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The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teacher Efficacy When Employing a Balanced Literacy Framework

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The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teacher Efficacy When Employing a Balanced
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Abstract

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The primary goal of literacy coaching is to improve student learning. Meeting this goal requires an understanding of, and attention to, research on effective district, school, and teacher practices including a guaranteed and viable curriculum and challenging goals and effective feedback (Marzano, 2003). Research has shown that the impact of literacy coaching has increased teacher efficacy in the teaching of reading.

This dissertation employed a mixed-methods study to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. The participants were Grades 3-5 English/language arts (ELA) teachers from five Title 1 elementary schools within the same school district located in the Piedmont region of South Carolina.

Quantitative data were collected using a five-point Likert scale survey distributed via Survey Monkey. The data were collected to determine the impact of literacy coaching when employing all tenets of balanced literacy instruction. The researcher designed the survey around tenets of balanced literacy instruction. The tenets included guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, independent writing, setting a clear purpose for reading, and modeling think-alouds for students. Focus-group questions were developed to verify survey data. Data analysis of focus-group responses entailed the researcher identifying themes and patterns, which further validated survey responses.

The researcher found that literacy coaching had a positive impact on most teachers when implementing a balanced approach in their ELA classrooms. Recommendations for future research included conducting a study with ELA teachers in Grades Kindergarten through 3 to further determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. Honing (1996) stated the reading program in every school should enable nearly every student to be able to read fluently and understand grade-appropriate material by the end of elementary school; yet in more and more schools, large numbers of students do not become readers early enough to develop the skills and experience to read age-appropriate materials throughout their elementary careers (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (2005) identified 67% of the nation's fourth graders as reading below proficiency. Unfortunately, many of these students will have difficulty transitioning the skills developed reading children's books into skills needed for more complex content area reading in the upper grades (Sturtevant, 2005).

Many reading initiatives and reforms have attempted to address this reading dilemma in America's schools. A current initiative that many districts and schools are embracing is literacy coaching. Literacy coaches are teachers with expertise in both literacy and content instructional practices. They collaborate with teachers by observing classroom instruction, modeling lessons, and coaching teachers on instructional practices (Symonds, 2003). L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean (2010) stated that literacy coaching provides job-embedded and ongoing professional development for teachers. This approach is rooted in cognitive coaching, peer coaching, and mentoring. Literacy coaching is described as responsive, collegial, and thought provoking (Dozier, 2008).

Within the last few years, many states and districts have developed literacy coaching within their elementary schools to support teachers in increasing student

achievement in reading. According to Sturtevant (2003), literacy coaches have the

potential to serve a critical role in literacy reform in public schools. They can increase

teacher capacity in literacy instruction. Literacy coaching also serves as a potential agent

of change which can affect instructional reform that will enable teachers to meet the

needs of struggling readers.

Problem/Theoretical Framework

> The National Council of Teachers of English (2004) stated that
>
> reading is a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic
>
> process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and
>
> written language, their knowledge of the topic and text, and their knowledge of
>
> culture to construct meaning with text. (p. 1)

Reading is vital, particularly during the primary grades (N'Namdi, 2005). When young

learners have trouble learning to read, it crushes their excitement and love for learning. It

can become embarrassing and even devastating to read slowly and laboriously in front of

peers daily. By the end of third grade, substantial decreases occur in students' self-

esteem, self-concept, and motivation if they have not been able to master reading skills

(Reid, 2004). Lesnick, George, Smithgall, and Gwynne (2010) believed that problems

begin to compound through upper elementary and middle school grades. In many cases,

struggling readers are unable to understand and learn about the wonders of science,

mathematics, history, literature, and the like because they cannot read the grade-level

textbooks. These individuals constantly display a dislike for reading, primarily because it

is such hard and difficult work (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004).

There are devastating consequences for children, families, and societies resulting

from the epidemic of reading failure or struggling readers. For many years, children have

been taught using various methods of teaching reading. Riccards, Blaunstein, and Reid (2015) stated that the reading failure in the United States has taken on epidemic proportions. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 32 million adults, or 14% of the total population in the United States, cannot read (Riccards et al., 2015). According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2000), the cost in human lives is unconscionable. Twenty-five percent of young adults lack the basic literacy skills needed in a typical job. Sixty percent of adolescents who abuse drugs also have a reading problem. Seventy-six percent of children living in poverty cannot read at a proficient reading level. More than 60% of young prisoners are functionally illiterate.

