how long the surveys would take to complete, check for word and question bias, identify questions that needed to be reworded or dropped, identify questions that could be added, check that the directions were clear, and identify potential problems which may arise with any aspect of the survey instrument or its administration. Participants in the pilot survey returned their completed

surveys and feedback forms via fax or email, whichever they preferred. Suggestions for revisions were compiled and reviewed. Participants suggested adding a question about educational experience and about how texts are used in content-area classrooms. Once revisions to the survey instrument were made, the instrument was sent back to the middle school literacy coach who had initially participated in the cognitive pretest for a final review. No additional changes to the survey were made at that point (see Appendix A for the final adapted survey instrument). Final adaptations to the survey instrument based on the literature and feedback from coaches included the following: adding a question about the supports that the coach has at his or her school (question 11), adding a question about the challenges/obstacles faced by the coach (question 12), adding questions about the content areas the coach works with and how the coach works with these teachers (questions 13 and 14), adding questions about the use of multiple texts (questions 16-20), and adding questions about the use of comprehension strategies in content-area classrooms (questions 15, 23, and 24). None of the middle school literacy coaches who participated in the pilot survey were randomly selected to complete the revised survey.

Survey administration. An initial survey package was sent via U.S. mail to 125 randomly selected middle school literacy coaches across the continental United States. The packages consisted of an incentive, cover letter, survey, consent form, and stamped return envelope. The incentives were middle school-level books from a not-for-profit educational organization. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a second mailing was sent to those who had not responded to the original mailing. The purpose of the second

mailing was to remind participants to complete the survey. These packages included a cover letter, survey, consent form, and stamped return envelope.

Literature on survey research clearly notes that response rates for mailed surveys can range dramatically depending on the audience and their relationship, or lack of relationship, with the survey administrator; the complexity of the survey instrument; and other factors that could influence people's willingness to complete the survey such as timing, the attractiveness of the survey and the envelope in which it arrives, complexity of the questions, and the number of questions (Fink, 2003a). Fink stated "no single response rate is considered standard" (p. 42) due to the number of factors that can influence response rates. In determining the anticipated response rate for this survey study, response rates to similar audiences were reviewed. The response rate for IRA's 2005 survey of reading coaches was 13.2% (IRA, 2005). The original survey from which this survey was adapted yielded a 38% response rate (R. M. Bean et al., 2002). Based on the response rates for those surveys and the lack of preexisting relationship with the survey audience, the anticipated response rate for this survey was 30-38% (R. M. Bean et al., 2002; A. Kitsantis, personal communication, August 27, 2007).

Since it is not uncommon to have an initial response rate as low as 20% to an unsolicited mailed survey, survey methodologists recommend building in specific strategies to increase response rates (Fink, 2003a). Guidelines recommended in survey literature were abided by in the present study, including the following: (1) surveys were kept confidential, (2) a follow-up mailing was sent, (3) the return envelopes were addressed and stamped, (3) an incentive was provided, and (4) eligibility criteria was

clear and realistic (Fink, 2003a; 2003b). Fifty-one of the 125 literacy coaches returned the survey for an overall response rate of 40.8%, meeting the anticipated response rate. One completed survey did not include a signature on the consent form. An attempt was made to contact this participant via mail and telephone to obtain the signature. However, these two attempts were unsuccessful; therefore that particular survey was excluded from the data analysis.

Interviews. After the surveys were collected and analyzed, phase two of the research study began. Telephone interviews were conducted with each of the seven middle school literacy coaches. The interview goals include the following:

1. Explain the prediction of satisfaction with teacher support by administrator support and planning opportunities with teachers.
2. Elaborate on the myriad roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches.
3. Elaborate on the challenges literacy coaches face and how these challenges may impact their experiences and job satisfaction.
4. Elaborate on how participants support content-area teachers.
5. Explore the rewards of literacy coaching along with the coaches' personal experiences and thoughts about being middle school literacy coaches.
6. Find out what advice participants would offer future literacy coaches.

A guide was created to act as an initial starting point for each conversation (see Appendix C for the interview guide). However, the interviews were open-ended, thereby allowing for flexibility based on participants' responses.

As previously mentioned, all seven participants in the interviews were purposefully selected based on their years of experience both in education as well as in coaching, the depth of their responses on the survey instrument, and to ensure diversity in geographic locations. Each of the seven participants had a minimum of 11 years of experience as an educator and a minimum of two years as a literacy coach. The maximum number of years of experience was 30 and the maximum number of years as a literacy coach was 19.

Furthermore, the interview participants in this study came from different regions of the United States. This was an intentional choice to ensure that no one state or region dominated the results. One participant was selected from the West, one participant from the Northwest, one from the Midwest, one from the South, one from the Southeast, one from the Northeast, and one from the East. Actual names of the states that these individuals came from were omitted from this document to ensure that these individuals cannot be identified. This is particularly important for the literacy coaches who did not have positive comments to make about their school administrators. Because the state and information shared about individual districts could unwittingly be used to identify a coach, omitting the states and using pseudonyms was done to ensure that their anonymity was protected in every possible way. The survey data, however, does not include district-identifying information. Therefore, specific state names are only identified when referring to survey responses, not interview responses. All seven participants were interviewed by phone for a minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of 2 ½ hours.

Table 2

Interview Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Years in Education	Years as a Literacy Coach	Region of U.S.
Kim	20	2	West
Anne	16	7	Northwest
Erin	11	3	Midwest
Julie	20	3	South
Pam	15	9	Southeast
Nicole	16	5	Northeast
Lisa	30	19	East

Table 2 depicts the participants selected for interviews. The table focuses on the participants' years of experience in education, their years of experience as a literacy coach, and their geographic location. Although the table states *years as literacy coach*, it is important to note that for at least one participant, Lisa, her title has changed over time. The title of literacy coach was a new title for her at the time of the present study, but her role has been consistent over the years. Participant pseudonyms also are included in Table 2.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data from 23 of the 26 questions on the survey were entered into a statistical analysis program (SPSS). Only questions 11, 12, and 26 were not included in this initial

analysis. These three questions were included in the qualitative analysis although the findings from those three questions also were quantified by reporting the frequency with which participants provided each response. The analysis of questions 12, 13, and 26 will be discussed later in this chapter.

Data from the 23 survey questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., mean and standard deviation) and multiple regression. The measurement scales used in this analysis included nominal/categorical, ordinal, and interval scales. To aid with the quantitative analysis, a research log was kept. According to Litwin (2003) a log includes “documentation of the research decisions that are made during the coding or review of surveys” (p. 55). This codebook allowed tracking of decisions that were made throughout the analysis of the survey data.

Cleaning and inputting data. The following is an explanation of the decisions that were made with regard to coding data. The code of 99 was selected to identify no response to a particular question. For survey question 5 (*What grades have you taught in the past? Circle all that apply*) participants had the opportunity to choose the following grade spans: *K-3*, *4-5*, *6-8*, and/or *9-12*. Responses were scored and coded as follows: 1 = *elementary* [participant responses of *K-3* and/or *4-5*], 2 = *middle school* [participant responses of *6-8* only], 3 = *high school* [participant responses of *9-12* only], 4 = *combination of grades that include middle school* [participant responses included *6-8* along with any other grade span(s)]. When entering the data for question 10 (*Who is mainly responsible for defining your roles and responsibilities?*) three of the original categories listed were entered into SPSS. These included: 1 = *me*, 2 = *my school*

administrator, and 3 = *the district*. The selection of 4 = *other* was broken into two separate categories: 4 = literacy coach was involved, along with others, in defining his/her roles and responsibilities and 5 = coach was not involved in defining his/her roles and responsibilities. Question 14 (*When you work with content-area teachers, what specifically do you do? Please circle all that apply*) included the following possible responses: *model*, *co-plan*, *co-teach*, *provide materials*, *provide teaching suggestions*, and *other*. When entering these data into SPSS, 0 = no and 1 = yes was used to code this data. For example, if a participant circled *model*, then the score of 1 was entered indicating an affirmative response—yes, that participant models. If a participant did not circle *model*, a 0 was entered thereby indicating a negative response—no, that participant does not model. This was repeated for all possible responses to this question, i.e., *model*, *co-plan*, *co-teach*, *provide materials*, and *provide teaching suggestions*.

As the data were cleaned, variable values were checked against preset maximum and minimum levels (e.g., Likert scale 1-5). In planning for the analysis of the data, it was determined that it would be important to distinguish between missing data and “don’t know” or “not applicable” and also to check for outliers. The decision was made before analyzing the data that each outlier would be considered on a case-by-case basis so as not to exclude important information prior to carefully considering ramifications of such decisions.

Descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to “indicate general tendencies in the data [e.g., mean]...the spread of scores [e.g., standard deviation]...or a comparison of how one score relates to all others [e.g., percentile rank]” (Creswell, 2005,

p. 181). Frequency distributions were calculated for grade levels coaches work with, their years in education, their years as a coach, the number of schools they work with, the number of teachers at their main school, the highest degree earned, previous grades taught, who defines their role/responsibilities, teacher receptiveness to comprehension instruction, the tasks performed when working with content-area teachers, their primary areas of focus, their involvement with various activities and people, their views on comprehension instruction, and their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their roles. Frequency distributions in chapter 4 are reported in percentages.

Multiple regression. Multiple regression was used to address the following question: Does satisfaction with principal support or conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support? The dependent variable was teacher support and the predictor variables were principal support and conferencing.

The practical significance for conducting this multiple regression analysis is that it underscores the important relationship of principal support and conferencing with teachers, with literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support. Literacy coaching is expensive for schools and districts because it includes salaries and benefits. The effectiveness of literacy coaching depends heavily on the person in the position. Attending to literacy coaches' satisfaction levels may give principals important information about what they can do to support and retain literacy coaches. Furthermore, teacher support is critical to the success of any literacy coach since the primary intent of literacy coaching is to provide job-embedded professional development to teachers. If teachers are not supportive of the coach, it may significantly impact the coach's ability to

do his or her job well. This multiple regression analysis provides information about whether coaches' satisfaction with teacher support can be predicted by principal support and conferencing opportunities with teachers. This information may be beneficial to principals to help them find ways to support their coaches and keep them in their positions.

Earlier studies of literacy coaching have provided insights into the impact of literacy coaches' conferencing with teachers as well as the value of principal support. In their study of literacy coaching at the primary level, Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) found that literacy coaches' conferencing with teachers, regardless of the content of their conversations, had a positive impact on student achievement. Furthermore, in his multiple case study of middle school literacy coaches, A. T. Smith (2006) found that administrative support was important to the success of literacy coaches.

The value of this present analysis to the field is twofold. First, this study provides statistical data to support A. T. Smith's finding that principal support is important to literacy coaches. Second, it broadens the finding of Elish-Piper and L'Allier as it investigates one specific form of conferencing—planning with teachers—and its relationship to literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support.

As previously mentioned, in this multiple regression analysis the dependent variable was teacher support and the predictor variables were principal support and conferencing. The predictor variables were measured with Likert scales 1-5 in the survey, and correspond to items 4 and 7 from question 25 (see Appendix A for the survey). The multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS.

To examine the data for outliers on the predictor variables, the cutting score of 0.18 was used. One outlier was found and eliminated. There were no outliers on the dependent variable (teacher support) since the minimum and maximum values of the Studentized Deleted Residual (-2.301 and 1.806, respectively) were lower than 3.0 in absolute value. After the removal of the one outlier, data from 49 participants were used for this analysis. The Centered Leverage Value of .152 was less than the cutting score of .18 which was determined using the following calculation: $3(p + 1)/n$, where p is the number of predictors ($p = 2$) and n is the sample size ($n = 49$). The maximum value for Cook's Distance is .090, which is below 1.0, thereby indicating that there were no influential data points.

The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between satisfaction with principal support or conferencing, and satisfaction with teacher support. The alternative hypothesis was that satisfaction with principal support and conferencing predict satisfaction with teacher support.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Three survey questions and the interviews were analyzed using qualitative methods (Maxwell, 2005). The data from the qualitative analysis of the interviews were used to explain the survey results in greater depth (Creswell, 2005). The next section explains how the survey items were analyzed. This is followed by a description of the analysis of the interview data.

Survey qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis was used to explore the detailed responses of the survey participants in their own words. Using the qualitative analysis

along with the quantitative analysis added “depth, meaning, and detail to statistical findings” (Fink, 2003a, p. 64).

The survey included three open-ended questions (see Appendix A for the survey instrument). The first question dealt with supports that middle school literacy coaches have in their schools and/or districts. The second question addressed challenges or obstacles that they face. The final question on the survey was an open-ended question that gave participants an opportunity to discuss any concluding thoughts that they wanted to share. Responses from all three open-ended questions were recorded into one spreadsheet and then analyzed. As the data were analyzed, the responses for each question were placed into organizational as well as substantive categories that captured the ideas represented by the participants’ responses (Maxwell, 2005). The responses were then analyzed within each category to delve further into emerging subthemes. The theme of challenges related to people included subthemes of issues with administrators and resistant teachers. The theme of challenges related to resources included subthemes of district resources such as materials or funding as well as resources such as time. Throughout the process of analyzing the qualitative data from the surveys, memos and notes were used. Maxwell recommends using memos to “capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also facilitate such thinking, stimulating analytic insights” (p. 96). For each question, the responses also were analyzed for the frequency with which participants mentioned them.

Interview qualitative analysis. The interviews were used to explain the findings from the survey data and to explore the experiences of the seven literacy coaches in

greater depth to gain a rich picture of middle school literacy coaching. All seven interviews were digitally recorded as well as scripted while the participants spoke. The digital recordings were then transcribed. The scripts made during the phone conversations were used for memos (Maxwell, 2005) that were written after each interview. After each initial transcription was completed, the recordings were listened to another time and checked against the initial transcription to ensure accuracy of the transcription. Each transcript was then read a third time, one after the other, to get a complete picture of the seven stories as a whole before delving into each individual interview.

NVivo 7 (QSR, 2006) was used to assist in the analysis of the interview data. Substantive categories were created after the second and subsequent readings of the transcripts. NVivo 7 uses free nodes and tree nodes for organizational purposes to help the user see hierarchical and non-hierarchical relationships among data. Initially, free nodes were identified as stand alone themes. The transcripts were re-read again and tree nodes were identified to look for hierarchical relationships among the data. Emic and etic codes (Maxwell, 2005; Schwandt, 2001) were created both in the free nodes as well as the tree nodes. Examples of emic codes included words or phrases used by the participants such as “like climbing Mt. Everest” and “feel like a rubber band,” while etic codes included researcher-labeled codes such as preparation and recruitment. According to Maxwell (2005), emic categories are “taken from the participants own words and concepts” (p. 97) while etic categories “usually represent the researcher’s concepts...rather than denoting participants’ own concepts” (p. 98).

After identifying the initial and subsequent themes, connecting strategies were used to analyze the data across the seven participants to look for common themes (Maxwell, 2005). The data from the interviews were then connected and compared to the survey data to add greater depth to existing themes that had emerged from the survey data (Maxwell, 2005). Data from the interviews also were used to help explain the prediction of literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support by principal support and conferencing with teachers. Overarching themes that emerged from the data were the following: the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches around the country are multifaceted and diverse and are influenced by the contexts within which coaches work, the challenges that literacy coaches face are complex and influence coaches' experiences and job satisfaction, and administrative support or lack of it can have a significant impact on literacy coaches' satisfaction and perceived effectiveness.

In summary, this was a mixed design study using surveys and interviews that followed an explanatory design. The data was collected in two phases. Phase one included the administration of a mailed survey to 125 randomly selected participants. Phase two included interviews of seven purposefully selected participants. The qualitative data from the interviews was used to further explore or explain the quantitative survey data. Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and multiple regression analysis. SPSS was used to support the statistical analysis. The qualitative analysis was conducted after the quantitative analysis to further explore the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches, to understand more fully how coaches work with content-area teachers, and to explain the prediction of

teacher support by principal support and conferencing. NVivo7 was used to assist with the qualitative analysis of the interview data. The following chapter will present the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

4. Results

As noted in earlier chapters, five research questions guided this study. In order to address these research questions, a survey was administered in phase one of the study and interviews were conducted in phase two. Table 1 found on page 51 illustrates which tool, the survey instrument and/or the interview, was used to gather data to answer each question. The survey was administered in the fall of 2007 and the interviews were conducted in winter 2007. The findings from the study are presented in this chapter and are organized around the research questions. Demographic information about the study participants is provided first, followed by the five research questions that guided the study and the data that addresses each question. A summary of the findings also is presented at the end of this chapter.

Demographic Information

The majority of middle school literacy coaches who participated in this study have a high degree of education, have been in the field of education for many years, and have had middle school teaching experience prior to coaching at this level. Nearly three quarters of coaches have a master's degree or higher. Roughly 80% of middle school literacy coaches have been in education for 10-20+ years, but have been a literacy coach for less than five years. Following are the actual percentages to further illustrate these findings.

The highest percentage of participants in this study had 10-20 years of experience in education (42%), followed closely by those who had more than 20 years of experience in education (38%). Fourteen percent had between 6-10 years of experience and six percent had less than five years of experience. For the majority of participants in this study, literacy coaching was fairly new. At the time of the study, seventy-two percent had been a literacy coach for 1-5 years while this was the first year of coaching for ten percent of the participants. Nearly one in five had been a literacy coach for six or more years. A majority of the literacy coaches in this study held a master's degree (66%). Eighteen percent held a bachelor's degree, while ten percent had a specialist certification and six percent had a doctorate. Most of the participants in this study taught middle school at some point in their career prior to coaching (86%), while 14% had taught either elementary school or high school (10% and 4% respectively), but not middle school prior to literacy coaching at the middle level.

The vast majority of coaches in this study work at one school. Yet, it is spread fairly evenly how many teachers these coaches work with at their school sites. In fact, nearly a third work with all teachers, while a third work with roughly half of the teachers or more, and a third work with less than half of the teachers at their schools.

Reasons for Becoming a Literacy Coach

Literacy coaches who participated in the interviews were asked why they chose to pursue a career as a literacy coach. A common theme that emerged across all seven participants was the theme of recruitment. In all seven cases the coaches were asked to become literacy coaches by someone within their district. For Nicole, the choice was

simple—she had recently given birth and was hoping to work part time. Because of her background as a middle school English/language arts (ELA) teacher she was offered a part-time job as an ELA coach. At the time of her interview, her position had recently changed and she was now working with all content areas, although still on a part-time basis. In Erin’s case, the school decided to create a new role because many students in her school were struggling with reading. This decision meant that a teaching position at Erin’s grade level had to be eliminated, so she agreed to take on the role of literacy coach. Anne shared that it was her background in reading that led her principal to recruit her for a reading specialist role. Julie, Pam, and Kim also discussed the role their administrators played in recruiting them for their positions as literacy coaches. Julie stated, “I don’t know if this would be good to quote, but my principal made me do it, is kind of what it is...I’ve done this a lot, so my principal finally put me in the position.” Like Julie, Kim also spoke of her administrator’s support and encouragement. Kim’s principal asked her to move to a new school with him and encouraged her to take on the role of literacy coach:

Part of the reason why I took on coaching was because the principal and I came to this school at the same time...the first year I was in the classroom and because of people saying you should be a literacy coach we decided that when that position became available I’d take the position. It was really like a request from the staff. So when I was in the position working with them they were already into the fact that I was a coach, not in the room to evaluate them, but really there to support them. It was a really positive situation.

Along with mentioning being sought out and recruited by a school administrator, Julie, Kim, and Pam all discussed that coaching was something that they had all already been doing in their own classrooms. Kim stated, “A lot of people asked me for help with teaching language arts and teaching reading. I also did a lot of training in the realm of teaching literacy skills.”

Results for Research Question #1: Roles and Responsibilities

The following section focuses on the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches as identified by participants in this study. First, the data from the survey about who is responsible for defining the roles of literacy coaches will be discussed. This is followed by the specific roles and responsibilities discussed first by the survey participants and then by interviewees.

Determining roles and responsibilities. The vast majority of participants (66%) stated that they did not have a voice in defining their roles or responsibilities. Their roles and responsibilities were defined for them by their school administrator, district personnel, and/or their state department of education.

Grade levels with which coaches work. The majority of the participants in the survey work with grades 6-8, with grades 7 and 8 being the grades with which middle school literacy coaches tend to work most closely. Ninety percent of the coaches in this survey never work with grade 5. Seventy eight percent of participants work fairly regularly or very frequently with grade 6. Most participants work fairly regularly or very frequently with grade 7 and grade 8 (90% and 88% respectively).

Multifaceted Roles and Responsibilities

To gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches, participants were asked to identify how often they are involved in various activities including instructing students, assessment, co-planning, modeling, peer coaching, curriculum development, communicating with parents, guiding paraprofessionals, working with volunteers, and non reading-related tasks. Participants were asked to identify the frequency of their involvement using a 1-5 scale, with 1 being not at all and 5 being daily. Table 3 shows each activity followed by the percentage of respondents who reported each frequency, followed by the mean and the standard deviation.

The majority of participants in this study indicated that they are involved with instructing students on a daily basis (40%) and are involved with co-planning several times per week. Most are either involved with assessment several times per month or several times per week (38% and 36% respectively). The majority of participants indicated that they are involved with modeling several times per month. Participants were split in their reported involvement with peer coaching. The majority of participants reported being involved in curriculum development several times per month (38%). The majority of participants in this study were involved with parent communication and guiding paraprofessionals fairly infrequently, while most indicated that they never are involved with volunteers. The majority of participants in this study are not regularly involved with non reading-related tasks.

Table 3

Literacy Coaches' Reported Involvement in Various Activities

Activity	Frequency of Involvement					Mean	SD
	Not at all:	Once a month or less:	Several times per month:	Several times per week:	Daily		
Instructing Students	14%	16%	14%	16%	40%	3.52	1.50
Assessment	0%	10%	38%	36%	16%	3.58	0.88
Co-planning	4%	10%	34%	42%	10%	3.44	0.95
Modeling	8%	26%	40%	20%	6%	2.90	1.02
Peer Coaching	14%	26%	24%	8%	8%	2.90	1.19
Curriculum Development	6%	14%	38%	30%	12%	3.28	1.05
Parent Communication	12%	40%	28%	14%	6%	2.62	1.07
Guiding Para-professionals	40%	34%	14%	10%	2%	2.00	1.07
Working with Volunteers	56%	30%	10%	4%	10%	1.62	0.83
Non reading related tasks	36%	34%	20%	4%	6%	2.10	1.13

Participants also were asked to identify how often they focus on teaching content vocabulary skills/strategies, teaching comprehension, teaching strategies for reading nonfiction, reinforcing classroom instruction, and guiding computer use. Overall, teaching vocabulary skills/strategies, comprehension, and nonfiction reading strategies were emphasized on a regular basis as was reinforcing classroom instruction.

A Deeper Look at the Roles and Responsibilities of Middle School Literacy Coaches

The interviews were used to further explore the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches. The interview participants identified numerous roles and responsibilities that they assume. The general roles and responsibilities included working with or supporting teachers, working with or supporting students, and focusing on their own professional growth and development in order to stay abreast of current research in the field of literacy. Table 4 shows the specific roles and responsibilities discussed by participants in this study. Following details each of these roles and responsibilities as discussed by the interview participants.

Table 4

Roles and Responsibilities Discussed by Interviewees

<u>Most Used (mentioned by 4-7 participants)</u>	<u>Least Used (mentioned by 1-3 participants)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• working with data• staying current with literacy research• providing staff development• collaborating with teachers• providing resources• modeling• co-teaching• co-planning• working with new teachers• conducting teacher observations• providing feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• working directly with students• incorporating technology• supporting classroom teachers• observing other classroom teachers• developing curriculum• encouraging reflective practices• supporting alternative programs• serving on school committees• meeting with administrators• developing reading incentive programs

Co-planning. Pam, Kim, Nicole, and Julie all mentioned that they co-plan with teachers. Kim co-plans with an English/language arts teacher who is new to her school. Pam, Nicole and Julie co-plan with teachers across content areas.

Modeling and co-teaching. Pam, Kim, Nicole, and Julie all discussed modeling and/or co-teaching as a key responsibility that they have as literacy coaches. In the following excerpt Julie discussed how she uses modeling as a way for teachers to see a teaching technique or strategy in action while also focusing in on how it affects students:

For some people who come to me and say “I’ve heard about this particular strategy. I’m not really sure what that looks like in my classroom. Can you model that strategy with this content?” I’ll put that together, model implementing the strategy and interact with their kids, and give them the opportunity to see not only that strategy but also their kids’ actual responses.

Pam discussed how she purposefully sets aside time daily for modeling. In the following excerpt Pam talked about staying after modeling sessions to talk with teachers or for the explicit purpose of getting to know students:

I set up maybe four appointments during the day to go in and model with teachers...and I like to stay after and see how the kids follow up on the lesson or talk to the teachers or even just get to know the kids because our school is so big that if I don’t build a rapport with them while I’m in there doing that, I feel like I don’t get to meet them. I try to block off that time.

Pam also discussed modeling while co-teaching so that teachers are also part of the “modeling process.” She explained how she used this technique in a 7th grade classroom:

We had a debate on the controversial issue of cell phones... We got six articles from *Newsbank* and the kids got into teams. It was like a jigsaw. That was something they did in stations—they read and took notes, then they came back together and presented as teams persuasively depending on what stand they were going to take. We did it as a co-teaching lesson... There are lots of teachers who need modeling, but it helps them too where you're modeling, but they're in that modeling process with you. With some teachers I do a lot of that.

Supporting teachers observing teachers. Pam discussed how she provides support for teachers so that they can observe their colleagues. She conferences with teachers before and after observations and provides support after the observations as well. In the following example, she discussed how the process works:

If a teacher wants to go observe in another reading teacher's classroom, I'll cover her class so that they can see how someone else has set up their stations or how does someone else set up their independent reading block... If I can get coverage for them, then I like to go and observe with them. I can see the same things that they are seeing. I prefer to do that because sometimes they don't know what to look for, especially if they're new. The teacher who is teaching can't really help them at that point. I usually talk with them before and we set some goals for what we're going to observe. A lot of times I'll give them a note-taking tool especially if I'm not going to be in there with them because we're not going to have the chance to dialogue while they're observing. We have some walkthrough checklists and they have a spot where they can take some notes. I'll highlight

some things when I know what time of the day they're going to be observing. I'll ask them to jot down some notes so we can talk later. So we talk before they go in, and then they'll go in with or without me, and then we'll talk afterwards.

Pam further explained how she works with teachers after they have had a chance to observe in another teacher's classroom. She said,

That [the post-observation discussion] usually leads to what piece of what they observed they want to try to implement in their own classroom. Then I'll help them in whatever way I can. For example, if they need help making a transition board for stations or if they need help selecting books from the book room to start their groups or getting me to administer some informal assessment to see how they're going to put their groups together. It really can be totally varied.

Observing teachers and providing feedback. Pam, Kim, Nicole, and Julie also discussed observing teachers and following up with feedback to identify areas in which they can further support the teacher. Julie shared that for some teachers her interactions “involve collective conversations and then observing them and giving feedback or having a conversation afterwards.” She also shared that she does “spot observations to get a sense of what's going on in the building.” Kim shared that every day included “a couple of periods...50-60 minutes each of observing people.”

Working with data. All seven participants discussed assessment and working with data. For Erin, Anne, and Lisa, their discussion of working with data focused on working with small groups of students. The assessments identified were informal assessments,

online assessments, standardized assessments, and state assessments. All three discussed using assessment data to drive their instruction with the struggling readers they service.

Julie and Pam discussed their role of collecting assessment data on students throughout the school. Julie focused on the quarterly interim assessments she administers, while Pam focused on the assessments that are mandated by her state for low-achieving students. Julie emphasized helping teachers learn to use data. She explained that some of the teachers she works with have a difficult time using data to inform their instruction:

We had an interim assessment last week and kids missed the point of main idea... They [teachers] look at that data and they still focus back on “well the kids just aren’t paying attention. I told them that 14 times yesterday”... instead of using the data to re-channel and redirect their own instructional practice, there’s still too much focus on “well, kids just aren’t paying attention.”

Pam shared that she is responsible for all of the reading assessments in her school except for the state assessment. She noted that since her school does not have an assessment coordinator, she and a colleague are responsible for all of the progress monitoring of the lowest readers in the school as mandated by her state. As she discussed the assessments, she shared how overwhelming it can be with “just the two of us and hundreds of kids to assess.” Along with coordinating the reading assessments in her school, Pam also works with teachers on using the data that is collected on their students. In the following excerpt she shared an example of working with teachers to make sense of data:

I've been working with some teachers who have gotten their data, their small group instruction data. They keep the data on their kids behind tabs—targets they know kids need to work on. As the groups change, because they need to remain flexible, they just move the tabs depending on what kids are in each group. I help a lot with that, with helping them know how to place kids. Sometimes they have so much data it can be overwhelming, especially those Level 1 and Level 2 kids because they have the DAR [Diagnostic Assessments of Reading] data, the SRI [Scholastic Reading Inventory] data, the data our team does—to help them think of how do I pull books? What does all this mean? That helps them.

Developing curriculum. Pam and Julie both discussed working with teachers on lesson development and developing units of study. Julie focused on the new social studies standards in her state and how “for some teachers it’s a big struggle because they have their old textbooks and they don’t know how to teach some of the new things.” She shared that she has worked with three of the four social studies teachers in her building to do “big curricular work” and “make the standards manageable for them.”

Working with new teachers. Erin, Julie, Kim, and Pam each discussed working with new teachers in their schools. Erin focused on giving new teachers “quick things they can use to help their kids, like quick things with vocabulary.” She explained that she focuses on “quick things” because “they’re busy and I’m busy, so something that I can teach them that they can use.” Erin went on to provide the following example: “if they say my kids are really struggling with something, I might say, ‘Have you tried QAR [question-answer-relationships] with them yet? Let me help you.’”

Julie shared how she, too, works closely with new teachers. In the following excerpt, she discussed working with a new keyboarding teacher:

She did readers' theatre with the kids on the *Click Clack* series before they were getting started with their keyboarding. They're reading aloud to each other. She's always emailing me. When she has time on her prep, she comes on over and says, "I'm not sure if this is working." She's like the perfect person to coach with.

Anytime something isn't exactly right, she'll immediately say, "Here's what I did. What am I missing? Can you come watch?" as opposed to chucking it or keeping on flailing through.

Kim shared that she works with one new teacher in her building. She explained that they take turns observing one another. She said they then "meet to debrief and do reflection meetings. He and I work together to plan his language arts classes."

Pam explained that her school has a considerable number of new teachers with varying degrees of experience. She noted that she assists them with administering their assessments. She models giving the assessments and "will do 1-2 children to make sure that they understand how to administer the test...the best way for them to learn how to give it is to jump right in." Pam explained that to support their learning, she will "sit with them while they're giving their first ones so that if they need help on the navigation piece it sometimes helps." She noted that the new teachers in her school welcome her openly, "they're like 'anytime, come in'...and they appreciate it."

Pam has found that the greatest need with her new teachers is understanding “the importance of the explicit teaching piece.” In the following excerpt she explained how she helps new teachers see the value of explicit instruction:

...to help them see that when you’re teaching reading it’s not just talking about a certain strategy minimally and then assigning a task. It’s about digging in deeper to that and explicitly teaching. Helping them see that whether they teach science, or math, or social studies, that is the piece that I see that teachers miss—the explicit strategy instruction. As many times as you can model that for them and make it part of your lesson, and help them to notice that it’s part of your lesson, the better. That’s really important whether you’re doing author’s purpose or compare and contrast or main idea...it’s really important. If they don’t see that piece of it, then the kids aren’t going to get the instruction.

Pam explained that many of the new teachers at her site are new to the field of teaching. One of the new teachers “has been in banking for 26 years and she’s now our newest reading teacher. To ask her to walk in from her field to this field and snap her fingers and put it all together is tough.” Pam explained that she’s there to support these new teachers because “it’s a big learning curve. They’ve never even been in a school setting and now they’re here teaching. I have to help them digest all of the pieces.” She shared that although all of the new teachers in her district have mentors, much of the responsibility for supporting them falls on her shoulders since “mentors only get compensated for 20 hours per year...and mentors are in their own classrooms during the day.”

Providing staff development. Anne, Nicole, Pam, Julie, Kim, and Erin all spoke of providing some level of staff development for their school sites and/or districts. Anne shared that at quarterly staff development meetings at her school, she will “bring presentations about easy things that teachers can use in their classrooms—comprehension strategies, strategies to go through the textbook to help students understand them.”

Julie discussed how she and her principal administered a needs assessment survey to identify the literacy needs of their staff members. One way they used this data was to create an after-school inservice that was filmed and placed into their school’s professional library. Julie shared that she is “involved in organizing professional development for our school and facilitating meaningful professional development for teachers.” She explained that this includes helping teachers find and register for conferences as well as planning and implementing a week-long inservice in the summer based on the data gathered throughout the year as well as staff interests. The goal of this inservice, according to Julie, is “that then they have the whole summer to process it and reflect on it and gather materials and ideas or energy to put some of these things into place.”

Nicole focused on the power of book studies that she facilitates for her district and her school. She identified two of the books that they use as *I Read It But I Don’t Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers* by Cris Tovani and Ellin Oliver Keene as well as *Nonfiction Matters* by Stephanie Harvey, among others. She explained that the books are selected based on district needs and staff interests: “We know that we need to

write across the content areas...it's a combination of what we need, what people are interested in, and what's current."

Encouraging reflective practice. Julie and Kim both focused on the importance of reflection. Kim uses Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1998) to help teachers reflect on their practices. She has found that this type of coaching is particularly effective because "people are really looking at what they're doing. I'm not telling them what to do. They're actually looking and thinking about what they're doing and how they feel about it." Julie also said that she focuses heavily on helping teachers learn how to be reflective practitioners. One tool that she uses is videotaping "just for themselves." But, she has found that using videotaping as a reflective tool is difficult because it is "hard to encourage people to get past 'look how stupid I look on film' and to do that reflective work." Julie, who recently became National Board certified, is passionate about the importance of reflection:

I don't care as much if they take on that process [becoming National Board certified] but that they take on that reflective process...part of my job is to encourage tenacity and patience. I've specifically told my teachers, partly because of the National Board process and partly because it's ingrained in me, that we have to make thoughtful, reflective, intentional choices.

Julie further explained that she believes that "reflection is not only critical; it is necessary. I appreciated one of my colleagues saying 'how can they get any better if they don't take any time to reflect about it?'"

Meeting with school administrators. Kim was the only coach who specifically mentioned planned meetings with a school administrator. Kim shared that the meetings focused on discussing the administrators' needs for assisting language arts teachers. While both Julie and Pam discussed meeting with their administrators, it was unclear whether these meetings were regularly scheduled meetings or impromptu meetings.

Providing resources. Erin, Julie, Kim, and Pam all mentioned that one of their responsibilities included providing teachers with materials and resources. Erin noted that she houses the middle school book collection since the school does not have a school library. Julie talked about gathering books for teachers who were planning book talks and helping teachers purchase books for their classroom libraries. She explained that her school had "put in our budget for the past couple of years funds to build classroom libraries, not just in literacy classes. Last year the focus was social studies classes." Julie also shared that she helps teachers with finding materials on the Internet.

Kim's school has little flexibility when it comes to selecting classroom materials. Her school was deemed a Program Improvement school by her state. According to her state's department of education website, "Program Improvement (PI) is the formal designation for Title I-funded schools and LEAs [Local Education Authorities] that fail to make AYP [adequate yearly progress] for two consecutive years." Kim shared that "we're pretty much told what we can and can't use as far as what resources... We've basically been told that we have to use a specific program and that they don't want us stepping out of that a lot." Despite being a Program Improvement school, she explained that teachers can integrate novels into their classroom instruction. When teachers are

looking for novels to use, Kim said she will “work with teachers on choosing novels from our bookroom. Finding ones that will work for them and for the students and then I’ll help them find other resources they need to effectively teach those novels.”

Pam shared that her school has a leveled bookroom with an online searchable database so that “each teacher has equal access to the bookroom.” She explained that her role is to “weed through the materials, give them [teachers] catalogs and samples” and ensure that there are varied genres and forms including “...readers’ theatre, descriptive, informational, instructional materials, magazines, plays, text sets....” Pam also shared other ways she helps provide teachers with resources for stations or classroom libraries:

I help them if they want to do a comprehension station to get resources. Helping them find magazines or other texts that they’ll use to model that lesson and what are they going to use for the kids for the practice piece to see if they have the understanding of the strategies. I [also] help them build their classroom libraries... Sometimes they [teachers] don’t know what to put in there and they don’t really put the best quality things in them. Also helping them by giving interest inventories for the middle schoolers so that we were actually appealing to the kids and what they wanted in the classroom library. That gets tricky because they have five classes, so you have to look at the data from all five classes.

Collaborating. Collaborating with classroom teachers was mentioned specifically by five of the interviewees. Lisa, who was not one of these five, explained that she does not collaborate with *classroom* teachers, but that she does collaborate with the Special Education teacher. She noted that she does, however, “attend team meetings and parent

meetings in a more informal way.” Pam, who was one of the five who discussed collaborating with classroom teachers, shared that she works closely with the middle school reading department chairperson along with classroom teachers. She noted that the reading department chairperson in her school has only taught for three years, “so she needs a lot of support.” Pam explained that she helps the chairperson plan for the weekly two-hour meetings with all of the middle school reading teachers. Pam also mentioned working with her school’s parent/teacher organization. Like Pam, Julie shared how she collaborates with classroom teachers. She mentioned that she recently has been working with the football coach to find ways to support his athletes during the off-season. All seven literacy coaches discussed collaboration, albeit with different teachers from classroom teachers to Special Education teachers to electives teachers to sports coaches.

Supporting after-school and Saturday school programs. Lisa and Julie both discussed supporting programs that take place outside of the regular school day. Lisa said, “We do an after-school program on Mondays for students who are struggling with reading. We play games and have fun just to get them comfortable with language.” Julie discussed how she and others in her school have implemented a Saturday school program. In the following excerpt she discussed its impact on students and teachers:

...Kids are begging to be part of that group [Saturday school]. They have extra time to work on things...in a way that is done with best practices. The hope is that teachers will catch on to hands-on meaningful exchange, take-your-time-and-work-it-through small group conversations. Kids come to the classroom and are excited about something that they had learned. The teachers can build on

that... We're also passing along to teachers through email, reflections that kids did there... we passed on things like "this was the first time that I've ever been able to figure out this social studies problem because we used a trade book first"... It helped to build the culture of trying different things and risk taking.

Developing reading incentive programs. Pam discussed how she worked to develop a reading incentive program that was based on time spent reading. She explained how this was intended to be equitable for all students. "Everyone can complete an amount of time reading, regardless of what level text you can read." She works with teachers to think about how "instead of taking a test, to have them [students] doing a more meaningful book project or book talk or become part of a book club."

Serving on school committees. Pam discussed several committees that she serves on. One of the committees is the School Improvement Committee in which she focuses on the school's "goals for instruction in reading." Since her school is a Working on the Work (WOW) school (Schlechty, 2002), she said that they have a WOW Design Team that she is part of. This team "works on helping teachers design more engaging lessons for kids." The other committee that she discussed was the Reading Leadership Team. She said that this team consists of 21 people representing all content areas and grade levels. That team "supports the WOW design team, but really looks more deeply at reading and how it infiltrates everything in our school."

Working with students. The coaches interviewed in this study work with students in different ways. Anne, Lisa, and Erin each work primarily with students in small groups. Anne works with small groups of students who "scored novice" on the reading

portion of their state assessment. Erin works with struggling readers in grades 6 through 8. She stated that she focuses on comprehension because “that’s where they struggle.” Erin teaches the following strategies: “making predictions, making connections, activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, summarizing, inferring, [and] helping students answer and develop their own questions.” She explained that she typically focuses on three or four strategies per year because “I see some of these kids in 6th through 8th grade, so that way...I will have covered all of the strategies that I wanted to teach them.” Erin shared how she is explicit in her teaching of these strategies:

I always start with activating prior knowledge because it’s something you do with any book...I have to say to my kids, “you know what we’re doing right now, we’re activating prior knowledge. I want to find out what you already know about World War II before we read this book about World War II.” I’m very explicit about everything I teach now. They really need to understand what we’re doing and why. I kind of try to feel out what each of my groups are lacking in and that’s where I go...I try to tell them that this isn’t just for this class, but it’s for science and social studies and math. I hope they’re transferring it.

Instead of directly *teaching* students, Pam and Julie both spoke about *connecting* with middle school students. Since they do not pull groups, they look for connections in different ways than Lisa, Erin, and Anne. The following is an example of how Pam purposefully takes the time to connect with students in her school:

Middle school kids are so different from elementary kids. I find the kids who are most reluctant haven’t been proficient readers for years. When they find that

there's someone who can talk to them about reading, their persona changes. We can do things to help them where their peers don't know. They come by my office or I have private conversations with them in classrooms. Some kids' reading levels are low, devastatingly low. It breaks my heart. No wonder they behave how they do and how they isolate themselves. Other kids tease them. I love being able to have them check in with me. I don't have the time, but I make the time. It's that important. Even if it's just 5-10 minutes a day. I try to check in with kids. I write narratives at the top of their quick assessments that I've done in their classes. I keep a clipboard of their names, their reading teachers' names, and information about those kids—what they're interested in, something that they're not feeling good about with their reading. Then I'll check in.

Pam went on to share the following story about a specific student with whom she has developed a positive relationship. She explained how she has supported him as a reader and the impact that this support has had on him:

I had one boy who was a behavior problem in his classes, but who was always respectful with me. I gave him some strategies for reading at home and would give him books to take home. Through talking to him I found out he didn't have books at home and here we're asking him to read for 30 minutes a day. I realized he didn't have any strategies for unknown words, so I asked if he could ask someone at home. He said no one would help him with things like that. So I gave him a book, pre-floated some vocabulary, and gave him a strategy for how to pick

books at his level and deal with words he didn't know. He comes to my office every day now. I know he knows I care about him, and that's making a difference.

Incorporating technology. Technology use was explored with all interviewees to see if this was a common responsibility for all of them. The coaches in this study have varying degrees of competence and comfort with technology. Some, including Anne and Lisa, do not use it at all. Others, including Nicole and Julie, are beginning to see the power of technology. Nicole declared, "I'm going to start using it because...it's going to help me get into classrooms." Julie uses videotaping for teachers' reflective practices and to record trainings for the school's professional library. She also mentioned the idea of using technology with students. "We're talking about trying to incorporate more technology where kids are demonstrating how to do a certain thing and we can film it and keep it as a record for kids who are struggling with a difficult concept." She also discussed working with the technology person at her site to develop a chat room for students for dialoguing with one another and the teacher—a technology-based version of a dialogue journal.

Pam's school uses technology in many ways. Pam noted, "If there's a way to do something electronically, then we use it." All teachers at her site have laptops. Pam shared that using technology when she co-teaches or models is an expectation at her school. She offered the following example of modeling with technology:

If I go in to model a lesson, I can go into a classroom and be automatically logged onto their system and be up on the wall within minutes. So if I've done a PowerPoint presentation or something specific I want them to be able to see, like

if it's a magazine article that I've hot linked, I hook right into their screens. Some classrooms have the capability to cross back from two computers back and forth. Pam also discussed how all of the teachers wear microphone necklaces and that there are nine speakers in the ceiling of each classroom. She said, "kids in all areas of the classroom hear the same thing at the same volume. This is great for modeling lessons." She gave the following example of conducting a think aloud: "Let's say we're doing a read aloud and a think aloud from a document that you put under the document camera. You don't have to worry if everyone can hear you. I think it keeps everyone more engaged." Pam also addressed the impact that the technology has on the school climate:

Everybody has the same equity of listening. It doesn't matter where they're sitting in the room, and sometimes the classrooms have 30-35 kids in them... Teachers don't have to yell or raise their voices. The culture seems more calm to me. You don't have to worry if all kids can hear the lesson.

Staying current. One of the responsibilities discussed by interview participants was to stay current with literacy research. The coaches discussed different ways they do this including reading professional books and journals, taking classes or attending workshops, and attending meetings.

Erin shared that she did not have her reading endorsement when she started in her new role. She explained that she earned her reading endorsement at a local university and learned about working with struggling adolescent readers through those courses. She stated that the courses have helped her stay current with best practices in literacy. Kim

mentioned attending workshops provided by her district or her county as a way to learn about new information in order to share this new learning with teachers at her school.

Lisa discussed how her school participates in professional learning communities (PLC). Her “PLC” is with the Special Education teacher and other reading teachers. Kim, Julie, and Pam all mentioned networking with other coaches, although none of them explicitly used the term PLC.