A study conducted by Green (2010) discussed several contributing factors that affect struggling readers. Subgroups, which include males, minorities, and impoverished students, represent a disproportionate percentage of those with the lowest reading achievement (American Federation of Teachers, 2007; Husain & Millimet, 2009). Neurological factors; parental expectations; early exposure to literacy experiences, reading programs, and dialect variations of the English language were also key variables conceived to explain the reading dilemma (Kamhi & Laing, 2001; Lindo, 2006; Washington & Craig, 2001).

Reading Approaches

Green (2010) further discussed the impact of various reading methodologies used with struggling readers. Federal policy requires school districts to employ scientifically based instructional approaches to teach reading that include a meaning-based approach, a skills-based approach, or a balanced approach. Riccards et al. (2015) believed that reading programs such as whole language-based instruction or basal readers have

impeded the acquisition of literacy. Many of these literacy programs have claimed that they are based on research, but they have not been put through careful studies.

Ethnicity

Gaps in literacy for ethnically diverse students emerged at a very young age (Morrison, Bachman, & Connor, 2005) and continued throughout early adolescence (McGuinness, 2005). Many minority children came to school unprepared for literacy acquisition, as they did not have the comparable advantages, exposure, and opportunities that their nonminority peers had prior to school entry: immersion in literacy, exposure to books, and rich educational experiences (Pellino, 2006). Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2006) revealed that minority children were able to read less often than their nonminority peers with 72% of Hispanic children being read to daily compared to 78% of African Americans and 92% of European Americans. Literacy acquisition during the preschool years (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) is critical to the prevention of later reading difficulties.

Many low and middle class African-American children are African American English (AAE) dialect users (Washington, 2001). "African American English is a cultural dialect that impacts correct acquisition of the English language" (Washington, 2001, p. 216). Children who speak this dialect at home often struggle with the linguistic transition from AAE to Standard American English (SAE), the language taught and used in schools (LeMoine, 2001). Children who speak AAE also write in this same vernacular, a written vernacular that is in opposition to the SAE vernacular expected in schools. Difficulty with the ability to linguistically shift (Harris, Kamhi, & Pollock, 2001) between dialects helped explain the achievement gap.

Many Hispanic children entered school with limited knowledge of the English

language, as the primary language spoken at home prior to school entry was Spanish. These students were often referred to in the school setting as English Language Learners (ELLs): students who have a limited range of speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills in English (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007). ELL students often experienced a lower level of reading achievement than their non-ELL peers and must be taught not only how to speak a new language but how to decode and comprehend it as well (Neufeld, Amendum, Fitzgerald, & Guthrie, 2006).

Other Struggling Readers

Many other children with robust oral language experience, average to above average intelligence, and frequent early interactions with literacy activities also had difficulties learning to read (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Kelly and Campbell (2006) stated that these students often struggle because they lack two critical reading skills: phonics and comprehension. They also lack the ability to quickly recognize sight words, frequently used words in the English language. The slower than normal development of sight vocabulary and words could affect reading fluency and limit reading comprehension (Kelly & Campbell 206). Other areas that limited reading comprehension for struggling readers were inability to transfer information to new settings, finding the main idea in a story, and using context clues.

Parental Involvement

High levels of parental involvement compared to future academic success (Baharudin & Luster, 1998; Darling, 2008; Jeynes, 2005). Educators and school administrators who encouraged active parental involvement in the classroom and parental support at home (Smith, 2006) increased student achievement. Parental involvement for minorities is significantly lower than for nonminority students (Desimone, 1999) and past

research (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) indicated that barriers such as childcare and transportation often prevent active parental involvement.

Visual Problems

Children who struggle with reading may be experiencing visual tracking, which is the process of measuring either the point of gaze (where one is looking) or the motion of an eye relative to the head. They can also struggle with eye teaming, a visual efficiency skill that allows both eyes to work together in a precise and coordinated way. Double vision can affect reading and the ability to communicate to teachers what they can or cannot see (Mastropieri, Butcher, & Scruggs, 1997).

Learning Disabilities

Students identified with specific learning disabilities (LDs) also often experience difficulties in reading, particularly in reading comprehension (Alves, Kennedy, Brown, & Solis, 2015). LD students who struggled with reading cannot easily access and coordinate multiple mental processes and have difficulty checking and revising their explanations for understanding texts (Swanson, 1999). Some of these students had difficulty processing and memorizing information. Mastropieri et al. (1997) stated that frequently some of these students will learn words in one context and not transfer them to the next.