Kim, Pam, and Julie attend literacy coach meetings as a way to focus on their own professional growth and for networking purposes. Kim described her meetings as follows:

All of the coaches from the middle schools in our district would meet with the district person who would do some kind of PD [professional development] piece during that meeting. Or if there wasn't anything during that meeting, they'd give us fliers about other workshops or things, like working with English language learners, that we could go to for our own development as coaches. We could register and the district would pay for it. We'd go and then bring them back to the staff—strategies that we got from the one-day workshops. In the monthly meetings we'd talk about the assessment pieces that the district wanted turned in. We'd talk about which pieces had to be completed and when. If they weren't being done at our site, what were the barriers? And we'd get ideas from one another about how to get past that particular barrier. Just supporting each other in the role of being a coach. We'd network outside of those meetings too. We all have each other's phone numbers and everyone was always open to phone calls.

Pam also shared that the literacy coaches in her district meet once a month. Half of each meeting is devoted to literacy coaches' professional development. Julie attends regularly scheduled literacy coach meetings facilitated by an educational co-operative. She, like Pam and Kim, focused on the networking aspects of the meetings and the professional development at each meeting. Julie discussed that the current focus of her coaches' meetings is on learning styles. She is helping teachers at her school incorporate activities in their classrooms that attend to students' learning styles, and helping students learn to pay attention to their individual learning styles.

Supports for Successful Implementation of Roles and Responsibilities

Participants in the survey identified two to three supports that they have in their school and/or district to get a sense as to the support systems that are in place to help middle school literacy coaches be successful in their requisite roles and responsibilities. Participants provided 106 responses. The responses fell into three distinct categories: supportive people or organizations, supportive processes, and supportive resources.

Supportive people. Seventy-five percent of the responses focused on support provided by other people or organizations within school districts and outside their districts. Support by a school administrator (principal or assistant principal) was mentioned by 18% of respondents. An equal percentage of respondents identified supportive district personnel (17%) as mentioned other literacy coaches within their districts (17%). One participant noted that "two other literacy coaches act as sounding boards" while a second coach wrote of having a "small middle school coach community" and a third mentioned the support of "collaborating with other literacy coaches." District

personnel who were listed in the responses included curriculum directors, curriculum coordinators, curriculum specialists, literacy specialists, literacy supervisors, and assistant superintendent of curriculum. Ten percent of respondents included teachers as a support. Three percent of the respondents included support provided by other coaches including data coaches, math coaches, or graduation coaches. Supports outside the district included regional support centers, educational cooperatives, universities, and state reading organizations. As an example of working with a local university, one participant stated, “A professor from X College [pseudonym] will be working with us to define our roles.”

Supportive processes. Processes that have been put in place by schools or districts to support literacy coaches accounted for 13% of responses. Supportive processes included meetings, memos, and opportunities for planning. Meetings, mentioned by 10% of participants, included monthly or quarterly meetings with other literacy coaches in the district, meetings with school administrators, or meetings with district-level supervisors.

Supportive resources. Resources such as training/professional development, technology, and funding were included in 12% of the responses. The most frequently mentioned resource was professional development for literacy coaches. It was mentioned in 10% of the responses. One participant noted the value of “training/staff development offered and paid for by the BOE [Board of Education]” while another mentioned having a “wealth of professional development opportunities.”

Research Question #1 Summary

In summary, the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches are numerous and diverse. The interviews were used to further explore the roles and

responsibilities identified in the survey. The roles and responsibilities ranged from those that involved working with and supporting students to those that involved working with and supporting teachers.

Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches identified in this study included co-planning, modeling and co-teaching, supporting classroom teachers observing other classroom teachers, conducting observations and providing feedback, working with data, developing curriculum, working with new teachers, providing staff development, encouraging reflective practices, meeting with administrators, providing resources, collaborating with teachers, supporting after school and Saturday school programs, developing reading incentive programs, serving on school committees, working with students, incorporating technology, and staying current with literacy research.

Along with having multifaceted roles and responsibilities, the participants in this study indicated that there are a range of supports that they have for successfully completing their requisite roles and responsibilities. Across the surveys and the interviews, these supports fell into three core categories: supportive people, supportive processes, and supportive resources.

Results for Research Question #2: Satisfaction

In order to explore participants' satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, the survey instrument was used. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with 11 different aspects of their jobs using a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not at all satisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Five of the aspects dealt specifically with the literacy coaches' roles,

four focused on support from various stakeholders, and two were related to literacy coaches' own professional development. Table 5 illustrates the findings from the survey and highlights various job aspects and participants' levels of satisfaction with each aspect.

Instructional approaches. The majority of participants in this study (44%) indicated that they are satisfied with the instructional approaches used in program they provide. No participants indicated that they were not at all satisfied. The mean was 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.83.

Availability of and quality of instructional materials. A third of participants indicated that they are satisfied with the availability of instructional materials, while approximately another third indicated that they are moderately satisfied with the availability of materials. The mean was 3.44 with a standard deviation of 1.07. Similar to their reported satisfaction with the availability of instructional materials, most participants indicated that they were either satisfied or moderately satisfied with the quality of instructional materials (38% each). The mean was 3.50 with a standard deviation of 0.99.

Planning opportunities with teachers. Literacy coaches were split in terms of their satisfaction with planning opportunities with teachers. The mean was 2.90 with a standard deviation of 1.19.

Support from key stakeholders. Most participants in this study indicated that they were satisfied with the level of support provided by key stakeholders in their school district, including central administration, principals, teachers, and parents.

Table 5

Literacy Coaches' Satisfaction Levels

Job Aspect	Satisfaction Level				
	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Instructional Approaches	0%	4%	24%	44%	28%
Availability of Instructional Materials	4%	14%	34%	30%	18%
Quality of Instructional Materials	6%	4%	38%	38%	14%
Planning Opportunities with Teachers	16%	20%	30%	26%	8%
Support from Central Administration	6%	10%	22%	40%	22%
Support from Principal	2%	6%	16%	28%	48%
Support from Teachers	0%	10%	30%	44%	16%
Support from Parents	4%	12%	30%	42%	10%
Staff Development for Literacy Coaches	14%	28%	12%	20%	26%
Availability of Professional Materials	8%	16%	26%	20%	30%

Staff development and professional materials for literacy coaches. Participants reported a range of satisfaction levels with regard to their own staff development

opportunities as well as with the availability of professional materials. Nearly the same percentage of participants indicated that they were only slightly satisfied with professional development opportunities as indicated that they were very satisfied (28% and 26% respectively) with these opportunities. The mean was 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.39. For satisfaction with the availability of professional materials, the mean was 3.38 with a standard deviation of 1.21.

Multiple Regression for the Prediction of Satisfaction with Teacher Support from Two Predictors: Satisfaction with Principal Support and Conferencing

The following question guided the multiple regression analysis: does satisfaction with principal support or conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support? Table 6 shows the multiple regression summary.

Table 6

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Literacy Coaches' Satisfaction with Teacher Support (N = 49)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Principal support	0.42	0.11	0.47*
Conferencing with teachers	0.25	.08	0.36*

Note. $R^2 = .51$

* $p < .01$

The findings from this analysis provide administrators information about how their support or lack of support for a literacy coach can influence the teacher support of

the literacy coach. Also, it shows that conferencing between literacy coaches and teachers predicts teacher support.

The multiple regression prediction of teacher support from principal support and conferencing with teachers is statistically significant, $F(2, 46) = 23.493, p = .000$. The multiple $R = .711$. The coefficient of multiple determination, $R^2 = .505$ indicates that 50.5% of the variance in satisfaction with teacher support is explained by variance in both variables, literacy coaches' satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers. In other words, each variable made a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of satisfaction with teacher support. The multiple regression equation is $Y' = 0.422X_1 + 0.254X_2 + 1.184$ where X_1 = principal support and X_2 = conferencing opportunities. Specifically, there was a statistically significant unique contribution of conferencing to the prediction of teacher support over and above the contribution of principal support. The $\beta = .364 (p = .003)$. This means that if a literacy coach's satisfaction level increases by one point, his or her satisfaction with teacher support will increase by .422, if everything else is held constant. Also, if the coach's satisfaction with conferencing opportunities with teachers increases by one point, the coach's satisfaction with teacher support will increase by .254, if everything else is held constant. The SPSS output can be found in Appendix D.

Research Question #2 Summary

In summary, middle school literacy coaches are satisfied with different aspects of their jobs, with coaches being least satisfied with their own professional development opportunities and opportunities to plan with teachers. Through the regression analysis it

was found that literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support can be predicted by the support provided by their school principal and conferencing opportunities with teachers. Both predictor variables made a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of teacher support.

Results for Research Question #3: Challenges and Rewards

Survey participants were asked to record two to three challenges or obstacles that they face as literacy coaches. There were 105 responses to this question. Interview participants discussed challenges as well as rewards. In the following section, challenges will be discussed first followed by rewards.

Challenges

The survey responses were organized into the following categories: challenges with resources, challenges with people, and challenges with the role itself. Challenges with resources included time and materials. Challenges with people included lack of support from administrators and/or teachers. Challenges with the role included dealing with the change process, content knowledge, professional development, juggling tasks, isolation, and prioritizing.

Challenges with resources. Time was the biggest obstacle mentioned in the survey responses. Twenty-nine percent of responses included time as an issue. Time was broken into several areas: general time constraints (15%), time in classrooms (4%), time working with teachers (3%), time with students (3%), time to read current research (3%), and time networking with other coaches (1%). One participant found it difficult to “find time to work effectively with those who volunteer” while another mentioned the

challenge of “having time to be in classrooms and to work with teachers.” Other references to time as an obstacle included: the “lack of time to model lessons especially with new teachers,” “finding time to work closely with teachers and students,” and the lack of “time to meet with staff to plan and discuss curriculum.” An additional reference to time included the lack of “time to create, organize and order materials and be in the classrooms.”

Another obstacle discussed in the survey responses was a lack of materials. Eleven percent of participants mentioned a lack of materials and resources. Two participants had similar sentiments when they stated the need for “high interest content with low and intermediate readability levels” and “finding content area materials at lower reading levels.” Another mentioned the lack of monetary support by stating that she had “no budget for materials.”

Challenges with people. Challenges with people included two areas: a lack of support from administrators and a lack of support from teachers. Resistant teachers were mentioned in 23% of the responses. Some of the issues mentioned included “teachers making time available to plan *with* them instead of *for* them,” “teachers who are unwilling to change,” “teachers who choose not to attend professional development opportunities,” “teacher support and follow through,” and “teacher apathy.” Some participants specifically mentioned content-area teachers. One participant noted that “content area teachers don’t have time to teach reading strategies” while another stated the challenge of “content area teachers [being] totally unaware of importance of

incorporating literacy instruction.” A third lamented, “Content literacy is not being well received.”

Learning how to build relationships with teachers was an important theme that emerged from this data. One participant noted the difficulty of “teachers being receptive to having me come into their classrooms.” Others mentioned “teachers asking for help,” “teacher acceptance,” “convincing teachers to seek coaching support,” “gaining staff trust,” and “getting the teachers to use me as a resource.” These responses dealt with the importance of building trusting relationships with staff so that they feel comfortable turning to the literacy coach for support. Other, more general, issues with teachers included “inexperienced teachers,” “teacher turn-over,” and “getting teachers to embrace students.”

Challenges with the role itself. There were several challenges that were mentioned by participants that focused on the role itself. Challenges with the role included challenges with the change process, content knowledge, professional development, isolation, and juggling or prioritizing tasks.

The sheer complexity of changing attitudes and practices were reflected in the survey responses. Responses dealing with change ranged from “bringing about change” to learning how to “deal with those who are unwilling to change.”

Along with mentioning the change process as a challenge, two participants also listed the necessity of having strong content knowledge. One specifically stated that a challenge he or she faced included a “lack of expertise in science/22 at the middle school

level.” Not only did this person mention a lack of content knowledge, but also emphasized the number of science teachers that he or she has to work with.

In addition, professional development was identified by four percent of respondents as an obstacle. The issues surrounding professional development were divided between professional development for teachers and professional development for literacy coaches. One participant noted that there was “too much professional development” for teachers in his or her district. Another participant mentioned the obstacle of incorporating literacy professional development for teachers by stating that the “professional development training time at school is already committed to other issues for the year.” With regard to professional development for literacy coaches, three participants stated that there was a lack of professional development opportunities in their schools and/or districts for their own professional growth.

Furthermore, participants identified specific tasks as obstacles, including scheduling, paperwork, and administering assessments. One respondent wrote that “paperwork and administrative tasks are extremely time consuming.” Another stated that “coordinating and carrying out and leading intervention programs” was challenging.

Another challenge that was reported by participants was isolation or not having a peer. While some respondents specifically identified “isolation” as a challenge, another participant wrote “last year there were two of us (math/literacy), now I’m both!”

Moreover, the diverse roles of literacy coaches were listed as challenging. Some of the roles identified by the literacy coaches in this study included small-group interventionist, literacy assessment coordinator, curriculum developer, literacy

intervention program coordinator, scheduler, co-planner, facilitator, collaborator, coach, mentor, materials purchaser and organizer, book room monitor, and professional developer. Ten percent of responses identified that there was simply “too much to do.” In light of the numerous roles and responsibilities identified by the middle school literacy coaches in the present study, “prioritizing” was listed as a challenge.

A Deeper Look into Coaching Challenges

Challenges identified in the survey were further explored through the interviews. Some of the challenges that the interviewees discussed dealt with working with teachers. These challenges included working with resistant teachers and getting into classrooms. Student-specific challenges also were discussed as were time constraints, district or community challenges, challenges with working at the middle school level, funding challenges, a lack of professional development for themselves as coaches, challenges with administrative support, and isolation. Following is a description of each of these challenges as presented by the interview participants.

Resistant teachers. Dealing with resistant teachers was a frustrating topic for Julie, Kim, and Anne. Julie stated that she finds that language arts teachers are her hardest sell, while Nicole struggles with getting into social studies classrooms. Julie hypothesized that some “veteran teachers and sometimes novice teachers...are afraid to ask for help in front of a principal they don’t know really well yet.” Julie also spoke about how difficult it was for her to not work with all teachers at her school site, especially those whom she believes would benefit greatly from coaching. She said,

When I pass by teachers' rooms who I've offered pieces of information to, but they haven't followed up on that, I see them struggling with the kids. I want to run in and say I can really help make your life easier if you'd let me. That sounds too much like supervising and you've got something to fix. I understand that, but it's really, really, really difficult to put into practice...Some of those teachers who don't want to be coached are just letting them sleep, letting them disengage because it's easier. That's part of what I'm reinforcing with teachers who I'm not working with.

Anne also gets frustrated with teachers who are unwilling to change their practices. She discussed the impact that resistant teachers have on students in her community:

There is so much resistance of teachers who say, "I don't have time to teach reading." But if they don't back up and take time to teach reading across the board especially in middle school where it's getting late, there's not much hope for those students once they leave us. We can give them all the answers we want but if they can't read and comprehend text on their own, they're not going to make it. That's what we've certainly found. Even students who are considered good students leave our school district and try to go to college. The return rate is amazing. Most of them quit college in the first few months because they simply cannot read the material that they get as a freshman in college. They're overwhelmed.

Like Julie and Anne, Kim also discussed the challenge of working with resistant teachers. She shared that some teachers at her school “hadn’t bought into it [literacy coaching].” She explained,

There were two or three veteran teachers who really didn’t think that they needed any help—didn’t need any other way to teach than the way that they were already teaching. So going in and doing model lessons for them was difficult. Trying to guide them into a different way of thinking about the way they were teaching was more challenging than working with people who were more like sponges.

Nicole spoke about the need for getting into classrooms to help build relationships with teachers—those who are supportive as well as those who are not. This was something that she found frustrating and difficult. She stated,

Teaching is such a funny thing. Like anything, there are positive people and then some naysayers. Just from what I’ve read, there are people who are suspicious of what you’re doing. They’re like “what do you do?” I think that whatever this role is, and it will vary from day-to-day and week-to-week, I think some people are supportive and some aren’t. I think that’s why you need to be in the classroom as much as you can. But getting there is like climbing Mount Everest.

Getting into classrooms. Nicole talked extensively about how difficult she finds it to get into classrooms. She said that she was first initially seen as the English coach because she was not “working with the content areas like I am now. We’re putting it out there. They’re not forced to have me come in. I put the information out there and I’m there as a resource.” She went on to explain that she spends “a lot of time trying to figure

out how to get into people's classrooms...[the] big stepping stone is what am I going to share and how am I going to get in there to share it." She underscored her frustration about her role by stating, "This is the part of the job I don't really like. I feel a bit like a used car salesman and I don't like that. This is the biggest challenge for me—to get into classrooms. How do you do that?" She went on to further vent her dissatisfaction by stating,

It's really hard. Either I'm doing this wrong, which I don't know because I've never really had any training and I don't have a peer. But I'll send out a million things or I'll go to a department meeting and I'll say I have this and this. I'll send out bi-weekly strategies. It's just really hard to get into people's classrooms. I think that people are really busy because they have this jam-packed curriculum they have to teach. I keep sending out things and coming out and asking what people need. Very few people, except the new teachers, very few people will come to me and say "Gee, can you come in for this?" I just think there are certain teachers who will embrace that and have people come in all the time and then I think there are other people who just don't want anybody in their classroom.

Student issues. Erin discussed the challenges that she faces with students, not teachers. Her primary role and responsibility is working with struggling readers. One of the challenges she discussed was "when those test scores don't go up, because they don't always." She attributed some of this challenge to students who "still have a negative attitude towards reading." Erin explained how challenging and frustrating she finds this negative attitude:

I have a small handful I have to say who hate coming to my class. They don't want to be there and they'd rather have a study hall. It's hard for me to break through that barrier and show them that this is important and we want to help you. And that this is going to help you in your lifetime. I just feel like I can't break through and get it across to them.

Lisa, who also works with small groups of students, discussed challenges similar to Erin's. She stated that her main challenge was "not having enough time with each student." She went on to explain,

These are kids who are coming to us in sixth grade. I think one of the kids I was able to give a sixth grade reading diagnostic reading assessment to, and all of the other ones I gave third and fourth grade assessments to. These kids are really behind. I don't have enough time to work with each kid individually.

Time. Time was a challenge mentioned by six of the literacy coaches who were interviewed, regardless of whether they worked primarily with students or primarily with teachers. Several referred to teachers' time, while others referred to their own time to work with teachers. Nicole stated, "I think people are busy and don't think they have the time to focus on this [literacy]." Anne concurred with this sentiment when she said,

They don't have time. That's what you hear a lot. They don't have time to teach reading in their classes. That's kind of the common refrain... They don't see that if they helped students to read the information better, that they'll have better participation in class and better understanding.

Erin also noted that some teachers do not feel that they have enough time, or interest, to focus on literacy. She stated, “The ones that teach math really don’t feel like they have anything to do with reading so it just doesn’t interest them, and they have enough on their plates. They really don’t have time to think about reading too.” She also explained that teachers in her district are all engaged in learning about poverty, so all teachers “have so many things on our plate right now...It seems like there’s not a lot of time to focus on anything else right now.” Conversely, Julie stated that “the biggest challenge for me is finding a way to communicate to teachers that there *is* enough time.” She went on to explain that she tells teachers that “it’s about prioritizing. It’s about relationship building. It’s about partnership and that they [students] have all of the skills that they need.”

When Pam discussed time, she looked at it from the perspective of her time with teachers, not teachers’ time with students or teachers’ time for instruction. She stated,

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

Working as the only literacy coach with a large staff and across nine grade levels can be quite challenging. Pam summed it up aptly when she said, “I feel like a rubber band.”

District and community issues. Community and district issues also posed challenges for some of the literacy coaches in this study. Anne, who works on a Native

American reservation in a Western state, spoke of many issues that affect her school district and community as a whole, including illiteracy and poverty. She explained,

We're a district that has been targeted for improvement. Within the past seven years we have not met AYP... This year we just made safe harbor in reading as far as *No Child Left Behind*. It's a district where just a few years ago we had a 60% drop out rate at the high school. We're on an Indian reservation in [state omitted]. We're very isolated and have extreme poverty. Lots of problems to deal with. As a district it's just really starting to get real organized. That's really what I mean by working our way out of a hole. We come from a community where there's a high, high illiteracy rate. There are a lot of students whose family members don't know how to read a letter coming from school. We're also working with students who are just learning the English language. They speak a very different form of English than standard English. There are a lot of challenges in this district.

Anne added that there is an "overwhelming need in our community for increased awareness of literacy skills and what that really means, and how important that is." She shared that there are issues with teachers as well as parents with regards to understanding the value of literacy:

This is an area where education has never been important for a lot of reasons. Schools have been thought of as places where bad things happen. People are just starting to realize that it's important that you get a good education. This is a fairly new concept. A lot of the teachers that we have that are from the community, aren't well educated, and they may or may not know their own subjects well,

much less think about how to help their students better read the material and better understand the material.

Anne shared that “in this rural community you have to be here for a few years before they’ll want to welcome you as part of the community because so many people blow through here.” She further explained, “warming up to the idea that someone’s going to help you in your classroom takes time.” She said that her principal “is so overwhelmed...to have them have daily instruction in the classes that is related to content, that we’re not able to focus on *how* they’re teaching what they’re teaching.” The challenges that her school and district face pose significant challenges to Anne, the teachers at Anne’s school, the students in Anne’s community, and the school principal.

Working in the middle. Middle school in and of itself poses challenges to literacy coaches. Pam, Julie, and Nicole all shared that they think working with middle school teachers is decidedly different than working with elementary teachers. Nicole stated,

I’ll send out an email, keeping in mind we have 300 students per grade level, so that’s a lot of teachers. It’ll have something attached, like a great graphic organizer, and I’ll maybe get two responses. And they’re great tools. It’s frustrating. It gets really, really frustrating. I’m definitely a leader. I’ve been chosen to do many great things in my district, which I really appreciate. It’s hard to be that kind of personality that wants to do something well and then encounter this frustration. The elementary teachers are a little more receptive. I’ve worked in those buildings. It’s different in the middle school. It just really is.

At another point in the interview Nicole reiterated this frustration. She said, “It’s a very difficult role to be doing this *and* working with middle school teachers.” She noted that in her experience, the teachers at her middle school are “not as open” to having someone in their classrooms in a coaching role as are elementary teachers in her district.

Lack of money. A lack of funding is a challenge that some middle school literacy coaches face. Pam discussed a lack of money as a challenge since her school does not receive much supplemental funding for materials and resources. She said,

Money is a challenge for me. We’re a higher SES [socio-economic status] school. We’re not one of the critical needs schools. We had to develop a plan and monies had to go with them. We don’t have a very good budget for our school. We have excellent resources, and we opened an awesome school with tons of technology. The scary thing is when things get older, and things do get older, how is our school going to expand capacity but also maintain what we have? We have a lot, but that doesn’t last forever. The budget for reading is small. I was trying to get some resources for two grade levels and it was just not available. The schools with critical needs are getting the money right now.

Lack of professional development for coaches. Professional development for coaches also can be an obstacle for those who do not have opportunities for their own professional growth. Nicole discussed the dilemma that she faces with professional development since she is the only literacy coach in her district and local area. Because she has no peers in her district or region, she does not meet with other coaches. Nicole noted that she also has a difficult time finding professional development workshops that

meet her needs. She made the following observation, “Professional development for literacy coaches besides a regular teacher conference? There really isn’t a lot out there.”

Lack of administrative support. Pam, Kim, and Julie all spoke of the importance of administrative support and how “fortunate” they feel to have supportive administrators at their schools. Nicole, on the other hand, said “I have very little communication with him [referring to her principal]. Little to none. I think my communication with my principal could be a lot better. I don’t know. I don’t think he’s that supportive.” She went on to explain how having his support would make her job easier with teachers, particularly with respect to her “greatest challenge” which is getting into classrooms:

I think that if there was more support from my school administrator it would be a lot easier. I think if people see you working with that person directly, maybe going to a few meetings together and having dialogue about what’s going on and about what you’re working on...I think it would be natural if that relationship was there—that working together. People would probably be more receptive and see it as being more important that I was in their rooms.

Lack of communication. Nicole said that as a result of the lack of communication with her principal, she believes that the support for her role “is waning.” While Nicole discussed a lack of communication with her principal, Anne shared that her communication with teachers is “limited.” She shared she finds this lack of communication unfortunate, and she wants to increase communication in the future by working more closely with teachers.

The role itself. The coaches who were interviewed for this study also indicated that there are challenges that arise simply due to the nature of the role itself. Nicole spoke of the shift in her coaching role and the challenges that have arisen as a result of those changes. She stated that previously she was in “more of a decision-making role” and had to “coordinate a lot of the testing.” She shared that she is trying to adapt to this shift, but noted, “It’s kind of a learning experience for me too. Not even kind of, it really is.”

Kim spoke of the challenge of “reminding the administrator that I was supposed to be in the classroom coaching instead of doing all of these extra things that needed to get taken care of, finished up or handled that were more on an administrative level.” She added that occasionally she would have to say to her principal, “Not an administrator. The role you’re trying to put me into by having me go in and do walk-throughs or interviewing or subbing is not what I should be doing.” Kim’s challenge was keeping the role focused on working with teachers as a peer, not working in an administrative capacity.

Isolation. Pam, Anne, and Nicole all spoke of the value of having a peer and the challenges that not having one can pose. Anne stated, “In the past we had a reading specialist in the high school. She was a wonderful resource. She’s now gone.” She went on to say that “there are no other reading specialists or people with specialized reading training in the district...really I’m the touch person here in the district on reading resources. It’s tough. I wish that other reading specialist was still there.” Pam also discussed the isolation that some coaches may feel. She said,

The first year you kind of felt like you had no friends because the teachers didn't consider you a peer, and you're certainly not an administrator, and you're the only coach. That's really hard because you don't feel like you have a peer group except for that once a month when you meet with other coaches, and that's not enough. Isolation can be a daunting part of the literacy coach's role. For coaches like Nicole and Anne, who do not have peers, this challenge can be difficult to cope with.

Dealing with Challenges

Some of the participants talked about specific ways that they try to overcome challenges. To deal with the challenge of getting into classrooms, Nicole said, "I'm hoping that there will be a shift and that I can find more creative ways to get into classrooms." One of the creative ways that she is exploring is the use of technology. She talked about using PowerPoint and commercials to teach inferencing in a way that is engaging for students and interesting for teachers. She said, "My new strategy is that it almost has to be something really fun for people to want me to come in." Nicole also talked about using different questioning techniques to get to the root of people's needs and then offering to support them by specifically addressing those needs:

Let's use the social studies department as an example. I could go there and say, "Do you need anything?" I can tell you what the answer's going to be. It'll be "No, we're good. Thanks." What I should do is pose things like, "Where do you see the weaknesses in your students? Would you like me to develop a lesson plan to address that weakness?" Then I have to do something really fancy on the computer and fun, and then I'm in.

Julie and Kim both talked about the power of getting people to be reflective about their teaching practices in order to build relationships and increase people's willingness to change their instructional practices. Julie emphasized that "reflection is not only critical, it is necessary." She encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. She stated, "A big part of time management and reflection is about taking the time to study your craft." In looking at reflective practices, Kim specifically talked about the power of Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1998). She noted that Cognitive Coaching "involves coaching people and changing the way they're thinking about teaching." She uses Cognitive Coaching because it involves "mostly reflection" and helps people look at how their instruction impacts students. Kim stated that this model is about "...really getting people to look at specific students and how they're being successful or not and what's causing them not to be successful if they're not." Kim went on to explain that she believes Cognitive Coaching is an effective tool for literacy coaches. She believes it is powerful for the following reasons:

People are really looking at what they're doing. I'm not telling them what to do. They're actually looking and thinking about what they're doing and how they feel about it. Then you talk with them about it... You kind of like lead them from a place of this is not working to... a place of this is working. But I'm not telling them to do this and this and this. They're thinking about what they're doing and coming up with things for themselves. It's theirs. It's like students being responsible for their own learning. It's teachers being responsible for their own growth and professional development in teaching.

Rewards

Along with discussing challenges that they face, the seven interviewees also shared what they perceive as the rewards of their job. These rewards centered around positive relationships with students and/or teachers and helping people learn. The coaches who work primarily with students focused on student-centered rewards and the coaches who work primarily with teachers focused on teacher-centered rewards.

Positive relationships. Erin, who works primarily with students, focused on building positive relationships with students. She said that since she works “with small groups, I really enjoy the personal relationships that I can make with my kids.” She went on to explain how this is a change from her experiences in the regular classroom and how important these relationships are because her students “come from poverty backgrounds or rougher home lives. And those positive relationships actually that I have to work at and make, are just as important as reading.” Nicole focused on the positive relationships she has built with teachers. She explained, “Anytime I come in, people are like ‘thank you so much!’ It’s really positive. My interactions and relationships with people are very positive.” Whether the positive relationships were built with adults or students, the human aspect of their jobs was important to all of the literacy coaches.

Helping people learn. The coaches who work primarily with students focused on the learning of their students as a positive reward. Anne talked about the satisfaction of working with students and of working with reading in general. She said,

Seeing bright, intelligent students who for whatever reason have been left behind and seeing their reading skills improve...I feel like I’m improving their lives

overall. Whether it's their academic lives in school or their lives outside of school. They'll be able to read materials and be able to understand their world around them a little bit better.

Erin also focused on the reward of seeing students learn and grow as readers. She said,

The most rewarding part is when I see students over a couple of years start to enjoy reading more. Of course I like it when their test scores go up, but to me the most rewarding part is their enjoyment. I can get them to enjoy reading a bit more because I have a reading motivation incentive. When they come in and say, "I had to stay up until 11:00 last night to finish a book because it was so good!" or when I can recommend a book to them and they really enjoyed it, or when I saw them in 6th grade and they were a non-reader and then by 8th grade I see them and they've always got a book in their hand.

Lisa, who also works primarily with students, focused on student learning as well. She concentrated on the reward of seeing students' reading progress. She said she enjoys watching "the kids who struggle so much, when reading starts to click in and it makes sense... We have kids who couldn't even read a sentence fluently, and now they're in 8th grade and they're reading novels, and they're doing well in their subject areas and on state tests."

Nicole explained that she finds being in the classroom the most rewarding part of her job—a feat she also finds the most challenging. She explained,

Definitely the most rewarding is when I'm in the classroom ironically, and when I can get feedback from the teacher, or I can help that teacher and help the students

because I know they're getting a good learning strategy, or I know they're becoming good readers because of something that they learned that day. Helping people is the biggest reward.

Julie focused on the rewards of working with teachers and her role in supporting their professional growth. She also discussed the positive impact this work has on students:

The biggest reward for doing this work is that I still have those moments like I did with kids that matter just as much. When teachers are being open and taking responsibility. When I have those moments when a teacher says, "I thought that child was illiterate and, my gosh, look at that piece of writing that this child did." When I've built that relationship with them and they've built relationships with the kids. When I see kids in one classroom and I'm modeling a lesson and mentioning something that I know is going on in another room, instead of [my] saying, "I know this is going on in your history class" instead *they* say "that's what we're doing in such and such a class." Then I know that teachers are making the connections and helping kids to do meaningful work.

Kim also spoke about the reward of seeing teachers' grow as professionals. Kim went on to explain how rewarding it is to see the impact this growth can have on students, "Going into a classroom with a teacher who had been struggling with classroom management and...actually seeing 80-100% [of students] completely, authentically engaged in the learning and enjoying being in the room as opposed to dreading being at school."

Pam also discussed the rewards of working with teachers. She, too, focused on the growth of her colleagues:

When you can see how teachers evolve. I love being a part of that. It's like when kids in first grade learn to read and you see the light bulb clicking on. I love being a part of that. I love going to a protocol where they're trying to design a lesson and you can give suggestions and it's non-threatening. That culture is built there so that everybody is seen as a support for everyone else.

Pam further explained that she finds the relationships that she has developed with teachers rewarding. She said, "That whole job is built on relationships. I've seen some schools not be receptive to their coach. I think the best thing for me is the relationships that I've built. That's important to me as a person too."

Own professional growth. Pam not only discussed the professional growth of her colleagues, but she also talked about her own professional growth as well. She shared that one of the greatest areas of professional learning for her has been in the area of technology. She said, "I came into that school without a large technology background. I've grown tremendously with regard to technology, just how I think of using it is very different." Pam also shared that her knowledge base has grown as well since she has "had the opportunity to read all of the pieces on new literacies."

Research Question #3 Summary

In summary, middle school literacy coaches identified numerous challenges that they face daily. Some of the challenges that they shared are complex and influence their job satisfaction and their effectiveness, such as dealing with resistant teachers or having a

lack of administrative support. Nicole, who struggled with getting into classrooms and who did not have a supportive principal, was unsatisfied with her job and also questioned her effectiveness in her role. Janice, who also dealt with some resistant teachers, struggled with how effective she was being by not working with teachers whom she felt would benefit from her support.

Some of the challenges that were revealed in this study included challenges with resources such as time, materials, and funding. Other challenges consisted of working at the middle school level, working with resistant teachers, juggling and prioritizing multiple roles and responsibilities, working with content-area teachers, and isolation. The literacy coaches in this study use a variety of techniques to overcome their challenges such as incorporating technology and encouraging reflective practices so that teachers are coming to their own conclusions about changing their instructional practices.

Along with identifying challenges related to their roles, the middle school literacy coaches in this study also discussed what they found rewarding about their jobs. The greatest focus was on the human element of the literacy coaching role. Rewards included building positive relationships with teachers and students, and helping teachers and/or students learn. Some of the coaches also discussed their own growth as literacy professionals as being a rewarding aspect of the role.

Results for Research Question #4: Working with Content-Area Teachers to Support

Students' Comprehension of Multiple Texts

To explore how literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts, both the survey and the interview data were

used. The findings presented in the following section begin with a look at which content areas middle school literacy coaches work with, followed by the specific ways in which they work with these teachers. Findings about staff receptiveness to comprehension instruction as well as their likeliness to include multiple texts also are discussed.

Working with Content-Area Teachers

Participants were asked to identify all content areas with which they work. The majority of participants work with all content areas (58%), while another ten percent work with all content areas except for math. Eighteen percent of participants work only with reading/language arts. Six percent work with social studies and reading/language arts, while four percent work with math and reading/language arts, and two percent work with science and reading/language arts. Two percent work with just social studies. One participant added that he also works with ESL [English as a Second Language].

Table 7

Working with Content-Area Teachers

Responsibility	Yes (%)
Model	70%
Co-plan	64%
Co-teach	46%
Provide materials	80%
Provide teaching suggestions	88%

Table 7 summarizes some of the responsibilities that literacy coaches have when working with content-area teachers along with the percentages of literacy coaches in this study who perform these responsibilities. Participants were given the choices of model,

co-plan, co-teach, provide materials, provide teaching suggestions, and an opportunity to list additional things they do when working with these teachers. The majority of participants in this study provide teaching suggestions to content-area teachers, followed by providing materials.

Staff receptiveness to comprehension instruction. Overall, middle school literacy coaches reported that their school staff are receptive to comprehension instruction. Eighty-eight percent of participants reported that their staff is either very receptive (22%) or somewhat receptive (66%) to comprehension instruction. Twelve percent reported that their staff is not very receptive to comprehension instruction. No literacy coach reported that their staff is not at all receptive to comprehension instruction.

Teacher likeliness to use multiple texts. Literacy coaches reported that the teachers in their schools are likely to use multiple texts in their classrooms. The majority of participants reported that their teachers are very likely (40%) or somewhat likely (44%) to use multiple texts. Sixteen percent reported that their teachers were not very likely to use multiple texts in their classrooms.

For those who coaches who reported that teachers use multiple texts, their teachers (78%) were likely to include both fiction and nonfiction supplemental texts. Ninety-six percent reported that teachers used information from the Internet as supplemental texts. Participants also reported that supplemental informational texts are used in a variety of group setting as well as for myriad purposes, including whole group instruction (68%), small group instruction (68%), research (62%), project work (70%), reading intervention programs (2%), and independent reading (4%).

Sixteen percent of participants reported that teachers at their school sites do not use supplemental informational texts. These participants were asked to explain why these teachers do not incorporate supplemental text. The most reported reason was the lack of materials (48%), followed by a lack of perceived value (38%) and the assertion that textbooks are used as the main source of information (35%).

Helping students comprehend nonfiction texts. Participants were asked to identify how valuable various literacy practices are in aiding students' comprehension of nonfiction texts on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not at all valuable and 5 being very valuable. Table 8 shows the techniques identified by the middle school literacy coaches as aiding students' comprehension of nonfiction texts.

Overall, participants found that all there are a range of techniques that teachers can employ to help students comprehend nonfiction texts. They identified all of the following techniques as being somewhat valuable, valuable, or very valuable in aiding students' comprehension: explicit comprehension instruction; group discussion; having students read texts at their own reading level; having students use multiple comprehension strategies; having students set goals; explicit vocabulary instruction; ensuring that students' literacy engagement is promoted; having students read often and from a range of sources; having students ask/answer questions before they read, while they read, and after they read; and using graphic organizers. Literacy coaches may work with content-area teachers to apply these techniques in their classrooms through modeling, providing teaching suggestions, co-teaching, or co-planning.

Table 8

Techniques for Promoting Students' Comprehension of Nonfiction Texts

Technique	Perceived Value			Mean	Standard Deviation
	Somewhat Valuable	Valuable	Very Valuable		
Explicit comprehension instruction	0%	20%	80%	4.80	0.40
Discussion	4%	28%	68%	4.64	0.56
Having students read texts at their own level	6%	26%	68%	4.62	0.60
Encouraging the use of multiple strategies	4%	16%	80%	4.76	0.52
Having students set goals prior to reading	10%	34%	56%	4.46	0.68
Explicit vocabulary instruction	0%	26%	74%	4.74	0.44
Promoting students' literacy engagement	6%	22%	70%	4.65	0.60
Volume reading	2%	12%	86%	4.84	0.42
Having students ask questions before, during and after reading	4%	8%	88%	4.84	0.47
Using graphic organizers	4%	35%	60%	4.56	0.58

Comprehension strategies in the content areas. Participants were given a list of six comprehension strategies and asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how important each strategy is for students to use in content-area classes. The six strategies included finding main ideas and important details, making inferences, visualizing, making connections, asking questions, and synthesizing. Participants also were given the opportunity to add other strategies that they believe are important for students to use in content-area classes. Means (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the six comprehension strategies were 4.76 (0.48), 4.64 (0.56), 4.78 (0.61), 4.78 (0.42), 4.64 (0.56), and 4.78 (.46) respectively. This information may provide insights into which comprehension strategies

a middle school literacy coach may assist a content-area teacher with implementing to help students' comprehend nonfiction texts.

Synthesizing, making connections, and finding main ideas/important details were the three strategies that participants indicated were most important for students to use in content-area classes. Seventy-eight percent of participants stated that it is very important for students to use the strategy of finding main ideas and important details in content-area classes. Sixty-eight percent of participants indicated that it is very important for students to use the strategies of making inferences and asking questions. Sixty-two percent of participants indicated that visualizing is a very important strategy for students to use in the content areas. All participants indicated that making connections is either a very important (78%) or an important (22%) strategy. Eighty percent of participants indicated that synthesizing is a very important strategy for students to use in content-area classes. No participants indicated that any of the aforementioned strategies were either not very important or not at all important. Five participants wrote in two additional strategies: four added summarizing and one added attending to text structure.

Supporting content-area teachers. To further explore the findings from the survey, the interviewees were asked to share specific ways that they support content-area teachers. Anne stated that when she works with teachers on developing IEPs [Individualized Education Plans] for Special Education students, she shares ideas with social studies and language arts teachers about how they can “take this student who doesn’t have the ability to read the text, and help them to read and understand it.”

Nicole discussed various ways that she supports content-area teachers, including focusing on “vocabulary strategies in the content areas.” She noted that she works with content-area teachers to “help them think about ‘how do I think about and plan instruction so that students can learn from instruction and keep it longer.’”

According to Erin she supports content-area teachers “if they contact me.” She explained that she would “like to do more with content-area reading. I know our science and social studies teachers could be teaching reading too. They do teach reading, they just don’t know it.”

Julie works with all content-area teachers. She explained that one of her roles is “helping non-literacy teachers by name understand that for them to incorporate literacy practices in their classrooms supports and encourages meaningful work within their content as opposed to being one more thing they have to do *instead* of their content.” The following is one example of how math teachers have approached her for support:

Teachers will come to me and say, “I don’t know if the kids don’t understand the words or the content. Can you give me some vocabulary things so I can see how they do with that to see if it’s a math concept or not?”

Julie shared that she has introduced content-area teachers to dialogue journals to help students develop their understanding of the various texts they read: “I haven’t done dialogue journals with any teachers’ classroom where I haven’t had 100% participation...I love the look on teachers’ faces when they see kids who have never done work for them before get engaged.” Julie noted that she has used dialogue journals in two content areas, including “in math and I’ve done it in social studies. I’m working with the

computer tech teacher to figure out how to do it as a chat room for kids, getting to a technological level.” Along with dialogue journals, Julie also mentioned that she has worked on helping content-area teachers use exit slips, the QAR [question-answer-relationships] strategy, and anticipation guides. She shared that she also encourages teachers to focus on engaging students, “If they can take a few moments to engage kids in general, they’ll see ‘oh, she’s really interested in that.’ It gives them a chance to connect with kids on both a relationship and a content level.”

Pam explained that she works with reading teachers, social studies teachers, science teachers, and math teachers. She shared that she and a math teacher went to a training over the summer and from that decided to create a math course for their school focused on “linking math and reading. She has the math perspective and I’ll add the reading part—helping kids better read mathematics.” Pam also shared that she supports social studies teachers in finding resources. Since her district is a “CRISS district” which she explained stands for Project CRISS: CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies (Santa, 1979), she works with content-area teachers to identify which CRISS strategies and graphic organizers the teachers will use to support students’ thinking. Pam also discussed finding and ordering materials for social studies teachers as well as science teachers. She said that when science teachers set up an inquiry area with resources, they work with her to “set it up so that they have the range of materials for all kids.” Pam explained that she also works with reading teachers to help them “see how they can be of support to the social studies, science, or math teacher on their team by supporting the content vocabulary, and giving kids multiple exposures to content vocabulary.”

Although Kim's role primarily focused on language arts, she explained that at times she has worked with content-area teachers. She shared the following examples:

I'd give them some ideas and advice and ways that they could use things like anticipation guides or vocabulary building... Show them how to guide their [students'] comprehension instead of just expecting kids to read it all and get it... We do what's called guided language acquisition and development where teachers are working with second language English acquisition students and doing a lot of visual representations of the text and adding the vocabulary to the visual representations as they get to it. So, if they're doing *cell*, we would do a big picture of the cell and the students would copy that. Then, as students take notes, they would write the words as they got to each part of the cell, right on the picture, guided by the teacher. The teacher would have the same picture on the overhead and they'd be writing together. Then they'd use that to study.

Kim's example highlights one way that content-area teachers can infuse literacy strategies such as vocabulary building into their content-area instruction to benefit all students, including English language learners.

Research Question #4 Summary

In summary, over half of the participants in this study work with all content areas. Most provide teaching suggestions and materials, while just under three-quarters also model. Less than half of the participants co-teach with content-area teachers. Most reported that their staff members are at least somewhat receptive to comprehension instruction. Many also indicated that teachers at their schools are likely to use multiple

texts in their classrooms. Approximately a fifth of participants shared that teachers at their schools do not use nonfiction texts either because they do not have the materials, they don't see the value, or they rely on a textbook as the predominant source of information. The vast majority of literacy coaches indicated that explicit comprehension instruction, discussion, explicit vocabulary instruction, promoting student engagement, goal setting, volume reading, using graphic organizers, and having students read texts at their level are valuable ways that teachers can support students' comprehension. They also indicated that determining importance, visualizing, making connections, making inferences, asking questions, attending to text structures, synthesizing, and summarizing are important strategies that students can use in content-area classrooms to aid in their comprehension of multiple texts.

Results for Research Question #5: Advice for Future Literacy Coaches

Toward the end of each interview, participants were asked to share advice that they would offer to teachers who are interested in becoming middle school literacy coaches in the future. The advice that they shared is organized around two main themes—internal factors that deal with who the person would be as a coach and external factors about the school or climate in which the person would work. In the following section, external factors are discussed first followed by internal factors. Table 9 lists the external and internal factors.

Have a defined role. Two of the current literacy coaches discussed the importance of ensuring that new literacy coaches have a defined role. For example, Anne noted the

importance of ensuring that there is a clear description of what the role entails as well as the short-term and long-term vision of the role:

I think, especially since there are so many definitions of what a literacy coach or reading specialist is, and there's such a large variety of roles that we have throughout the country...I would just make sure that anyone getting into this field wherever they are looking for employment that there's a very clearly defined role for them in terms of how they are going to be used and that they're going into a district that is willing to look forward and willing to try new things.