Conclusion

A myriad of factors has attributed to the reading dilemma in the United States. As stated earlier, unsubstantiated teaching methods and approaches, ethnicity, dialectical differences, poverty, educator competency, and lack of parental involvement have attributed to the increase of struggling readers.

Purpose of the Study

There have always been arguments over how to best teach young children to read. During most of the 20th century, choosing the best program to implement in schools was a hot topic among administrators, teachers, and parents. Although no single instructional program approach or method has been found to be effective in teaching students to read, evidence-based best practices that promoted high rates of achievement have been documented (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). An evidence-based best practice refers to an instructional practice with a record of success that is both trustworthy and valid.

The International Reading Association (IRA, 2000), asserted that evidence-based best practice provided

- Objective data that any evaluator would similarly identify and interpret.

- Valid data that adequately represents the tasks that children need to accomplish to be successful readers.

- Reliable data that will remain essentially unchanged.

- Systematic data that were collected according to a rigorous design of either experimentation or observation.

- Referred data that have been approved for publication by a panel of independent reviewers.

Allington (2005) stated that evidence-based instruction involves teachers making decisions using their professional knowledge of pedagogical skills. For teachers to provide instruction using best practices, they needed a strong knowledge of good evidence drawn both from professional wisdom and the research.

According to Hiebert and Reutzel (2014), reading instruction and research were

shaped by political forces desiring to endorse various methodologies for reading instruction. Numerous concepts and approaches in the teaching of reading have been emphasized since the middle of the 20th century (Ediger, 1996). Some of these approaches included the basal approach; phonics camp; whole language; Reading Recovery; Reading First; balanced literacy; and currently, literacy coaching.

The basal reading approach emphasizes a strong teacher role in guiding pupils to understand and attach meaning to ongoing lessons and units of study. With basal reader use, the teacher's manual lists objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures for leveled groups of students. The typical schedule in a basal reading class begins with reading lessons selected from a published scope and sequence chart of reading skills. Each skill is explained by the teachers and followed with the completion of worksheets and workbook pages designed to reinforce the skill. The basal readers contain controlled vocabulary designed to present only a few high frequency sight words along with other words that fit a letter sequence or pattern. Teachers are also encouraged to choose from a myriad of activities to address instructional levels of students (Puorro, 1997).

Phonics is a method of teaching reading and spelling which stresses sound-symbol relationships. According to Albert (1994), this method was especially important for beginning reading instruction. Phonics helped learners match the letters of the alphabet to the already known speech sounds. The debates as to whether teachers should use phonics when teaching reading were resurrected in 1955 when Rudolf Flesch wrote *Why Johnny Can't Read* (Puorro, 1997). Flesch indicated that phonics was the only natural system of learning how to read. Students learned the reading process by memorizing letters and sounds with much ease.

Another methodology to reading instruction is the whole language approach. The whole language approach stresses students reading entire stories or books to grasp the meaning of ideas and content. Students learn to read using a philosophy of holism in reading instruction. Whole language integrates all language components into the teaching of reading (Holland & Hall, 1989). A classroom that implements whole language looks quite different from a traditional language learning environment. The whole language classroom environment views students as a community of learners with learning taking place through a diversity of social interactions, modes, times, shapes, and formats that maximize the various resources available to schools (Schwarzer, 2003). Students, as they interact with each other and the teacher, share information, ask questions, solve problems, and reflect on their understanding (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989).

Reading Recovery is an approach in reading instruction initially used in New Zealand. Reading Recovery is considered a short-term intervention for the lowest achieving children in first grade. This program also served as a safety net for students having difficulty with literacy learning. Children meet individually with a specially trained teacher during a 30-minute period daily. Instruction could occur between 12-20 weeks. Reading Recovery was also implemented in many districts and schools to reduce referrals and placements in special education. Through Reading Recovery professional development, teachers developed an understanding of literacy processes and literacy acquisition (Ediger, 1996).

The Reading First Initiative was created as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 which is funded by the United States Department of Education. Reading First's primary goal was to improve reading instruction and student performance in kindergarten

through Grade 3 (Denton, 2003). The program required participating districts to adopt instruction that included five elements of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The program had five major components which included scheduling 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction daily for all kindergarten through Grade 3 students with an additional 30 minutes for those scoring below grade level; using instructional materials that incorporated the five elements of reading instruction; participating in locally and state-sponsored professional development activities associated with Reading First; using reading coaches as part of the overall approach; and developing and implementing a well-organized reading assessment system that includes screening, diagnosis, formative, and summative assessments.