Table 9

Coach-to-Coach: Advice for Future Literacy Coaches

External Factors	Internal Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined Role • Professional Development • Peer Support/Network • Observe Coach • Administrative Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, Patient, and Positive • Clear Expectations for Role • Clear Reasons for Pursuing Role • Relationships • Don't Pretend to Know Everything • Coalition of the Willing

Get professional development. The value of professional development for a literacy coach was stressed by three of the seven interviewees. One example came from Erin. She focused on staying abreast of current research by taking courses and getting information from reliable sources:

If they haven't had those reading classes in a long time to make sure they get some of that training in the latest research because sometimes it's overwhelming to be out there...I'm always looking for the latest thing. I had a really good

professor for two of my classes and she had a lot of great ideas and really inspired me. Find a good place to get your reading classes and information—one where you feel like you’re taking away something useful.

While Erin spoke of the importance of getting professional development *while* coaching, Kim discussed the value of getting professional development *prior* to taking on the role of literacy coach. She again focused on Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1998) and understanding the power of this model of reflective coaching. She said, “I would recommend that they look at Cognitive Coaching and building their skills as a Cognitive Coach before they try to do literacy coaching.”

Have a peer. Two literacy coaches discussed the importance of having someone or several people to network with. When Nicole discussed this, she said that is important to “make sure you’re not the only one.” She focused on the value of having a peer to dialogue with, to share ideas with, and to use as a support.

I think that's really important that if you're looking into a school district that you have a peer to work with or peers. You need to brainstorm with people. You need to have other ideas. And just to vent the frustrations. I can't say things to the teachers. But then when I talk to someone else and they say, “Yeah, I have the same thing,” then it's like “it's not me. I just have to forge ahead.”

Kim, like Nicole, advised finding other literacy coaches to network with. She focused on the value of having peers to brainstorm ways to overcome “barriers” and relying on others to provide support and guidance.

Observe a coach. Nicole advised that teachers interested in becoming literacy coaches observe a middle school literacy coach prior to taking on the role. She focused on the value of seeing what coaches actually do:

It would be great to have more education and information about what the role really is. I've never looked at another literacy coach's role. I have a couple of books that I'm reading right now, but seeing is believing. Maybe observe a literacy coach for a week.

Have administrative support. Pam and Nicole both stressed the importance of making sure to have administrative support at the school site where the coach will be working. An example Pam provided came from her own middle school experience with her administrator.

It's very important that administration supports whatever initiatives you're supporting. For example, if I'm supporting the middle school reform initiative [an initiative in her district] and I'm saying you have to pull two groups in a 47-minute period and they go to the administrator frustrated and the administrator says, "Oh you know what, you don't really have to pull two groups, don't worry about pulling any groups." That would cause me huge havoc. My administrators say, "You know what, the middle school reform drives what we do and the expectation is that you pull groups. If you can only pull one right now, that's okay, but we're going to be looking for you to be moving into groups." I think it's just being on the same page.

Pam stressed the value of looking for this support *before* accepting a position as a literacy coach. She advised using the interview process as a way to find out how supportive the administration is of literacy coaching:

Make sure your administration is on board with you. When you go out for an interview, yes, they're interviewing you, but interview them too. See how supportive they are. Make sure that you find the right fit, even if that means that a coaching position waits another year.

Be flexible, patient, hardworking, and positive. Four of the coaches talked about being flexible, patient, hardworking, or positive. Pam's response of waiting for the right position encouraged being patient. Lisa spoke of patience in terms of how to respond once the teacher is in the role. She also encouraged flexibility.

You have to have a lot of patience and you have to be flexible. As a reading specialist your schedule is always changing. If something isn't working you have to be willing to try something else. You have multiple preps if you're pushing into different content-area classrooms, plus having all grade levels. So, if you're not willing to do just a little bit more than everybody else, this probably is not a good place for you to be. You have to be willing to do the extra work.

Kim and Julie encouraged teachers wanting to become literacy coaches to be patient when they work with teachers. In conjunction with taking things slowly, Kim also advised that future literacy coaches should be positive and supportive when they interact with staff:

Just being as friendly as possible even with the people who are really struggling. There are things that they're good at. Always start from what's working—what they're doing well and then gently move into “Okay, you have this piece in place, now what can we do next.” Take things in little steps instead of going in and trying to fix everything. Really look at what's working, and then work with the teacher to figure out what can we do to make it better.

Know your expectations and your reasons for becoming a coach. Kim noted that it is important to know what your expectations are prior to becoming a literacy coach. She said,

Know for yourself what you expect before you go into it. Know what your goals are and what you want to do as a literacy coach. Be clear with yourself about what it is you want to do and how it is that you're going to get there.

Julie focused on understanding one's reasons for wanting to get into literacy coaching in the first place. She advised that teachers think about these motivations and make sure that they enter coaching for positive reasons, not to escape something else or because “you're tired of being in the classroom.”

Build relationships. Pam emphasized the value of building relationships with staff. She said, “Teachers need to know that you're there to support them.” Pam underscored the value of building relationships while also acknowledging that it takes time by stating, “Build relationships. Take time out to do it. It's essential.” She also advised that if a coach is in a resistant school, that it is imperative that the new literacy

coach takes the time to build relationships in order to be most effective in his or her role as a coach:

If you're walking into a situation where there's never been a coach...Sometimes there's a division between teachers and coaches for whatever reason. I don't know what causes it, but I know that even if you spend the whole first half of the year building relationships, that's what I'd recommend to someone in a situation like that...I have been on the other side and been in a resistant school—they did turn around. It took so much time and energy and so many times I just bit my tongue against my beliefs just to build that relationship. It's almost like picking your battles. Now I can sit down with pretty much any teacher in my school now and flat out lay it on the line. I don't have to worry about that piece of it. That's already established...and I think that the difference is that most of the teachers in my school are serious about that too. It really is about building relationships to make the rest happen.

Don't pretend to know everything. Pam was adamant that literacy coaches do not “pretend to know everything.” She said, “if there's something you don't know, don't act like you know something you don't.” She went on to say, “It's okay to say, ‘let me research that.’” She explained that being honest about what you know and what you don't know helps to “build trust” with teachers and encourages teachers to see the coach as authentic.

Begin with a “coalition of the willing.” Pam emphasized the value of working with those teachers who are ready and willing to work with a literacy coach. She said,

“Begin with a coalition of the willing. Just really get on board with the people who come to you—even if it’s just the same 5 or 6 people. It’s going to spread eventually.” Julie echoed this idea when she said the following:

Work with those people who want you to work with them. I think it’s really important to remember to do that. It reinforces the idea of good teachers getting better. It’s what coaching is all about...People are going to brag about cool things happening in their classroom because they’re glad about that happening.

Competence and character matter. Pam, Julie, Kim, and Anne each alluded to their reputations and the positive impact this has on their credibility. Pam shared that she is “very tactful and very considerate of their [teachers’] feelings, but they also know that I’m all serious about what’s best for kids.” Julie said, “A lot of people know me from having grown up in this community. They know I clearly state that we know what we need to do.” Kim discussed how the teachers and the principal at her school all knew that she was a good teacher prior to becoming a literacy coach, and teachers would come to her for advice and ideas. She explained how the principal would encourage other teachers to “come into my room to see how I had things set up...it was like she knows what she’s doing. If you watch what’s she’s doing and how she’s doing it, your skills will grow.”

Research Question #5 Summary

In summary, the literacy coaches in the interviews provided advice for teachers who are considering becoming literacy coaches at the middle school level. Their advice included having a defined role, having support from a peer and the school administrator, getting professional development, being flexible and patient, building relationships with

teachers, and being willing to admit that you are not an expert in everything. They also shared that literacy coaching is about character and competence, so new coaches need to be cognizant of both who they are individuals as well as what they do as middle school literacy coaches.

Final Thoughts of Middle School Literacy Coaches from Across the Country

Participants from both the survey as well as the interviews were given an opportunity to discuss any final thoughts that they wanted to share. The final comments from survey participants are discussed first, followed by final thoughts from interviewees.

Survey Findings: Final Comments

The final question on the survey gave participants the opportunity to include any final comments that they wanted to share covering anything from literacy coaching to working with teachers on comprehension instruction or the use of multiple texts. Fifteen participants chose to include final comments. These individuals came from the following states: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Montana, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. For this section, participants' states are included along with their statements as there is no district-identifying information.

Benefits of coaching. Six of the participants made comments that dealt with the benefits of literacy coaching. One participant from Illinois stated, "I've had a great time getting into classrooms and co-teaching with teachers in my school. We really collaborate well and they come to me for support, materials, and ideas." A coach from Texas echoed this idea of the power of collaboration when the person stated, "Coaching is powerful

when teachers and coaches accept each other as peers with different perspectives, skills, talents, and resources. Sharing the needs helps students and adults to grow as learners.” A coach from Florida also dealt with the importance of acceptance. This coach stated,

Coaching at a school can really benefit the teachers and students if accepted.

There are so many activities coaches can help teachers with in their classrooms. It can be so beneficial if used appropriately. I wish there was a reading coach at my school when I taught reading!

Two coaches from Georgia also discussed the benefits of coaching. One stated, “This is a very difficult job [double underline] that requires so many professional skills and personality traits. I firmly believe that good coaching will have a positive impact on student achievement!” The other coach noted, “Principals & instructional staff members are beginning to realize the value of literacy coaches...those who volunteer to go through the coaching process are finding they are more successful with student achievement.” A coach from Washington emphasized the value of literacy coaching by simply saying, “I believe every school needs a literacy and math coach. As a literacy coach I work with language arts and reading teachers as well as content teachers.”

Two coaches from Florida explicitly shared their passion for their jobs. One stated,

I love my job! I love helping teachers. After 38 years in the classroom I have lots of experience to share and because I have proven myself, teachers are willing to listen. I just wish I could spend more time with teachers and kids and less time with all the other stuff.

The other coach wrote, “Love this job! I love the research and data analysis aspects of the job.”

Issues/challenges. Six coaches shared additional comments about issues or challenges that they face in their positions. Some of the issues/challenges that they highlighted had to do with teachers while others dealt with expectations or time.

One coach from Florida noted, “There is a lack of understanding or maybe reluctance on the part of teachers to correctly remediate reading problems.” A coach from Pennsylvania stated, “...many teachers still view us as teachers w/strategies who will teach their classes for a day.”

Two coaches discussed challenges that they face with expectations. A coach from Arkansas stated, “Adopting a program for common assessments and narrowing our options from 2 coaches down to only 1 has made it difficult to be effective as often as is expected. Modify and adapt!” A coach from Florida shared, “The more top-down mandates that I have to deal with, the less effective I am.”

Another coach from Florida stated, “Every decision we make should be data driven. Actual assessing and analyzing the data takes a lot of time. It is hard to find/make time to model.” The comment in the previous section about top-down mandates may also connect to issues with time.

Role clarification. Two participants in the study chose to clarify their current roles. One participant from Pennsylvania wrote, “We are still transitioning from Reading Specialists to Literacy Coaches and trying to define our roles. We still have intervention groups that we meet with daily—trying to figure out what is most effective and beneficial

for students and teachers.” This coach also asked the following questions, “What is the most effective use of our time? How do we best help students?” Another participant also shared that he or she works primarily with students as a reading specialist in Virginia. This person stated, “I work as a reading specialist. I pull out students in reading/language arts for critical reading and writing in grade 8 and grade 7. I work with my students individually in class and work with reading and writing skills.”

A literacy coach from Montana noted that the role of the literacy coach is under utilized. This coach stated, “Most schools/districts don’t know how to best use literacy coaches/reading specialists within schools or districts.”

The use of multiple texts. One California coach chose to share comments about the use of multiple texts. The coach stated, “Most teachers enjoy using supplemental text but with NCLB...mandates it is hard to find funding and time to use supplemental texts.”

Final Thoughts from the Interviewees

Five of the interviewees shared closing comments at the end of the interview when asked if they had anything else that they would like to add before concluding the interview. Following are the final thoughts shared by Julie, Erin, Kim, Anne, and Nicole:

Julie said that participating in the interview was a good reminder for her to reflect on her own practices. She concluded the conversation with this parting thought, “I appreciate the opportunity to talk about it. I don’t always get a chance to remember all of the good things that we do.”

Erin shared her vision for her role and how she would like to see her role evolve for the upcoming school year. She shared the following ideas:

I like how my job's set up now, but the only thing that I'd like to do is when we talk about content-area reading is get more teachers on board and help them. We definitely need inservice time to do that. I'd love to share some of the knowledge that I've gained from my classes about how they can incorporate some of the things I do right into their classes that wouldn't really be that hard or more work for them. It's just a mind change, really.

Kim shared her enthusiasm about the power of literacy coaching. She said, "It's a really, really great position to have. It's something that's really needed—ongoing training for teachers that helps us become better as professionals."

Anne also discussed her final thoughts about literacy coaching. She shared the following:

I certainly think it is an important job and a fascinating field. Reading education sways so often between how you should approach teaching reading and then, ten years down the road, it sways in another direction. Finding that middle ground, staying on that middle ground, and making progress...to me that is such a challenge. It's something that I don't think I'll ever get bored with.

Anne also shared that like Erin, she would like to shift her role a bit to not only work with small groups of students, but also become more of a resource for teachers in all content areas while also working with small groups of struggling students.

By the middle of the hour-long interview it was apparent that Nicole was discouraged with her role as a middle school literacy coach. It was clear both through her

words as well as the tone of voice when she spoke about getting into classrooms. Her final thoughts reflected how weary she has become with her role:

I work two days a week and it's hard. Five days of it would just be painful. I don't really know if I can do this a whole lot longer. I don't know if I'm just not cut out to do it. I don't know. I don't know. It's just really challenging. I'm so happy when I'm in somebody's classroom. It's just so challenging to get there. And if I don't feel like I'm doing a good job, I'm the kind of person who has to a really good job. [After a long pause] So, can you tell I'm just really frustrated?

In summary, participants voiced a range of final thoughts at the end of either the interview or the survey. The final comments served as an opportunity for these middle school literacy coaches to summarize their feelings about either the job or about simply being asked to participate in this study and being given the chance to share their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs. These findings are included in this chapter because they provide insights into what the coaches felt was particularly important to share as their parting words either in print on the survey or verbally through the interviews. The final thoughts shared on the survey and well as in the interviews reinforce the findings that the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches are multifaceted and diverse, and the challenges are complex and may influence coaches' job satisfaction and effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

The combination of the survey and the interview findings provide insights into what middle school literacy coaches around the continental United States do in their roles as coaches, how they do their jobs, and what they think about different aspects of jobs.

Data from the survey was analyzed first, and then the interviews were used to explain or further explore the findings from the survey.

Data from both the survey and the interviews indicate that middle school literacy coaches perform a range of roles and have multiple responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities are multifaceted and include co-planning, modeling and co-teaching, supporting teachers observing teachers, observing teachers and providing feedback, working with data, developing curriculum, working with new teachers, providing staff development, encouraging reflective practices, meeting with administrators, providing resources, collaborating with teachers, supporting after school and Saturday school programs, developing reading incentive programs, serving on school committees, working with students, incorporating technology, and staying current with literacy research. None of the coaches in this study discussed working with volunteers or paraprofessionals.

Overall, middle school literacy coaches are satisfied with the myriad responsibilities they assume, although their level of satisfaction differs from slightly satisfied with professional development opportunities for literacy coaches to being moderately satisfied with instructional materials at their school sites and with opportunities to plan with teachers to being satisfied or very satisfied with other aspects of their jobs. Support of the principal emerged as an important factor for the middle school literacy coaches in this study. Middle school literacy coaches' satisfaction with support by their principals and conferencing with teachers were found to predict coaches' satisfaction with teacher support. The more satisfied literacy coaches are with the support

of their principal or conferencing opportunities with teachers, the more satisfied they are with the support of the teachers at their schools, if everything else is held constant.

A Middle School Literacy Coaching Continuum

Looking at the survey results and the interview data provides an interesting glimpse into middle school literacy coaching. The literacy coaches who completed the survey live and work all across the continental United States, from Connecticut to California and from Florida to Washington State. The literacy coaches who participated in the interviews each came from a different geographic region of the United States as shown in Table 2. Along with working in different geographic regions, these coaches also work in different types of communities, including rural, urban, and suburban communities. One of the coaches works on a Native American reservation.

The findings from this study indicate that there is not one “right way” to be a literacy coach at the middle school level. The coaches seem to fall more along a continuum than into a tidy box marked “middle school literacy coach.” Figure 1 shows this continuum. The continuum includes the roles and responsibilities of coaches and also acknowledges that the roles they assume are influenced by the contexts in which they work as well as by their own individual experiences and backgrounds.

In this study, the continuum falls with Lisa on one end, a literacy coach who fills more of a typical reading specialist role, and Pam on the other end, a literacy coach who works primarily with teachers and administrators. Following is an explanation as to how each teacher who was interviewed in this study falls along this continuum.

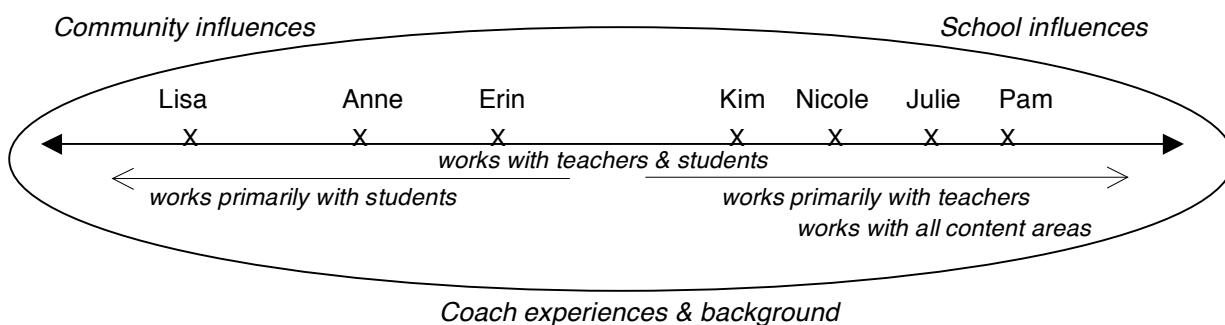


Figure 1. Continuum depicting the range of roles performed by middle school literacy coaches in this study and factors that influence these roles and responsibilities including external influences such as community and school influences as well as internal influences including the individual coach's previous experiences and background

At the far left end of the continuum falls Lisa. Lisa's primary role and responsibilities are centered on working with struggling adolescent readers. These students may or may not be receiving Special Education services. She collaborates primarily with the Special Education teachers, not regular education classroom teachers. Her primary responsibility is to give the children she services the extra support that they need to be successful readers in middle school and beyond. She feels responsible for making a difference in the lives of these children. She participates in professional development like the rest of the staff at her school. She feels most comfortable teaching students, not teaching teachers. Lisa offers an after-school program for struggling readers with the goal of helping these students become more comfortable with language and literacy. Lisa is content with her role and responsibilities as she works to meet the needs of struggling adolescent readers in her school. She has taught reading for many years and uses her knowledge and experience to best meet the needs of these struggling readers.

At the other end of the continuum in this study is Pam. She works primarily with teachers. She is an active member of numerous school committees, including curriculum design committees and literacy committees. She works with staff to develop a literacy action plan for her school and helps spearhead its implementation. Pam's district has a middle school reform initiative that drives her decision-making and that of her school administrators. Pam works with all teachers across the content areas, including new teachers, to observe, co-teach, model, co-plan, and provide feedback and resources. She also helps develop curriculum that incorporates reading and writing across the content areas, while ensuring that it meets the rigorous demands of her school's goals and the district's middle school reform initiative. Pam also facilitates the assessment program at her school for all assessments related to reading. Pam works with teachers to implement various progress monitoring assessments by teaching them how to administer the assessments and how to use the data to drive their instruction. She has built relationships with staff by establishing trust and mutual respect. Pam is an instructional leader in her school and works closely with her administrators. Her district and state actively support literacy coaches through meetings, literacy coach professional development, and a literacy coach association. Pam utilizes technology as a tool for learning. She helps content-area teachers use technology effectively to help students develop skills they will need for 21st century life and jobs. While Pam works primarily with teachers, she also ensures that she takes the time to get to know students. She systematically maintains data on children when in classrooms working with teachers. She purposefully sets aside time to build rapport with students whom she feels need extra support and encouragement.

Pam is in a fairly new school in which the principal interviewed and hired all staff. According to Pam, this has helped to build a climate in which the expectations are known, and risk taking and collaboration are encouraged.

Erin, Anne, Nicole, Kim, and Julie all fall along the continuum between Lisa and Pam. Erin and Anne, who both work primarily with students, are closer along the continuum to Lisa, while Kim, Nicole, and Julie, who each work primarily with teachers, fall closer along the continuum to Pam.

Moving along the continuum from Lisa falls Anne. Anne, like Lisa, works primarily with students. She pulls students out of their regular classes and also teaches an “elective” course that struggling students take. Anne offers professional development for the teachers at her school site during a two-hour long workshop set up by her principal on a quarterly basis. Anne’s desire is to work more closely with teachers in the upcoming school year, along with pulling small groups of struggling readers. If this change were to take place, this would move her to the right on the continuum. Anne’s community greatly influences her role in that there is low literacy amongst community members. She works on a Native American reservation and deals with issues of poverty and illiteracy. There are few resources available to parents or in the school itself. The district has a low graduation rate and a high “return rate” when students head off to college. Anne shared that the students in her school are quite needy and many are low readers. Teachers are unsure how to work with many of the children and the principal is focused primarily on ensuring that instruction occurs in classrooms.

Moving further along the continuum toward Pam is Erin. She, like Lisa and Anne, is primarily focused on struggling readers in the middle school. She pulls small groups of middle school students for intensive language arts instruction. She uses a range of assessment tools to identify the students in her groups and communicates with the classroom teachers at times. Erin helps the new teachers in her school when they are struggling with students who are having difficulties with reading the textbook and/or writing in the content areas. She provides these teachers with “quick” tips for working with struggling readers and writers. At various venues, Erin has presented information about her role and the impact on students at her school. These venues include presentations for her school board and at local and state middle school conferences. Like Anne, Erin also would like to shift her role a bit in the future to work more closely with teachers. This has not happened in part because all staff in the district are currently participating in district-wide staff development focused on working with children of poverty. She, with the support of her principal, hopes to make the shift in her role and responsibilities for the upcoming school year.

When we look at Kim, we move along the continuum toward the end in which literacy coaches work primarily with teachers. Kim works with English/language arts teachers primarily, although she does provide some informal advice and suggestions for content-area teachers. She models, co-plans, observes, and provides teachers with feedback. She does not work with students. Kim also does not utilize technology in her role. Kim provides some support for finding materials and resources, but the school is tied closely to a basal program and teachers are not encouraged to deviate from this

program. Kim's role and responsibilities are influenced by state mandates as well as the school principal's vision of the role. Kim plans to shift her role annually between classroom teacher and literacy coach because there is a teacher in her building who will be returning from maternity leave who also wants to be the school literacy coach. The principal supports the two of them alternating the literacy coach role annually.