The balanced literacy approach has become a promising reading initiative to increase literacy and student achievement. Balanced literacy instruction first appeared in California in 1996. Low scores on a national reading assessment were blamed on the use of whole language. A new curriculum called balanced reading instruction was mandated. Balanced literacy begins with creating a genuine appreciation for good literature. It includes teaching phonics, grammar skills, reading and comprehension strategies, and writing forms and skills writers (Bingham & Hali-Kenyon, 2013). A balanced literacy plan is most effective when children are given direct instructional support and a variety of daily reading and writing experiences that are needed in the complex process of becoming independent readers and writers (Bingham & Hali-Kenyon, 2013).

The balanced literacy approach also promotes reading skills and literacy among school-age children based on the characteristics of reading stages: early, emergent, developing, fluent, and independent. Some of the components of a balanced literacy program are interactive read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading,

and independent writing.

Balanced literacy further emphasizes speaking, listening, presenting, writing, reading, and viewing. The organizational structure of the classroom can include a whole-group area, a small-group area, and learning centers. These learning centers can include a writing center, a cross-curricular center, computer stations, a creative arts center, and a listening station. The use of these instructional techniques and strategies is intended to allow for differentiated literacy instruction and as a way of helping children gain access to developmentally appropriate literacy knowledge skills (Frey, Lee, Steve, Tollefson, Pass, & Massengill, 2005).

Research suggested that teacher quality is the single most important predictor of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). To support the implementation of balanced literacy instruction within a school, teachers needed ongoing professional development. One approach used to provide the professional development was literacy coaching. Literacy coaching is a current reading reform which aims to assist students in acquiring the reading skills they will need to be successful in higher education and the workplace. Across the nation, thousands of schools established positions for literacy coaching for improving student achievement in reading (Calkins & Pessah, 2008). Bean and DeFord (2012) stated that because literacy coaches are becoming increasingly important in schools, there exists a new excitement about possible improvements in literacy instruction and student achievement. Toll (2005) further stated that coaching is an important method for improving literacy instruction, literacy achievement, and teacher efficacy. Showers and Joyce (1996) stated that teachers who received coaching willingly adopted new strategies and practices in their literacy instruction, which increased student achievement.

Literacy coaches serve various roles and responsibilities within the school setting.
Bean and DeFord (2012) listed some primary roles of a literacy coach. These roles
include

Work with all teachers.

- The literacy coach needs to ensure that he or she is there to assist in improving

  instruction for all students.

Work first to establish relationships.

- The literacy coach should always listen carefully and let teachers know they

  value their thoughts and opinions and they will try to understand teachers'

  questions and concerns.

Work with your administrator.

- Literacy coaches should always have a good working relationship with the

  principal. They must keep the principal informed about what is going on to

  improve literacy instruction.

Recognize and appreciate the differences in teachers and how they work.

- Literacy coaches must be flexible and adjust what they do. They must

  recognize and celebrate differences in teachers.

Recognize his/her beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning.

- The literacy coaches must be cognizant of their own beliefs and acknowledge

  that these beliefs can influence how the coach interacts with teachers who may

  have different classroom management styles or instructional approaches

Research priorities.

- Literacy coaches must determine what is more important in terms of

influencing teacher practice and student achievement. Literacy coaches must know how to spend their day.

Let the data lead.

- Literacy coaches must use data to inform their work with teachers. Assessment data can determine where teachers are experiencing problems.

Be a learner.

- Literacy coaches are on an equal plane with teachers in their buildings. Holding a collaborative stance with teachers requires that a coach be a learner. Many situations will arise in which the coach does not know exactly what to do.

Document your work.

- Literacy coaches must always keep track of what they are doing and with whom they are working. This data help when the administration may question the work or validity of literacy coaching.