As we continue to move along the continuum to the right, we find Nicole. Like Kim, Nicole works primarily with teachers. Like Kim she began as an English/language arts coach. However, unlike Kim, she is now responsible for working with all content-area teachers. Her primary roles and responsibilities include observing, modeling, providing feedback, curriculum development, and finding resources and materials. She provides professional development for teachers in all content areas at her school as well as for teachers across her district. All teachers from the district can participate in her book studies as well as workshops and courses that she offers. The books are chosen based on the needs and interests of the teachers involved in the book studies as well as district needs, and are applicable to teachers of all content areas. Nicole does not have a peer in her district and rarely attends regular educator conferences for professional development. She would like to find more professional development specifically designed for literacy coaches. Nicole is beginning to see that using technology is one way that she can encourage content-area teachers to open their classroom doors to her. Nicole is greatly influenced by the principal in her school who she perceives does not support her. Nicole also is influenced by an assistant superintendent who supports and sees value in her role.

Nicole believes that her principal has the greatest impact on her lack of success in getting into classrooms because teachers see Nicole and her principal's lack of relationship.

Moving along the continuum to the right, we find Julie. Julie has a set job description that was developed in collaboration with her school principal. Julie, like Nicole and Pam, works with all content-area teachers. She has had more success than Nicole in getting into classrooms, yet she remains frustrated that she has not been able to make inroads with some staff. Unlike Nicole, but similar to Pam, she also receives support through regular literacy coach meetings and professional development that is geared to literacy coaches. Her meetings are held by a county educational cooperative since there are no other literacy coaches in Julie's district. Julie works with the school's interim assessments to gather data on middle school students and provide this information to teachers. Like Kim, Nicole, and Pam, Julie also believes that reflection is essential for teacher growth and improved practice. Julie is beginning to explore the role that technology can play in working with content-area teachers and students. Like Lisa, Julie offers support for students outside of the regular school day. In Julie's case, it is through a Saturday school program. However, unlike Lisa, Julie's goal is that the instructional techniques used in the Saturday school will spill over into teachers' classroom instruction during the regular school day. Part of the reason that Julie's principal moved her into the literacy coaching role was to support her goal of becoming National Board certified. As the school leader, he encourages the use of reflective practices. Julie is greatly influenced by her belief in the power of reflection and the process she undertook as she pursued National Board certification.

All of the coaches who were interviewed discussed the contexts of the communities and schools within which they work. All shared stories about students, teachers, and their administrators. For each of these middle school literacy coaches, the context of their school and community impacts their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, their roles and responsibilities also are influenced by who they are as individuals, including their backgrounds and experiences.

Overarching Themes

The overarching themes that emerged from this study focus on roles and responsibilities, challenges, and administrative support. First, the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches are multifaceted and diverse. They are influenced by the school and community contexts in which the coaches work as well as by the coaches' individual backgrounds and experiences. Second, the challenges that middle school literacy coaches face are complex and influence their experiences and job satisfaction. Third, administrative support is important for literacy coaches to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities. The following chapter will discuss these themes, their connections to literature, and implications for schools, districts, and schools of education. Suggestions for future research also will be presented.

5. Discussion

Five research questions guided this study. The research questions included the following:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches?
2. How satisfied are middle school literacy coaches with different aspects of their roles and responsibilities? Does satisfaction with principal support and conferencing with teachers predict satisfaction with teacher support?
3. What are the challenges and rewards identified by middle school literacy coaches?
4. How do middle school literacy coaches work with content-area teachers to support students' comprehension of multiple texts?
5. What advice do current middle school literacy coaches have for future middle school literacy coaches?

In analyzing the results from the present study, three main themes emerged. This chapter will provide a discussion about these three main themes and their relation to current research. The first overarching theme in the present study is that the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches around the country are multifaceted and diverse. These roles and responsibilities are influenced by the school and community contexts in which coaches work as well as by the coaches' backgrounds and experiences. In looking at the evolving roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches, the

middle school literacy coaching continuum introduced in Chapter 4 will be discussed in greater detail. Subsequent discussion will center on how schools can use a continuum such as this to determine the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches at the middle school level. The second theme that will be discussed is that the challenges that literacy coaches face are complex and directly influence literacy coaches' experiences and job satisfaction. The final theme is that administrative support or lack of it can have a significant impact on literacy coaches' satisfaction and effectiveness. Implications for schools of education, professional development organizations, and districts also will be discussed.

A Middle School Literacy Coaching Continuum

Currently there is not a consistent view of middle school literacy coaching roles and responsibilities across the country. There is a standards document (IRA, 2006) that according to the International Reading Association (IRA) website, "outlines the ideal of what a literacy coach should know and be able to do—in delivering both leadership and support in individual content areas." The present study found that the role looks different in different states, districts, and schools across the nation.

The present study found that there are a range of roles and responsibilities that middle school literacy coaches assume. Furthermore, these roles and responsibilities are influenced by the communities and schools in which the coaches work and by the coaches' experiences and backgrounds. There are some middle school literacy coaches whose primary role is to work in pull-out or push-in situations with small groups of struggling middle school readers. There are a number of coaches who work with small

groups of students, but who also provide staff development for teachers. Some coaches only work with English/language arts teachers. And still others provide job-embedded staff development to teachers in all content areas to help these teachers infuse literacy skills and strategies into their content-area instruction. Figure 2 highlights this continuum.

By comparison, in the International Reading Association's (IRA) November 2005 study of reading coaches, the vast majority of respondents worked primarily with teachers, not students. The respondents in the IRA survey, however, worked at the primary level (86%), with only a small percentage (17%) reporting that they work at the middle school level. The data from the present study suggests that using a continuum as a way to think about middle school literacy coaching may help to account for the fluidity of the role as it is actually being implemented in middle schools across the United States, allowing for the influences of the specific school and community contexts within which each coach works. The present study may present a broader view of what is actually happening in schools across the country as literacy coaching at the middle school level looks different in different places and is influenced by the coaches themselves (their backgrounds and experiences) and the school and community contexts within which they work.

Presenting the role of the literacy coach on a continuum may allow for the range of literacy coaching roles/responsibilities while also providing for the flexibility that is needed as schools and districts look at role, identify what their needs are as an organization, and determine how a literacy coach might be used to address these needs.

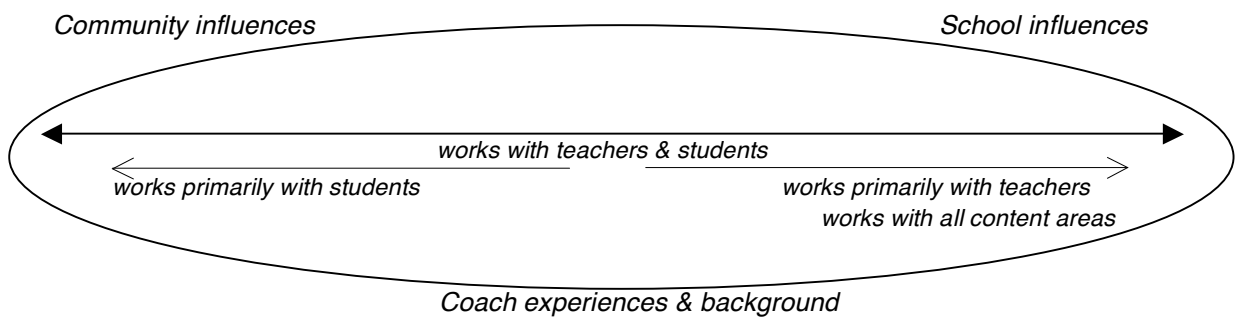


Figure 2. Continuum depicting the range of roles performed by middle school literacy coaches and factors that influence these roles and responsibilities including external influences such as community and school influences as well as internal influences including the individual coach's previous experiences and background

Take Anne and Erin from this study as examples. Both work primarily with students and provide minimal support to teachers. However, both of these literacy coaches and their principals see a need for working more substantively with teachers and hope to make shifts in their role for the upcoming school year to provide this additional support. Yet, they also see a need for continuing to work with small groups of struggling readers because of the specific needs of their schools and communities—Erin's school has a considerable number of students from poverty and struggling readers entering 6th grade each year and Anne's Native American community is faced with high levels of illiteracy. The contexts of the school and community are important to take into consideration when determining the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches. If indeed Anne and Erin's roles were to shift, they would move to the right along the continuum, indicating that they are working in some regard with teachers. Where they

would land on the continuum would depend on how they work with teachers, with which teachers they work, and in what capacity they work with students.

Like this study, A. T. Smith (2006) and Darwin (2002) found that the context of individual schools played a significant role in what literacy coaches in their studies actually did on a daily basis. Because context can be such a powerful factor in what a coach does and how it is done, a continuum may provide schools a way to dialogue about what they want for their students, teachers, and paraprofessionals. The important work comes not from placing a coach along the continuum, but rather from the conversation that ensues from thinking about and dialoguing about what roles and responsibilities a school community desires a literacy coach to assume.

Middle school literacy coaching is complex. There are a range of responsibilities that coaches undertake and they must be considered in connection with the needs of the school and community. Poglinco and Bach (2004) warned that, “adopting a coaching model without considering its complexities may not yield the results schools and districts are seeking” (p. 398). Literacy coaches and other stakeholders, including the principal and team or department leaders, can work together to make decisions about the roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach. By including team leaders or teacher leaders, the principal, and the literacy coach in this dialogue, relationships can begin to be built and buy-in addressed as all stakeholders have a voice in determining the roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach, and deciding how the coach will support the school’s literacy initiatives and goals. Stakeholder representation is an important part of ensuring the success of any initiative (Covey, 1999), including school-based literacy

professional development (NCTE, 2006). The degree with which the coach is involved in working directly with teachers would be influenced by the desires of stakeholders and the needs of the school in conjunction with the experience and background of the individual literacy coach. Poglinco and Bach found that “with some advance planning and a more nuanced understanding of how coaching can work, administrators can make informed decisions about how to incorporate the use of coaches into their school improvement plans for optimum results” (p. 398).

Theme 1: Multifaceted Roles and Responsibilities

As mentioned previously, the roles and responsibilities of middle school literacy coaches are multifaceted and influenced by the context within which the coach works as well as by the experiences and backgrounds of the coaches themselves. Some of the roles identified by the coaches in the present study include small-group interventionist, literacy assessment coordinator, curriculum developer, literacy intervention program coordinator, scheduler, co-planner, facilitator, collaborator, coach, mentor, materials purchaser and organizer, book room monitor, professional developer, committee leader, and community activist. These roles are similar to those found in previous research (e.g., R. M. Bean et al., 2007; Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Darwin, 2002; A. T. Smith, 2006).

Darwin’s (2002) reading specialists worked primarily with students, but four of the eleven participants reported that they modeled lessons regularly, while three modeled occasionally, and four never modeled lessons. Poglinco et al. (2003) found that “the importance of instructional modeling rests on the fact that it appears to be an effective instructional tool...seeing the coach demonstrate in the classroom had an important effect

on how teachers subsequently modified their practice” (p. 21). Roughly three-quarters of the participants in the present study use modeling as a coaching technique in content-area classrooms. However, the greatest percentage of participants (88%) reported that they provide teaching suggestions as the primary technique for supporting content-area teachers. A number of literacy coaches in the present study observe teachers and then offer feedback, while others give their colleagues “quick” ideas for helping students who are struggling with reading. Observing teachers as well as informally supporting teachers are responsibilities of coaches discussed in previous research (e.g., R. M. Bean, Swab, & Knaub, 2003; Poglinco et al., 2003).

In their study of K-3 literacy coaches, Elish-Piper and L’Allier (2007) found that conferencing between a teacher and a literacy coach was valuable. Their findings indicated that “the hours that a literacy coach spends conferencing contribute to the significant gains” in students’ assessment scores (p. 5). Elish-Piper and L’Allier went on to say that “Interestingly, the content of the conferencing did not appear to be an important factor affecting student text scores” (p. 5). The present study found that conferencing in the form of planning with teachers predicted how satisfied a coach was with teacher support, when other variables were held constant. While the Elish-Piper and L’Allier study found that conferencing affects student achievement at the primary level, this study found that conferencing predicts literacy coaches’ satisfaction with teacher support at the middle school level. Such planning opportunities may provide teachers with one-on-one opportunities to build relationships, thereby increasing support.

Whether a literacy coach works with teachers primarily as a job-embedded staff developer may be influenced by the needs of the school, but also may be reflective of the coach's comfort level with providing job-embedded staff development and being a literacy leader at the school site. Poglinco et al. (2003) found that simply because a teacher was good at teaching children did not necessarily mean that he or she would be a good teacher of teachers as a literacy coach. In the present study, Lisa, the literacy coach who worked only with students, had no desire to make changes to her role that would put her in the position of providing additional professional development to teachers. Yet, several of the coaches reported that they were already providing staff development to teachers prior to accepting their roles as literacy coaches. Erin, the coach who earned her master's degree after being in the role of literacy coach shared that she was interested in shifting her role to provide more staff development to teachers. She discussed taking on new opportunities to present at conferences, present to teachers during staff meetings, and make presentations to the school board. As she continues to hone her skills of working with adults, she may feel increasingly comfortable in a coaching role that provides job-embedded professional development to teachers.

Using technology. In the 21st century, it is important that technology use be part of the discussion when looking at what literacy coaches do to support teachers and students. Darwin's (2002) participants reported little use of technology. There are certainly the varying degrees of technology use by the literacy coaches who participated in the interviews for the present study. The range included Kim who said she does not ever use

technology as a literacy coach to Pam who stated, “Pretty much if there’s a way to do something electronically, then we use it.”

William Thomas, the director of educational technology for the Southern Regional Education Board, stated, “Using technology to a district’s best advantage is an issue that spans every department” (Davis, 2008, ¶ 11). Davis noted that the getting rid of the “knowledge gap” amongst school and district leaders is important for preparing students for the 21st century. Putnam and Borko (2000) stated that “computer and new communication technologies also have the potential to transform teaching and learning in classrooms and the work of teachers by providing new avenues to access distributed expertise” (p. 11). Literacy coaches can use technology in various ways to share ideas with teachers, provide access to experts through podcasts or other electronic means, model or co-teach lessons, and monitor student progress. In preparing students for 21st century jobs and life, technology is something that middle school literacy coaches must begin to gain comfort with and incorporate into their work with content-area teachers.

Kamil (2003) discussed the value of technology in his report on adolescent literacy. He stated, “As an alternative or adjunct to traditional reading instruction, computer-assisted instruction can offer students the opportunity to receive customized support, learn at a comfortable pace, and encourage the active processing of text” (p. 21). Kamil also stated, “Computers enable opportunities for adolescents to develop literacy skills through collaborative work and social interactions with each other” (p. 23). As a literacy coach in her middle school, Pam plays an integral part in helping teachers and students utilize technology for literacy learning. Nicole and Julie have both begun to see

the power of technology in reaching teachers and impacting students. Other literacy coaches will need to begin to see the power of technology in helping prepare students for life and work outside of school in the 21st century.

Working with content-area teachers. Supporting content-area teachers is an important aspect of a middle school literacy coach's job (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; IRA, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2005), "A successful literacy program takes the combined effort of skilled content-area teachers and reading specialists/coaches" (p. 7). Despite the call for job-embedded professional development in content-area classrooms (e.g., IRA, 2006) some literacy coaches at the middle school level find it challenging to get content-area teachers to view themselves as having some level of responsibility for the literacy learning of adolescents. Kamil (2003) captured one possible crux of this problem in the following statement:

For much of the history of reading in this country, the attitude of middle and high school teachers has been that their job was not to teach reading. They view themselves as content specialists and believe that the job of teaching reading belongs to elementary teachers. And they feel that, if only those elementary school teachers would do a better job of teaching these students to read, the problems at the secondary level would be solved. (p. 4)

The *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (IRA, 2006) provide literacy coaches with information about working with and supporting content-area teachers. One way that literacy coaches can work with content-area teachers is by

supporting their use of multiple texts in content-area classrooms. The IRA standards document calls for supporting students' reading of multiple texts in content-area classrooms:

Inexperienced adolescent readers need opportunities and instructional support to read many and diverse types of texts in order to gain experience, build fluency, and develop a range as readers. Through extensive reading of a range of texts, supported by strategy lessons and discussions, readers become familiar with written language structures and text features, develop their vocabularies, and read for meaning more efficiently and effectively. Conversations about their reading that focus on the strategies they use and their language knowledge help adolescents build confidence in their reading and become better readers. (p. 19)

Furthermore, Russo (2004) stated that in order to ensure that professional development is effective, it must be “ongoing, deeply embedded in teachers’ classroom work with children, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based approaches. It also must help to open classroom doors and create more collaboration and sense of communities among teachers.” Moreover, Sturtevant (2003) argued that literacy coaches play a crucial role in helping teachers choose and implement effective strategies in their classrooms. She stated,

Coaches also assist teachers in overcoming the problems they undoubtedly will experience in choosing appropriate teaching strategies and combining literacy instruction with content area curriculum requirements. Although educators universally share certain goals—that students learn to read and comprehend their

texts, understand essential vocabulary, and grow in both their literacy and their content knowledge—even the best-intentioned teachers need to work through ways to meet these objectives that fit within their own teaching styles and the school context. The coach plays a critical role in facilitating that process. (p. 11)

Another way that literacy coaches may support content-area teachers at the middle school level is with explicit comprehension strategy instruction. Beuhl (2007) underscored the importance of embedding comprehension instruction in content-area classrooms by stating that “reading comprehension instruction needs to be explicit and contextual, that is, taught in conjunction with the learning of meaningful content” (p. 192). The majority of coaches in the present study indicated that their staff is somewhat receptive to comprehension instruction, and they also reported that teachers in their schools are very likely or somewhat likely to use a range of multiple texts in their classrooms, including fiction, nonfiction, and information from the Internet. These texts, the literacy coaches in the present study reported, are used for various purposes and in myriad ways, including for whole group instruction, small group instruction, research, and projects. These findings are similar to the ways that Robb (2002) suggested are effective ways to incorporate multiple texts at the middle school level. Many literacy coaches in the present study reported that the teachers in their schools were not tied to solely using the textbook in content-area classrooms, which previous research has found is typical in secondary classrooms (Spires & Donley, 1998). Although for those teachers who did not use multiple texts, the literacy coaches in the present study reported that for almost half, it was due to a lack of materials in classrooms other than the textbook.

The middle school literacy coaches in the current study believe that there are multiple comprehension strategies that are useful in content-area classrooms. Some of the strategies they found most useful to help students comprehend texts in content-area classrooms included synthesizing, determining important ideas and details, making connections, and making inferences. Using graphic organizers as a way of organizing one's thinking also was seen as valuable for students to use in content-area classrooms. These strategies are consistent with those supported by research and professional trade literature (e.g., Bennett, 2003; Goodman, 2000; Harvey & Goudvis, 2008; Hynd, 1999; Massey & Heafner, 2004; Quiocho, 1997; C. Smith, 2003). Massey and Heafner (2004) highlighted the importance of the following strategies when working with multiple texts in content-area classrooms: establishing purpose, making connections to background knowledge, understanding text structures, making connections across texts, asking questions, and synthesizing information. The data from the present study revealed that middle school literacy coaches also found these to be effective strategies. As an example, multiple coaches discussed modeling the use of question-answer relationships (QAR) to encourage students to ask questions before they read, while they read, and after they read by teaching them to attend to different types of questions and answers. Modeling, as previously discussed, was found to be an effective professional development strategy in Poglinco et al.'s study (2003) and can be used to show content-area teachers how to explicitly teach comprehension strategies in their classrooms.

Along with discussing specific strategies that are useful in content-area classrooms, Beuhl (2007) called for a "content literacy framework that integrates

comprehension instruction into the teaching of an academic discourse” (p. 192). The literacy coaches in the present study discussed modeling or co-teaching in classrooms, observing teachers and providing feedback, and providing teachers with opportunities to observe other teachers as ways to support teachers as they infuse literacy strategies into their content-area instruction. These are consistent with other findings about effective professional development practices (e.g., Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Teachers need to be supported in their practices as they engage in new learning and employ new teaching techniques. Literacy coaches are in a position to provide this type of support for risk-taking and innovation. Putnam & Borko (2000) argued that “for teachers to be successful in constructing new roles they need opportunities to participate in a professional community that discusses new teacher materials and strategies and that supports the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice” (p. 8).

In the report, *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) called for middle school educators to ensure that adolescents receive the comprehension support that they need to be successful readers:

Educators must thus figure out how to ensure that every student gets beyond the basic literacy skills of the early elementary grades, to the more challenging and more rewarding literacy of the middle and secondary school years. Inevitably, this will require, for many of those students, teaching them new literacy skills: how to read purposefully, select materials that are of interest, learn from those materials,

figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, integrate new information with information previously known, resolve conflicting content in different texts, differentiate fact from opinion, and recognize the perspective of the writer—in short, they must be taught how to comprehend. (p. 1)

Literacy coaches may work with content-area teachers to help these teachers support students' comprehension of multiple texts, thereby giving students the tools they need to read, comprehend, and apply new learning in content-area classrooms.

Alvermann (2002) underscored the importance of helping students comprehend complex texts by stating, "Simply put, basic level literacy is insufficient in today's world where both reading and writing tasks required of adolescents are continuing to increase in complexity and difficulty" (¶ 3).

An additional way that coaches in the present study discussed working with content-area teachers was by helping teachers select appropriate materials for inquiry stations, comprehension stations, or classroom libraries. The primary goal of this materials selection was to provide students with a range of text levels so they were better able to access content in different subject areas (Kettel & Douglas, 2003; Robb, 2002). For example, Pam discussed using interest and attitude surveys to gain information about students to help a classroom teacher select books for her classroom library. She also discussed administering various literacy assessments and using this information to guide instruction and provide information about students' reading levels. Using assessment data to drive instructional choices was consistent with the findings of Poglinco et al.'s study (2003) of literacy coaches. Working with teachers to select and use materials also is

consistent with literature on middle school literacy coaching (e.g., Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

Book studies are a professional development avenue used by middle school literacy coaches to work with all teachers, including content-area teachers. Neufeld and Roper (2003), Walpole and McKenna (2004), and others support the idea of literacy coaches facilitating faculty study groups. The book studies mentioned by participants in this present study focused on various topics applicable to teachers of all content areas. Some of books selected by the literacy coaches in this study included those that dealt with incorporating reading comprehension strategy instruction into content-area classrooms, e.g., *Strategies That Work* by Harvey and Goudvis (2008); reading and writing across the curriculum, e.g., *I Can Read It, but I Don't Get It* by Tovani and Keene (2000) and *Knowing How: Researching and Writing Nonfiction, 3-8* by McMackin and Siegel (2002); and incorporating nonfiction in content-area classrooms, e.g., *Nonfiction Matters* by Harvey (1998). As discussed by Nicole in the present study, literacy coaches can use school or district data and the interests of staff members to select appropriate and meaningful books for faculty book studies.