According to Walpole and McKenna (2013), a literacy coach was not a principal, an assistant principal, a reading specialist, or teacher; but on a given day, he or she probably dons each of these roles, although not for long. The best reflection of a literacy coach should be one that addresses the needs of the teachers. A coach is a teacher's teacher. He or she accepts, understands, and addresses the real needs of adult learners. Although a shared focus on student achievement can provide the foundation for collaborative relationships between teachers and literacy coaches, coaches must build on that foundation by establishing trust, maintaining confidentiality, and communicating effectively with teachers. Knight (2009) indicated that coaches must establish trust by

openly respecting teachers' professional experiences. Literacy coaches could have made a difference (Walpole & McKenna, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Literacy is an essential skill for all students. Teachers must have the knowledge and skills to assist children in becoming competent readers (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Due to a significant increase of the number of literacy coaches in schools today, more research was needed to examine the effectiveness of coaches in working with teachers. This mixed-methods study increased the body of knowledge on the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in balanced literacy instruction.

Context of the Study

The researcher conducted this study using five Title 1 elementary schools in the Cypress County School District (pseudonym), which is in the piedmont region in South Carolina. Cypress County School District had a student population of approximately 5,352. Participants consisted of Grades 3-5 reading teachers in five elementary schools. Participants were administered an online survey and contributed in focus groups to determine the impact of literacy coaching on balanced literacy instruction.

To support this study, the researcher collected and analyzed 5-year historical and state comparison data from the state's English/language arts (ELA) assessment, South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS). According to this data, students in Grades 3-5 in the Cypress County School District scored below the state's average on the SCPASS ELA assessment for 5 consecutive years. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of students in Grades 3-5 who scored met or above on the SCPASS ELA assessment.
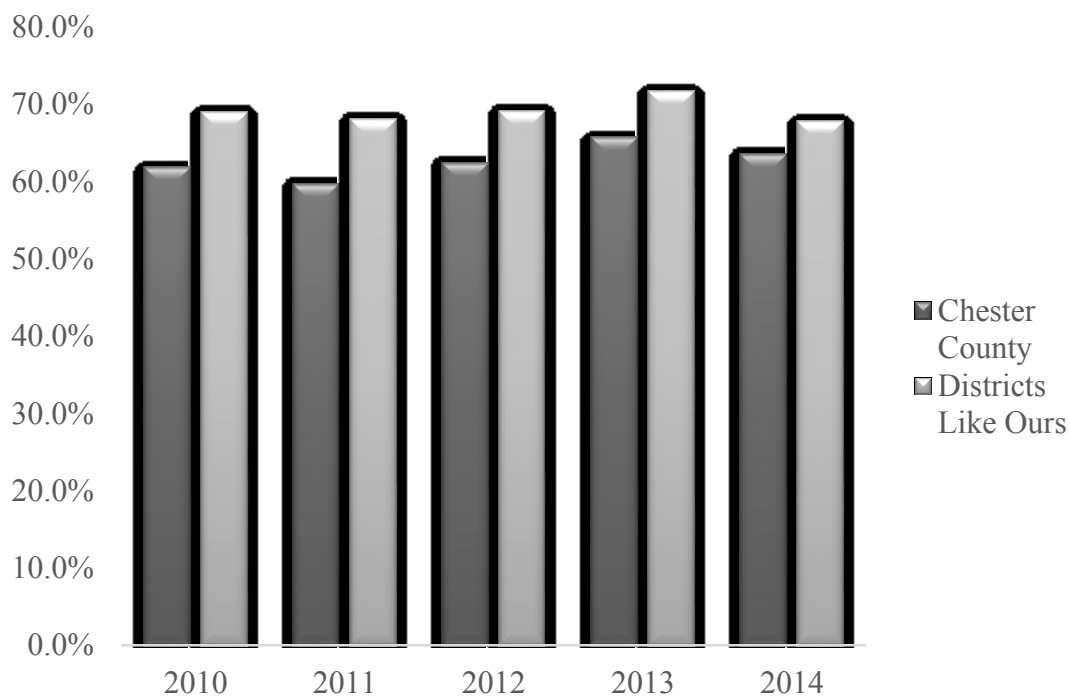
Figure 1. SCPASS ELA Percent of Students in Grades 3-5 Scoring Met and Above in the Sandlapper School District and the South Carolina: Historical and State Comparision for 2010-2014.

The researcher conducted a historical and comparative analysis of five similar districts based on the poverty index. According to these data, districts with similar poverty indices scored higher on the SCPASS ELA from 2010-2014. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of students who scored met or above according to the SCPASS ELA from 2010-2014.
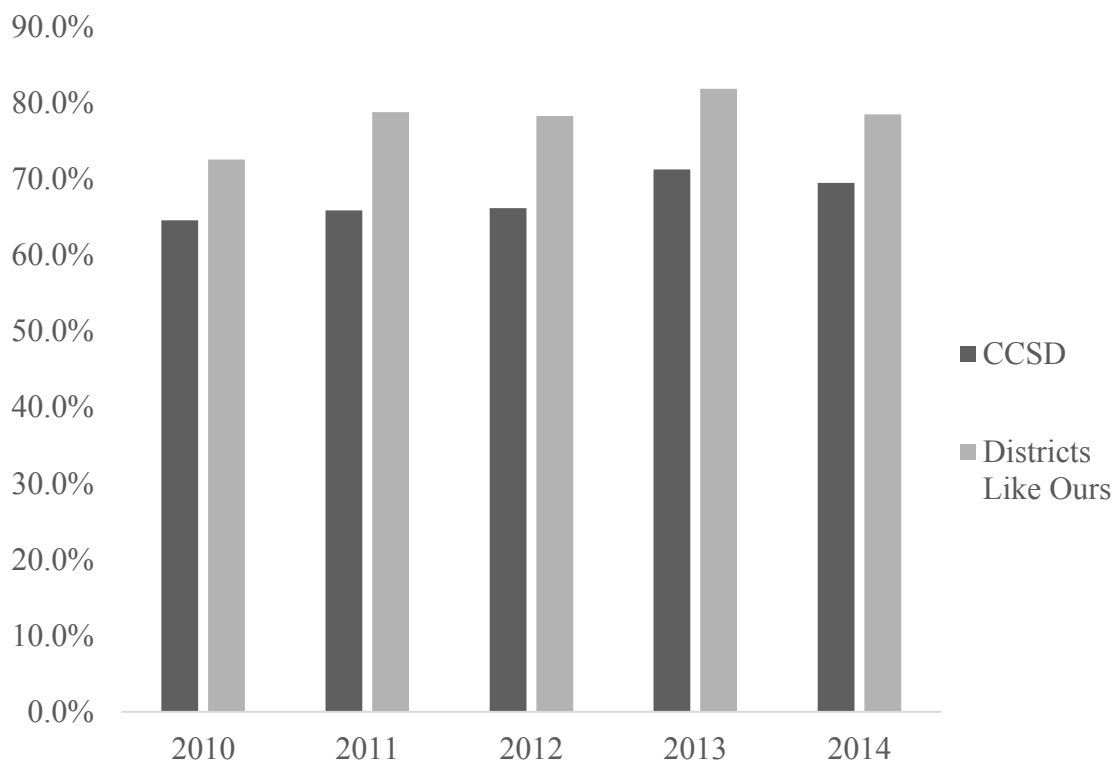
Figure 2. SCPASS ELA Percent of Students in Grades 3-5 Scoring Met and Above in the Cypress County School District: Historical Data Based on Poverty Index for 2010-2014 in Districts Like Ours.

The overall analysis of the data was important in describing the rationale of this study. Students in Grades 3-5 were continuously scoring below state average in reading. In addition, student achievement in districts with similar poverty indices continued to surpass this district. With the implementation of the literacy coaching initiative to support teachers in balanced literacy instruction, student achievement in reading would hopefully increase.

Definition of Terms

Balanced literacy. A balanced literacy approach promotes reading skills and literacy among school-age children on the characteristics of reading stages: early, emergent, developing, fluent, and independent. A balanced literacy framework entails a

whole-class approach to reading development that requires strong organizational skills to assess student needs. The approach consists of read-aloud/modeled reading, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and writing (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Guided reading. A balanced literacy component in which the teacher introduces material at students' instructional levels (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Independent reading. A balanced literacy component in which the students read independently on their independent reading level (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Interactive read-aloud. A balanced literacy component in which the teacher reads a selection to students (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Literacy. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking at a level appropriate for the society in which one lives (Froelich & Puig, 2007).

Literacy coaching. Someone who works with struggling readers to provide intensive instruction within the classroom or outside of the classroom and supports teacher learning by providing coaching and professional development to improve instructional practices (IRA, 2010).

Professional development. The systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 2002).

Reading comprehension. A student's capacity to recall previously read material measured by a formative or summative assessment (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Round-robin reading. A classroom instructional practice where children take turns reading orally.

Shared reading. A balanced literacy component in which the teacher and students read text together (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Teacher efficacy. A teacher's belief in his or her ability to have a positive effect on student learning (Ashton &Webb, 1986).