Along with providing job-embedded staff development through modeling, co-teaching, providing teaching suggestions and feedback, and offering book studies, the middle school literacy coaches in the present study also discussed providing staff development workshops on a regular basis. Some coaches provide workshops on a weekly basis, others quarterly, and still others offer workshops during the summer or interim session breaks. For example, Julie shared the idea of using information from a

needs assessment of all teachers across disciplines to identify the topics for summer workshops. The coaches in the present study also discussed developing curriculum with content-area teachers. For example, Pam collaborates on a curriculum design committee with all content-area teachers, while Julie has focused this year primarily on working with social studies teachers for curriculum development because of the needs of her teachers and new standards that these teachers are mandated to teach. Staff development workshops and curriculum development as forms of professional development also have been found in other studies of literacy coaching at the elementary level as well as at the middle school and high school levels (e.g., R. M. Bean et al., 2002; Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Darwin, 2002; A. T. Smith, 2006).

Working with content-area teachers can be overwhelming and/or daunting for some middle school literacy coaches. Yet, literacy coaches need not be experts in all content areas (IRA, 2006). However, they need to have a keen understanding of how they can help teachers support students' comprehension of multiple texts, including textbooks and other texts that teachers may include in their instruction. According to IRA (2006),

At the middle and high schools levels, in order to make informed recommendations, literacy coaches also must have sufficient knowledge of the specific content area in which they are assisting teachers. Although the standards include content-specific concepts in the four core areas, the expectation is not for literacy coaches to hold a degree in the content area or otherwise be an expert. They do, however, need to be adept enough to be able to assist with the literacy aspects of a lesson they are coaching. (p. 7)

Pam shared how she is collaborating with a math coach to bring in literacy aspects to mathematics classrooms to help support student learning. This is consistent with the view of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) as stated in the *Standards for Middle School and High School Literacy Coaches*:

Many mathematical textbooks are marked by particular characteristics such as a density of concepts that require slower reading than narrative texts, concepts that build from chapter to chapter, common words that have different meanings in mathematics, and equations and symbols that communicate certain meanings. Visual literacy abilities also are essential. Key mathematical information is represented in a variety of forms. Diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs can serve as vehicles for presenting key mathematical concepts with the accompanying text acting as an explanation. Supports for students and their teachers are vital here, such as that provided by literacy coaches. (IRA, 2006, p. 23)

Collaboration with content-area teachers, such as that discussed by Pam, not only benefits content-area teachers, but also can help coaches feel more competent in their roles as they help teachers infuse literacy skills and strategies into content instruction in meaningful and purposeful ways. Collaboration also can play a key role in helping literacy coaches build the capacity of teachers within their schools (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003). Sturtevant (2003) summed up the power of collaboration in literacy coaching by stating, "Overall, the literacy coaching role is highly collaborative. Successful coaches are viewed by teachers as advisor/mentors who understand their

goals, frustrations, and visions, and who facilitate their ability to help students achieve at high levels” (p. 2).

Prerequisites. The *Reading Today* article *Coaches, Controversy, and Consensus* (IRA, 2004) explored what individuals must bring to their roles as literacy coaches. The article quoted Sturtevant as stating that:

...effective coaches must be expert, knowledgeable teachers with a strong and current knowledge base about literacy theory and practice. They should have broad teaching experience, preferably at the grade level they will be coaching. They must also be accessible and effective at working collaboratively with teachers. Coaches must know how to teach adults as well as children—two different skills sets—and they must be effective team teachers as well. They also need to work with administrators. (IRA, 2004, From Real to Ideal section, ¶ 2)

Coaches need to have a considerable amount of knowledge and expertise to be effective, particularly at the middle school level where coaches have to be able to work with a wide range of subject areas and teachers with varying degrees of knowledge about literacy practices (IRA, 2006). Anders (2002) reported that this need for preparation of literacy coaches also was historically true as well when reading professionals worked in secondary schools in the 1960s and 1970s.

The vast majority of literacy coaches in the present study had middle school teaching experience prior to coaching, while 14% of the participants had never taught middle school before coaching at this level. As Julie and Nicole both discussed in their interviews in the present study, middle school is unique and has its own unique set of

challenges. The context within which coaches work can certainly influence what roles and responsibilities they take on as well as how well they are able to accomplish the goals they, and others, set out for the position. For example, some middle schools may embrace the cross-curricular teaming structure and have teams or “houses” in which the same students are seen by all or most of the teachers. These teams may have common planning periods to discuss curriculum and students. Some middle schools may act more like miniature high schools, while others thrive on interdisciplinary learning and integration. Some middle schools may utilize textbooks as the core materials for students in science, social studies, math, and English classrooms. Still others may use multiple texts, including a combination of electronic and print sources. Some middle schools may have gang or drug problems. Others may not. Context matters when it comes to middle school (Horn, 2006). Biancarosa and Snow (2004) also underscored the importance of recognizing that there are inherent differences in working at the middle school level versus the elementary level:

Ensuring adequate ongoing literacy development for all students in the middle and high school years is a more challenging task than ensuring excellent reading education in the primary grades, for two reasons: first, secondary school literacy skills are more complex, more embedded in subject matters, and more multiply determined; second, adolescents are not as universally motivated to read better or as interested in school-based reading as kindergartners. (p. 1)

Like A. T. Smith (2006), this study found that context matters when it comes to what coaches do, with whom they work, and how they support teachers and students in their middle schools.

In their diary study of literacy coaches, R. M. Bean et al. (2007) found that the coaches they interviewed had varying views of their roles and responsibilities. Some viewed their role as “experts”, while others saw their role as being more of an “extra hand” in the classroom. The researchers found that the contexts within which the Reading First coaches in their study worked impacted the coaches’ roles and responsibilities. This present study, like the findings from A. T. Smith (2006), Darwin (2002), and Poglinco et al. (2003) supports that this finding also holds true at the secondary level. The present study adds to this knowledge base by broadening the findings from earlier studies at the secondary level as it focuses only on middle school and includes coaches from across the continental United States.

Theme 2: Focusing on Rewards, Alleviating Complex Challenges

The rewards and challenges identified by literacy coaches in this study focused primarily on working with or making a difference with people, whether it be teachers or students. Along with seeing what drives coaches by looking at what they find rewarding about their roles and responsibilities, it also is important to focus on the challenges or perceived barriers that middle school literacy coaches face in their everyday roles. These challenges can shed light on what school districts or schools of education can do to support middle school literacy coaches in their roles.

Rewards. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the rewards identified by the literacy coaches in the present study revolved around making a positive impact on teachers and students. The coaches who work primarily with students focused on helping struggling middle school students become successful readers. Those coaches who work primarily with teachers identified supporting teachers in classrooms or seeing teachers “evolve” as professionals as being rewarding. Ironically, Nicole’s greatest challenge of “getting into classrooms” is also her greatest reward when she accomplishes it. Having rewarding experiences can help coaches deal with the frustrations and challenges that they face. The rewards in this present study are similar to those found in Sturtevant, Calo, Rutherford, and Pratt-Fartro’s (2007) study of teachers preparing to become reading specialists/literacy coaches. Sturtevant et al.’s study found that the rewards identified by current coaches or teachers preparing to be coaches revolved primarily around making an impact on teachers and/or students.

Challenges. The challenges middle school literacy coaches face are complex and directly impact coaches’ experiences and job satisfaction. It also might be argued that their challenges may actually influence their effectiveness, although more research needs to be done in this area to gauge this influence. Challenges such as getting into classrooms, dealing with resistant teachers, a lack of administrative support, and encouraging reflective practice were challenges that focused on people. There also were challenges that focused on resources, including a lack of funding, a lack of materials, and time constraints. Additionally, there were challenges in the role itself, such as feeling “like a rubber band” or feeling isolated. The challenges the literacy coaches in the present

study identified are similar to those revealed in other studies (e.g., Burkins, 2007; Darwin, 2002; Sturtevant et. al, 2007).

Challenges can influence a coach's job satisfaction and how they perceive their effectiveness. In his multiple case study of three middle school literacy coaches, A. T. A. T. Smith (2006) shared the following exchange with one of the coaches: "When asked about how she felt about her job as a coach, Diane replied, 'sometimes I feel it's the best job in the world. I really enjoy it. And then there are times I really wish I was doing something else'" (p. 62). In this present study, Nicole echoed and extended that sentiment. She said:

I don't really know if I can do this a whole lot longer. I don't know if I'm just not cut out to do it. I don't know. I don't know. It's just really challenging. I'm so happy when I'm in somebody's classroom. It's just so challenging to get there. And if I don't feel like I'm doing a good job...I'm the kind of person who has to do a really good job.

Dealing with resistant teachers in content-area classrooms can be challenging for middle school literacy coaches. In the present study, Nicole found this to be the case. This resistance is not uncommon when it comes to secondary teachers working with literacy coaches (Darwin, 2002). IRA (2006) explained a possible cause for this challenge: "Facing considerable pressure to cover content for state assessments, content area teachers also worry that teaching literacy takes essential time away from teaching their subject matter." Whatever the cause may be for the resistance, middle school coaches need to develop strategies for getting into classrooms and supporting content-

area teachers. The school administrator can be an important resource for the literacy coach as strategies are developed and implemented (Shanklin, 2007).

R. M. Bean noted that the power of coaching is helping teachers reflect on and think about their instructional choices and practices (IRA, 2004). In the present study, Julie and Kim supported this idea and were both frustrated when they discussed teachers who were unwilling to take risks or be reflective about their instructional practices.

The challenges that the coaches in this present study discussed were situated in the social and cultural contexts of their schools, districts, or communities. For Anne, the challenges facing her larger community, such as high illiteracy rates and low graduation rates, impacted the role she assumed. Her role focused on working struggling readers to provide intensive instruction and support. For Nicole, the challenges she faced with getting into classrooms were exacerbated by the lack of support provided by her school principal.

Another challenge that literacy coaches face is the challenge of different definitions—different definitions of what literacy coaches are (e.g., student-focused or teacher-focused) and different definitions of what literacy coaches at middle school are supposed to be doing (e.g., pulling groups of students or working with teachers). Even different definitions coaches use when they talk about what they do can be challenging. Take, for example, the term *push in*. Nicole and Lisa used this same term differently, depending on their primary role and responsibilities. Nicole said, “I push in for things like QAR and different strategies” while Lisa said “second period I do an intensive reading/language arts class where I push into their science, social studies, or math class.”

Nicole uses *push in* to describe getting into a classroom to model and work with a teacher, while Lisa uses this term to describe working in the regular education classroom to support the struggling readers she services. If both were asked whether they push into classrooms as coaches, both would answer yes. Yet, they are referring to two completely different coaching roles—one focused on working with students and the other providing job-embedded staff development for teachers. The lack of clarity on what is intended by terms such as *push in* may add to the overall confusion of what literacy coaches at the middle school actually do and with whom they work. Using documents such as the IRA *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006) may help to provide common language for literacy coaches as they dialogue with their stakeholders and other coaches about their roles and responsibilities.

Overcoming challenges. It is important to keep in mind that the challenges that middle school literacy coaches face may be similar in some regards to ones that elementary coaches face, but there are differences as well. As Nicole put it, “it’s just different in middle school. It just really is.” Taking into account what makes middle school different from elementary school is important in looking at how to address issues and challenges that these coaches confront. The *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (IRA, 2006) acknowledge these complexities. These standards state, “Expanding this role to the middle and high school grades adds another dimension, as secondary coaches must assume the additional responsibility of working with colleagues across content areas” (p. 5).

Having a network of coaches to talk with, to share ideas with, to brainstorm with, to problem solve with, or to simply share frustrations and get advice from is an important support system for middle school literacy coaches. Fullan (2001) and Shanklin (2007) both discuss the importance of networking and sharing knowledge with peers. Coaches like Pam, Julie, and Kim have these networks. In turn, these networks of support may provide them more tools to deal with daily challenges than those coaches who do not have support systems in place. For those districts that do not have multiple middle school literacy coaches, it would be beneficial to look for outside support for their coaches. Having a team, or network, can be a valuable asset for middle school literacy coaches to alleviate the sense of isolation that some may feel in the position, and build on the power of being connected to others undertaking the same or a similar journey.

Theme 3: The Role of the School Leader

An interesting finding from this study is the prediction of middle school literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support by their satisfaction with principal support. One may posit that the regression underscores the important role that principals play in supporting or stifling an initiative since they are the leaders responsible for creating the climate and culture of a school. Principals can help an initiative (such as literacy coaching) be successful and embraced by staff, or, through their lack of support for an initiative, they may cause it to be seen as unimportant. Principals have the positional power as the school leader to create conditions in which literacy coaches can either be successful or not. One such condition is creating opportunities for literacy coaches to conference with teachers, thereby giving coaches the opportunity to build positive,

professional relationships with teachers. This, in turn, may make teachers more apt to support the literacy coach and implement new strategies introduced by the coach. Since teacher support is at the heart of literacy coaching, knowing what may predict a coach's satisfaction with teacher support is important information for practitioners, both coaches and administrators. The finding of the importance of administrator support was revealed not only through the statistical analysis of the survey data, but also through the words of the middle school literacy coaches themselves.

Importance of administrative support. Kim discussed the power of principal support in getting teachers to come observe in her classroom and in setting up a climate where she is supported by teachers and engages them in reflection about their instructional practices. In talking about her relationship with her school principal, she said, “We have a very positive relationship. It’s really like whatever you need, you let me know what it is and what you think we need to fill it, and we’ll find it. I know that that is a unique position, and I’m extremely lucky and appreciative.” She also noted that her positive relationship with her principal helped her build positive relationships and “rapport” with teachers.

It’s important to also explore how the lack of principal support may impact a coach. Nicole shared how her principal’s lack of support has negatively impacted the support she receives from teachers. She stated, “...if there was more support from my school administrator it would be a lot easier...if that relationship was there, that working together...People would probably be more receptive and see it as being more important that I was in their rooms.”

Although many coaches are expected to observe, model, and/or co-teach, getting into classrooms clearly was an issue for some of the coaches in this present study. Nicole knew that getting into classrooms was key to her success, but lamented that “getting there is like climbing Mt. Everest.” She attributed part of her lack of success in getting into classrooms to a lack of principal support for her position. This connection underscores the important role that school administrators play in supporting literacy coaches’ daily activities as well as in building a culture and climate in which teachers feel compelled to have the literacy coach in their classrooms and feel like they can take risks by incorporating ideas shared or modeled by these coaches.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004) emphasized the impact that principals can have on school initiatives, including professional development:

The idea for comprehensive change may not begin in the principal's office, but it most assuredly can end there either through incomplete planning, failure to involve others, neglect, or failure to create conditions that allow a new order of things to emerge in the...school. Creating those conditions is often the first challenge-and sometimes it must start within the principal's own thinking and interactions with people. (p. 4)

This finding of the importance of administrator support is consistent with A. T. Smith’s (2006) findings. He found that “the principal appeared to have a great deal of power in shaping the roles the coaches assumed and the ways the coach interacted with teachers” (p. 60). R. M. Bean et al. (2007) also found that the principal played a significant role in working with the coaches in their study.

Shanklin (2007) in an article for the *Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse* highlighted the important role an administrator has in supporting a literacy coach. These supports that a principal can provide, as reported by Shanklin, also were mentioned by participants in this present study as being critical to their success as middle school literacy coaches. These supports, according to Shanklin, included the following: creating a clear and detailed job description, being committed to developing a school literacy team, providing assistance in building trust, assisting with time and project management, assisting in developing meaningful teacher professional development, providing access to resources, providing professional development for the coach, and providing feedback. All of these supports, Shanklin argued, are essential for a literacy coach's success.

Implications for Schools of Education and Professional Development Organizations

The results of this study have implications for schools of education and professional development organizations. The implications include leadership training for middle school literacy coaches and training in the fundamentals of coaching.

According to Shaw, Smith, Chesler, and Romeo (2005), IRA's *Standards for Reading Professionals* (2003) "require that graduate candidates preparing to be reading specialists must actually demonstrate their ability to assist and support classroom teachers and paraprofessionals through preprofessional experiences in literacy coaching" (§ 2). Institutions that have sought IRA recognition for implementing these standards "are beginning to make the paradigm shift to coaching, but there is still the need to fully integrate this new role into graduate programs" (§ 6). More needs to be done to ensure that teachers receive adequate training in content, pedagogy, adult learning theories, and

leadership prior to entering the role of literacy coach at the middle school level. This supplemental professional learning is vital to middle school literacy coaches as these coaches deal with content knowledge issues, more complex texts, content specialists who may or may not be open to infusing literacy skills and strategies into their content-area classrooms, and the complexities of working with adolescent learners.

Leadership training. One type of professional learning that would be beneficial to literacy coaches is leadership training. A number of middle school literacy coaches are considered instructional leaders. They need basic leadership training in building relationships, working with stakeholder groups, aligning systems and processes, and decision-making. Middle school literacy coaches need to know how to build relationships with stakeholders and need to understand why relationship-building is essential. These coaches need to know how to help create a school-wide vision for literacy learning and spearhead it, ensuring that this vision becomes a reality (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003). Furthermore, they need to have the skills to get all stakeholders involved in the development and articulation of this vision to ensure that all vested parties have a stake in reaching vision accomplished (NCTE, 2006). In addition, they need to know how to empower teachers to build capacity amongst staff, both teachers and paraprofessionals. They also need to know how to align systems and processes such as assessment systems to get the right information into the right hands so that teachers can make the right decisions for students or processes such as teachers observing teachers to build unity and a sense of striving for the common good. Moreover, middle school literacy coaches need to know how to make effective decisions, how to prioritize amongst sometimes competing needs,

and how to be change agents within their schools and districts. All of these skills are ones that should be explicitly addressed in a leadership component of literacy coaching training.

Not only do literacy coaches need leadership training, but school administrators also need training on how to best work with literacy coaches (Shanklin, 2007). Those administrators who have a middle school literacy coach on-site have a tremendous asset to assist with job-embedded staff development. But, these coaches need explicit support. It would serve the administrator, the coach, and the staff well if the administrator knew how to most effectively support these individuals so that the needs of the school are best being met and to ensure that the literacy coach is successful in his or her position.

Middle school literacy coaches face enormous and sometimes overwhelming challenges every day. Time, money, resources, resistant teachers, content knowledge issues, and getting into classrooms are challenges that coaches in the present study faced. Like Nicole said, getting into classrooms can be like “climbing Mt. Everest.” Middle school literacy coaches must have, as Julie said, “tenacity” and willpower to keep moving forward to build on what Pam called the “coalitions of the willing” to strive to “do what’s best for students and teachers.” As Junko Tabei said in 1975 after becoming first woman to climb Everest, “Technique and ability alone do not get you to the top; it is the willpower that is the most important. This willpower you cannot buy with money or be given by others...it rises from your heart.”

Schools of education and professional development organizations can help give middle school literacy coaches the leadership tools they need to successfully work with

teachers and encourage them to draw on their passion and strength to make an impact. Business leadership development organizations (e.g., Covey, 1999) have determined that effective leadership is about competence and character—who leaders are and what they know and do. Competence for literacy coaches comes not only in the form of knowing literacy strategies and staying abreast of current literacy research, but it is also about knowing how to be an effective literacy leader and knowing how to work with content-area teachers.

Training in coaching fundamentals. Helping coaches work effectively with teachers in different content areas to incorporate comprehension strategy instruction or vocabulary instruction benefits teachers as well as students. Also, working with coaches on how, as well as why it is important, to model, co-teach, observe, and provide feedback would help coaches develop their own skills and competencies as job-embedded staff developers.

Literacy coaches also can learn different strategies for helping teachers be reflective about their own instructional choices and practices. Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1998) is one model used by coaches and others in leadership roles. Cognitive Coaching “is a simple model for conversations about planning, reflecting, or problem solving. At deeper levels it serves as the nucleus for professional communities that honor autonomy, encourage interdependence, and produce high achievement” (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 5). Whatever model literacy coaches are trained in, encouraging teachers to be reflective is an important responsibility that coaches must support. Beuhl (2007) stated, “it is imperative when literacy coaches and professional development

specialists work with middle and high school teachers to include metacognitive debriefing sessions that model dialogue about an instructional practice and how the activity scaffolded comprehension” (p. 209). As coaches encourage other teachers to take on reflective practices, they need to model this as well in their own learning and professional growth. Schools of education and professional development organizations can train coaches in models such as Cognitive Coaching or other models to help these individuals learn how to get teachers to be reflective practitioners and learn how to be reflective practitioners themselves.

Implications for Schools and Districts

The results from the present study have implications for both schools and school districts. The following section provides information about what schools and districts can do to best use literacy coaches and support them in their roles.

Leadership development. Leadership is one of the core skills that is essential for coaches to know how to do well and is also an area that few middle school teachers receive training in either before they enter the classroom or before deciding to become a literacy coach. Literacy coaches are often considered instructional leaders at their school sites. Their professional development is critical to ensuring that they make effective decisions, build positive relationships, and help support the change process in schools. Covey (2001) stated that you don’t develop leaders in a workshop, it happens in the real work. He emphasized that in a workshop, you develop thinking models. Literacy coaches need thinking models and strategies that they can take back to their schools to help others execute best practices in literacy, regardless of content area. The business world has spent

billions of dollars looking at leadership and what works (Covey, 1999; 2001). The education community can benefit from drawing on the strengths of leadership models and apply what works to school contexts (Fullan, 2001).

Covey's *4 Roles of Leadership* (1999) can be applied to literacy coaches and their work to impact the literacy learning of students and teachers within middle schools. This leadership model draws on the following roles: Pathfinding, Aligning, Empowering, and Modeling. Pathfinding focuses on identifying stakeholder needs, creating a compelling vision, and developing a strategy to achieve this vision. Literacy coaches can benefit from identifying who the stakeholders are in their school community (NCTE, 2006). Key stakeholders may include teachers, students, administrators, themselves, parents, and even area businesses. Once stakeholders have been identified, coaches need to know how to draw stakeholders into the process of identifying a school-wide vision for literacy learning—what the process looks like and how it can be managed with the combined leadership of the administrator and the literacy coach. After collaboratively developing the vision, middle school literacy coaches would benefit from identifying their specific role in supporting or spearheading the implementation of the school literacy plan and developing a clear strategy, in collaboration with the school principal and other school leaders, for achieving this literacy plan. In their study of reform coaches in the San Francisco area, Coggins, Stoddard, and Cutler (2003) found that “coaches can serve as a bridge between a vision of improvement and its enactment, through day-to-day support for teachers and others in leadership roles” (p. 37).

Another important leadership role in the Covey leadership model (1999) is Aligning. This role focuses on the different parts of the system and how these parts work together to achieve the vision and strategy. Covey explained that aligning is about understanding the whole and aligning the parts. Literacy coaches can benefit from taking the time to understand the different parts of their school and district. Coaches in this study discussed different components of the overall system, but lacked a clear way to talk about how they all fit together. Coaches also would benefit from understanding the unique factors within their school, such as how different teams function and the informal and formal assessments given and used by teachers. With support from the administrator, the coach can take this information, synthesize it, and figure out ways to ensure that teachers have the information they need to make decisions about materials, resources, curriculum, and instruction. Aligning also can be beneficial for middle school literacy coaches as they learn to be effective decision makers as well. Pam called it feeling “like a rubber band”—being pulled in multiple directions. With sometimes competing roles and responsibilities and myriad teacher and student needs, coaches can use these leadership skills to ensure that the choices that they are making in terms of their use of time and energy are the right ones at the right time depending on the individuals involved and the situations they face. Coaches also can be sure to align processes that will help them be more successful such as arranging for weekly meetings with a school administrator or using memos or email to communicate ideas to a large group quickly and efficiently.

Another role in the *4 Roles of Leadership* (Covey, 1999) is Empowering. Empowering focuses on cultivating environments that draw on the talents and energy of

the individuals within the organization. In this case, the context would be a school setting. Studies also have shown that literacy coaches build capacity of teachers (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Coaches can benefit from learning how to build capacity within their schools beginning with what Pam calls “a coalition of the willing.” They also can benefit from learning about ways that empowerment can be positive as well as negative, so as to avoid common pitfalls that sometimes come with misuse or misunderstanding of empowerment. Fullan’s (2001) concepts of knowledge sharing and knowledge building also underscore the power of developing relationships and building capacity in schools as teachers work together to share their ideas and expertise with one another, in turn, creating a culture that thrives on professional growth.

Modeling, which is at the core of the four roles (Covey, 1999) is about building trust—the center of ensuring that a literacy coach is successful. Learning how to model, not in the traditional sense of classroom modeling, but rather in terms of how a coach talks with teachers, interacts with teachers, and ‘walks the talk’ can all play into helping teachers see the coach as not only a person of character, but also one of competence. Fullan (2001) further brought to light the importance of having what he called “moral purpose” which, in the case of literacy coaches, could include helping teachers be the best teachers they can be and positively impacting the lives of children.

The Covey leadership model (Covey, 1999) is about getting results as is the Fullan model (Fullan, 2001). Coaching is an expensive prospect. Schools and districts are investing in an individual, thereby paying salary and benefits to someone they cannot

guarantee will stay in that role for any length of time. The more that middle school literacy coaches can develop their leadership skills, perhaps the more likely they will be to have successful experiences and, in turn, the more likely they may be to stay in their positions.

Using the continuum. Schools can use a continuum such as the one presented in Figure 2 to dialogue with key stakeholders about the desired roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach. The power of using a continuum comes not with simply placing a coach along the continuum, but rather with the ensuing conversation about stakeholder needs and desired outcomes. A question schools can begin with may be, will the literacy coach focus solely on working with students? Schools who answer yes to this question may choose to have their coaches perform more of a reading specialist role and focus primarily on working with students who are struggling with literacy and not have these individuals take on a leadership role with regard to teachers' literacy professional development. For schools who answer no to this question about working solely with students, they need to determine who the coach will work with and to what degree. Will the literacy coach work with students while also supporting teachers with suggestions or materials? Will the literacy coach work solely with English/language arts teachers in a coaching capacity? Will the literacy coach work with all content-area teachers? If the team answers yes to the latter question, then the school is moving farther to the right on the continuum. The school team then may want to decide whether or not they want the coach to take a leadership role in creating a vision for literacy learning within the school community; whether or not they want the coach involved in curriculum development, and

if so, to what degree; whether or not they want the coach involved in designing and spearheading a school-wide literacy plan; and what specific job-embedded staff development they want to take place.

The literacy team also can use the continuum to discuss the school and community contexts that will influence what the coach does and with whom. The coach, as a key stakeholder, also can share his or her experiences and background to add to the conversation about the roles and responsibilities that he or she will assume. Again, the power comes from the act of dialoguing about what the school wants for its students and teachers and what literacy learning and literacy professional development will look like at the school with the support of a literacy coach.

Working with data. Schools and districts can use literacy coaches to not only gather assessment data, but more importantly to help teachers learn how to use this data to truly guide their instruction (e.g., Poglinco et al., 2003). All of the coaches in the interviews used data, but only some actually worked with teachers in looking at the data and seeing how it could impact the choices that they make for students in their classrooms. As an example, Pam worked with teachers to analyze interest and attitude surveys to decide what books to include in classroom libraries. She also helped teachers look at assessment data to determine what level texts to put children into for guided reading groups. Shanklin (2007) also emphasized the importance of literacy coaches working with teachers on data analysis.

Utilizing technology. Literacy coaches can be leaders in utilizing technology for literacy learning. In the present study, Julie, Pam, and Nicole all saw the power in using

technology to help students learn and increase their levels of engagement. Nicole also has realized that technology may be a way to get in the door with teachers who may be hesitant to have a literacy coach in their classrooms. Providing literacy coaches with ways to incorporate technology into content-area classrooms and help students comprehend electronic texts would be beneficial (Kamil, 2003) and help prepare students for 21st century life and work outside of school.

Creating support systems for middle school literacy coaches. Whether or not a district has literacy coaches at multiple middle school sites, districts need to identify ways that they can support the coaches that they do have. Monthly meetings focusing on aspects of the literacy coaches' roles and responsibilities tied with literacy coach professional development has been successful for coaches in this study including Kim, Julie, and Pam. When coaches are left on their own with no support system, their frustrations may build as they may not have anyone with whom to collaborate, vent or share ideas. If, like Julie, there are not other middle school literacy coaches in the district, districts can put other supports into place like working with neighboring districts or having coaches attend conferences such as the annual meeting of the International Reading Association where attention to literacy coaching at the middle school level is growing. These support systems may serve to not only increase middle school literacy coaches' job satisfaction, but they also help to develop literacy coaches' competence as literacy professionals. Another option for a district is to have the middle school literacy coach meet regularly with a district literacy contact and also schedule regular meetings with the school administrator to help build and develop that relationship. In some cases

the district administrator may need to initially facilitate the relationship between the coach and the principal.

Having a clear vision of where the literacy coach's role is headed. Having a clear vision of where on the continuum the literacy coach currently lands, and where the school would like it to move, can help ensure that the literacy coach and the school community know what the coach's primary roles and responsibilities are and build support for the position. These roles should be clearly defined for the coach, and the coach should be able to bring to the table ideas as well based on his or her experiences and competencies. Conducting an annual needs assessment of the teachers within the school where the coach works also can provide valuable information as to how the coach's role can be enhanced to meet the evolving needs of the school and teachers. A fluid, flexible role influenced by the experiences and backgrounds of the coaches themselves and the needs of the school and community may help ensure that the literacy coach position best meets the needs of the stakeholders involved, including the teachers, paraprofessionals, and students.

Implications for Future Research

There are several areas of research that would be beneficial to the literacy field to delve more deeply into middle school literacy coaching. Following are suggestions for four avenues of future research.

First, research is needed to find out about the preparation that teachers have before they take on literacy coaching positions, particularly at the middle school level. In their study of Reading First coaches, R. M. Bean et al. (2007) found that there was little literacy coaching preparation prior to coaches assuming their roles. This also was the case

with Darwin's (2002) study of high school reading specialists. Interestingly, Anders (2002) found that this, too, was historically the case back in the 1960s and 1970s with high school reading professionals who received little additional preparation before assuming their roles as secondary reading professionals. Anders found that "preparation for secondary reading was sparse, even among those who had secondary teaching experience" (p. 85). The present study illustrates that this lack of preparation also holds true for some teachers who take on middle school literacy coaching positions. All of the coaches in the interviews in the current study left the classroom and stepped into coaching roles with little additional preparation on how to be an effective literacy coach at the middle school level. Survey research using a large sample size could provide information about the explicit preparation that teachers receive in literacy practices, working with content-area teachers, coaching techniques, or leadership prior to taking on literacy coaching positions. This data could be used to inform literacy coach preparation programs or staff development offerings for literacy coaches. This line of research also could explore whether or not literacy coaches who receive explicit preparation in the areas of leadership and coaching are more effective or better received by their peers than coaches who do not receive explicit preparation in these areas.

Second, while this present study shared information about how coaches may work with content-area teachers, more needs to be known about how coaches can effectively work with teachers across each academic domain, as depicted in the *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (IRA, 2006). An in-depth multiple case study of literacy coaches using observations and artifacts could provide substantive information

about how coaches specifically work with teachers of different content areas including science teachers, social studies teachers, English teachers, math teachers, and others.

Furthermore, interviews and survey questionnaires of the literacy coaches themselves as well as the content-area teachers they work with and their school principals would provide information from different stakeholders' perspectives. This collective information could provide interesting and valuable insights into how different stakeholders perceive the coach's role and responsibilities and help identify specific stakeholder needs to determine how the needs of science, math, and other content-area teachers are alike and different.

Third, research is needed to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teachers and students. It is important to find out whether or not literacy coaching has a positive impact on student achievement at the middle school level. Studies such as those by Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) and Swartz (2005) can be extended to the middle school level to determine the relationship between literacy coaching and student achievement. Longitudinal studies would be particularly important for this line of research to see the impact that coaching has over time as coaches work with content-area teachers.

In addition, research needs to be conducted to determine if literacy coaching at this level actually changes teachers' instructional practices. Interviews or surveys of content-area teachers would provide additional information about how and why teachers change or do not change their instructional practices, as well as what role the literacy coach has in facilitating such changes. If such studies find that teachers do not change their instructional practices as a result of working with a literacy coach, this line of

research could help identify potential barriers. This research also could explore whether variables such as a literacy coach's certification or education, years in coaching or education, specific preparation, previous teaching experiences, or other variables, impact teacher practices or student achievement. Mixed-methods studies using explanatory, convergent, or exploratory designs could be used to accomplish these goals.

A final suggested avenue for future research is to explore the role of the school administrator with regard to literacy coaching. Research is needed to find out ways in which middle school principals work with literacy coaches and classroom teachers to either support the coach or impede the coach's effectiveness. More also needs to be known about how and why the support from principals influences literacy coaches' satisfaction with teacher support. This information would be beneficial to schools of education as they prepare administrators in educational leadership programs.

Limitations

It is important to note that the Market Data Retrieval list select of "Reading/Literacy Coach" only covers those educators using that job title. There may be personnel who work in similar capacities but who do not use this title. Additionally, the response rate of 40.8% could be a limiting factor in generalizing the findings from this study to other middle school literacy coaches who did not participate in this study. Also only seven literacy coaches were interviewed in this study. Their stories may or may not be representative of other middle school literacy coaches' experiences. A limitation of survey research such as this is that questions on the survey are left to the interpretation of each individual completing the survey. Furthermore, while the two variables (principal

support and conferencing) made a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of satisfaction with teacher support, the multiple regression analysis used in the present study did not explain why this is the case.

Final Thoughts

Middle school is a pivotal time in the lives of adolescents. Literacy coaching at the middle school level can be a powerful tool for professional development that has been implemented in part as a response to the crisis in adolescent literacy. Literacy coaching is a significant investment on the part of the district, school, and teachers involved in the coaching process. As Michael Kamil (2003) stated, the time to make the investment in our children is now:

In today's knowledge-based society, our students need to be expert readers, writers, and thinkers to compete and succeed in the global economy. Furthermore, our high fourth-grade and low eleventh-grade international rankings for reading achievement show that an investment in the education of fourth- through twelfth-grade students is not just important—it is a national imperative. (p. 30)

Middle school literacy coaches have the opportunity to make a tremendous impact on the lives of adolescents and teachers. The present study provides a look at middle school literacy coaching across the continental United States and helps provide a glimpse into what literacy coaches actually do as well as how they perform their jobs. In conjunction with other studies on middle school literacy coaching (e.g., IRA, 2005; Poglinco et al., 2003; A. T. Smith, 2006) we are beginning to see the power of coaching at this level. More needs to be done to find out what impact these middle school literacy coaches are

having on teachers' professional development as well as their impact on student achievement. The more information that researchers can provide about middle school literacy coaching in districts throughout the country, the more likely it may be for schools and districts to make the investment in and commitment to literacy coaching at the middle school level.

APPENDIX A: LITERACY COACHING SURVEY

1. With what grade(s) do you currently work? *Please circle one number for each.*

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Fairly Regularly</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>
Grade 5.....	1	2	3	4
Grade 6.....	1	2	3	4
Grade 7.....	1	2	3	4
Grade 8.....	1	2	3	4
Other(s): <i>please list</i> _____	1	2	3	4

2. How many years have you been an educator?

0-5 years.....	1
6-10 years.....	2
10-20 years.....	3
More than 20 years.....	4

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

This is my first year as a coach.....	1
1-5 years.....	2
6-10 years.....	3
More than 10 years.....	4

4. What subjects have you taught in the past? *Please circle all that apply.*

Reading/Language Arts.....	1
Math.....	2
Science.....	3
Social Studies.....	4

5. What grades have you taught in the past? *Please circle all that apply.*

K-3.....	1
4-5.....	2
6-8.....	3
9-12.....	4

6. At how many schools do you work as a reading/literacy coach?

1 school.....	1
2 schools.....	2
3 schools.....	3
4+ schools.....	4

7. Approximately how many students are in the school **where you spend the majority of your time?**

1-300.....	1
301-600.....	2
601-900.....	3
More than 900.....	4

8. Approximately how many teachers do you work with in the school **where you spend the majority of your time?**
- | | |
|---|---|
| All..... | 1 |
| <u>More</u> than half of the staff..... | 2 |
| <u>Less</u> than half of the staff..... | 3 |
| None..... | 4 |
9. Highest degree earned:
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Bachelor's..... | 1 |
| Master's..... | 2 |
| Educational specialist..... | 3 |
| Doctorate..... | 4 |
10. Who is mainly responsible for defining your roles and responsibilities?
- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Me..... | 1 |
| My school administrator..... | 2 |
| The district..... | 3 |
| Other: <i>please list</i> _____ | 4 |
11. List two or three supports that you have as a coach in your school and/or district.
- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
12. List two or three of the greatest challenges/obstacles you face as a coach.
- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
13. With which content areas do you work? *Please circle all that apply.*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| All..... | 1 |
| Science..... | 2 |
| Social Studies..... | 3 |
| Reading/Language Arts..... | 4 |
| Math..... | 5 |
| Other(s): <i>Please list</i> _____ | 6 |
14. When you work with content area teachers, what specifically do you do? *Please circle all that apply.*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Model..... | 1 |
| Co-plan..... | 2 |
| Co-teach..... | 3 |
| Provide materials..... | 4 |
| Provide teaching suggestions..... | 5 |
| Other(s): <i>Please list</i> _____ | 6 |

15. How receptive is your staff to comprehension instruction?
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Very receptive..... | 1 |
| Somewhat receptive..... | 2 |
| Not very receptive..... | 3 |
| Not at all receptive | 4 |
16. How likely would teachers in your school be to use supplemental texts in their classrooms?
- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Very likely..... | 1 |
| Somewhat likely..... | 2 |
| Not very likely..... | 3 |
| Not at all likely..... | 4 |
17. If teachers in your school use supplemental texts, which do they use? *Please check all that apply.*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Fiction books..... | 1 |
| Nonfiction books..... | 2 |
| Trade books..... | 3 |
| Magazines..... | 4 |
| Information from the Internet..... | 5 |
| Newspapers..... | 6 |
| Other(s): <i>please list</i> | 7 |
18. If the teachers in your school use supplemental texts, how do they choose which supplemental texts to use? *Please check all that apply.*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Match to curriculum..... | 1 |
| Availability..... | 2 |
| Range of readability levels..... | 3 |
| High interest content..... | 4 |
| Other(s): <i>please list</i> | 5 |
19. If the teachers in your school use supplemental *informational/nonfiction* texts, how do they use them? *Please check all that apply.*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Whole group instruction..... | 1 |
| Small group reading..... | 2 |
| Research..... | 3 |
| Project work..... | 4 |
| Other(s): <i>please list</i> | 5 |
20. If the teachers in your school do *not* use supplemental *informational* texts, why not?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Lack of materials..... | 1 |
| Materials are not easily available..... | 2 |
| Materials do not match curriculum..... | 3 |
| Textbook is the main source of information..... | 4 |
| Lack of perceived value..... | 5 |

21. How often do you as a literacy coach focus on the following during instruction?

	Not at all	Once a month or less	Several times/month	Several times/week	Daily
teaching content vocabulary skills/strategies.....	1	2	3	4	5
teaching comprehension.....	1	2	3	4	5
teaching strategies for reading nonfiction.....	1	2	3	4	5
reinforcing classroom instruction.....	1	2	3	4	5
guiding computer use.....	1	2	3	4	5

22. How often are you as a literacy coach involved in the following?

	Not at all	Once a month or less	Several times/month	Several times/week	Daily
instructing students.....	1	2	3	4	5
assessment/diagnosis.....	1	2	3	4	5
co-planning with teachers.....	1	2	3	4	5
modeling lessons.....	1	2	3	4	5
peer coaching.....	1	2	3	4	5
curriculum development.....	1	2	3	4	5
communicating with parents.....	1	2	3	4	5
guiding paraprofessionals.....	1	2	3	4	5
working with volunteers.....	1	2	3	4	5
non reading-related school tasks (subbing, class coverage, etc.)...1	2	3	4	5	

23. There are many ways that teachers can help students comprehend text. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all valuable” and 5 means “very valuable”, please indicate how valuable each of the following is for aiding students’ comprehension of *informational/nonfiction text*. Circle one number for each.

	Not at all valuable	Not very valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	Very valuable
Students receive explicit instruction in comprehension strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Students discuss what they read in groups.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students read texts at their readability level.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students use multiple comprehension strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Students set goals before they read.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students receive explicit vocabulary instruction.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students’ literacy engagement is promoted.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students read often and from a variety of sources.....	1	2	3	4	5
Students ask/answer questions before, during & after they read..	1	2	3	4	5
Students use graphic organizers to organize their thinking.....	1	2	3	4	5

24. Please indicate how important the following strategies are for students to use in **content area classes**. Please circle one number for each.

	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Very important
Finding Main Ideas and Important Details.....	1	2	3	4	5
Making Inferences.....	1	2	3	4	5
Visualizing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Making Connections.....	1	2	3	4	5
Asking Questions.....	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesizing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Other(s): Please list _____	1	2	3	4	5

25. How would you rate your satisfaction with each aspect of the program you provide?

	<u>Not at all</u> <u>satisfied</u>	<u>Slightly</u> <u>satisfied</u>	<u>Moderately</u> <u>satisfied</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>satisfied</u>
instructional approaches.....	1	2	3	4
availability of instructional materials.....	1	2	3	4
quality of instructional materials.....	1	2	3	4
planning opportunities with teachers.....	1	2	3	4
evidence of transfer of skills learned.....	1	2	3	4
support from central administration.....	1	2	3	4
support from principal.....	1	2	3	4
support from teachers.....	1	2	3	4
support from parents.....	1	2	3	4
staff development for literacy coaches.....	1	2	3	4
availability of professional materials.....	1	2	3	4

26. Is there anything else that you would like to share about coaching, comprehension instruction, and/or the use of supplemental informational texts? Feel free to add an additional page if you'd like.

Would you be willing to participate in an interview about literacy coaching? If so, please list your name, email, and phone number. Thank you! _____

Thank you for completing the survey. Your insights are greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX B: SURVEY PILOT FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for participating in the pilot of this survey on literacy coaching. There are two items that you are being asked to complete—a survey and this feedback form. Your feedback is greatly appreciated & will be critical in helping me refine the survey. Feel free to use the back of this form for additional writing space, if needed.

1. **Are there any questions that you feel need to be re-worded or revised?** If so, please list the question(s) and your suggestions for revision. Please also briefly explain the reason(s) why you feel the question(s) should be revised.

2. **Are there any questions that you feel need to be deleted from the survey?** If so, please list the question(s) and briefly explain the reason(s) why you feel the question(s) should be removed from the survey.

3. **Are there any questions that were not asked on the survey that you feel should be asked?** If so, please list the question(s) below and briefly explain why you feel that the question(s) should be added to the survey.

4. **If you have additional comments about the survey,** please write them on the back of this form.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant:

State:

Grades/Subjects Currently Working With:

Number of Years in Education:

Number of Years as a Literacy Coach:

Grade(s) Previously Taught:

1. Why did you decide to become a literacy coach?
2. What are your primary roles and responsibilities as a literacy coach?
3. Describe a typical day as a literacy coach.
4. How do you work with teachers in your school?
5. How do teachers in your school help students comprehend expository texts?
6. What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
7. What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
8. What advice do you have for teachers who are considering becoming literacy coaches in the future?

APPENDIX D: MULTIPLE REGRESSION SPSS OUTPUT

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.711 ^a	.505	.484	.60831

a. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction: planning opps, Satisfaction: support from admin

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.386	2	8.693	23.493	.000 ^a
	Residual	17.022	46	.370		
	Total	34.408	48			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction: planning opps, Satisfaction: support from admin

b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction: support from teachers

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.184	.406		2.919	.005
	Satisfaction: support from admin	.422	.106	.466	3.989	.000
	Satisfaction: planning opps	.254	.082	.364	3.114	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction: support from teachers

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.2816	4.5639	3.6939	.60184	49
Std. Predicted Value	-2.347	1.446	.000	1.000	49
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.091	.252	.146	.039	49
Adjusted Predicted Value	2.1624	4.5243	3.6889	.60352	49
Residual	-1.30974	1.04233	.00000	.59550	49
Std. Residual	-2.153	1.713	.000	.979	49
Stud. Residual	-2.200	1.763	.004	1.008	49
Deleted Residual	-1.36800	1.10363	.00493	.63232	49
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2.301	1.806	.001	1.025	49
Mahal. Distance	.091	7.290	1.959	1.651	49
Cook's Distance	.000	.090	.021	.023	49
Centered Leverage Value	.002	.152	.041	.034	49

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction: support from teachers

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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