Think-aloud. A reading strategy designed to verbally express the reader's thoughts as they occur.

Title 1. The legislation that provides federal funding to improve academic achievement for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Writing. A balanced literacy component which consists of the teachers modeling a writing strategy, reinforcing writing skills, composing writing with students, and students writing independently on their independent level by a topic of their choice (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Research Question

What is the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. The review of the literature for this study was organized into the following sections: (1) roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches, (2) balanced literacy instruction, (3) interactive read-aloud, (4) guided reading, (5) independent reading, (6) shared reading, (7) writing, and (8) teacher efficacy.

Roles and Responsibilities of Literacy Coaches

Literacy coaching has recently come to the forefront of instructional reform. This form of support provided ongoing job embedded professional development for teachers (IRA, 2004; Toll, 2005). IRA (2004) recently released standards for effective literacy coaches. These standards provided the following guidelines for coaches: (a) should be an expert classroom teacher, (b) should understand reading processes and assessments, (c) should be an exemplary presenter, and (d) should possess knowledge and experience in observing and providing feedback to teachers. In addition, the most significant contribution of coaching was the individualized nature of support (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). Therefore, just as we differentiate instruction for our students, the same type of individualized instruction supported teacher learning (Fitzharris, Jones, & Crawford, 2008).

According to Shanklin (2007), literacy coaches took on the role of a collaborator, working with the classroom teachers to improve reading instructional practices. They acted as facilitators in the teaching and learning process. Rather than being an evaluator, reading coaches must be a supporter if they are to produce desirable changes in practice. To prepare for the literacy coaching role, the IRA position statement identified three

levels of coaching activities (Shaw, 2009). The first level of coaching was the least formal in which the primary goal involved providing support through activities that built a relationship between the coach and teachers. These activities involved having conversations with teachers, developing and providing resources for teachers, developing literacy curriculum, participating in various professional development, assisting with student assessment, and teaching students. Level 2 activities allowed coaches to identify coaching goals and areas of strength in instructional practices with individual teachers and grade levels. These activities consisted of co-planning lessons, analyzing student work, interpreting assessment data, or providing professional development presentations. The most formal and intense coaching activities were categorized into Level 3 which built on teacher expertise through reflective practices. These activities included in-class support (such as modeling and co-teaching), observing teacher instruction and providing feedback for teachers, and analyzing video lessons (Shaw, 2009).

According to Walpole and McKenna (2013), a literacy coach is not a principal, assistant principal, reading specialist, or teacher; however, they are assuming a range of complex tasks within schools. Further research indicated that literacy coaches have additional responsibilities (Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011). During a study conducted by Bean and Dagen (2012), two groups of literacy coaches individually listed more than 25 activities in which they frequently engaged including several that did not involve working directly with teachers. Another similar study from Deussen et al. (2007) classified the majority of the time spent as a literacy coach was on activities that were managerial or administrative tasks. If you are a successful literacy coach, a healthy portion of your time must be invested in working consistently with students in the classroom, since credibility is a key component of successful literacy

coaching (Froelich & Puig, 2007). An ideal workweek schedule for a literacy coach consisted of the following: (a) 40% working with students, (b) 20% engaging in dialogic conversations with teachers and observations, (c) 10% providing observation lessons, (d) 20% planning and preparing for professional development sessions, and (e) 10% engaging in professional book study (Froelich & Puig, 2007). This schedule served as good start for literacy coaches who are given enormous time-consuming tasks to fulfill in a school or district.

Bean and Isler (2008) suggested literacy coaches are professionals who know their content area, have classroom experience, possess interpersonal and communication skills, and know how to work effectively with adults. Furthermore, they provided ongoing support for novice and veteran teachers as this helps them increase their knowledge base about how to teach reading and about differentiating instruction within the classroom. They literacy coach worked cooperatively and collaboratively with teachers to solve problems that teachers may face. Coaches helped teachers with such goals as how to (a) meet the needs of students who cannot read the content textbook, (b) create more active engagement in the classroom, and (c) differentiate reading instruction in a specific classroom. They helped all teachers become better at their craft and to improve student learning (Frost & Bean, 2006).

Walpole and McKenna (2013) stated that literacy coaches must be viewed as a learner, teacher, researcher, curriculum expert, school-level planner, and grant writer. As a learner, literacy coaches must make a substantial and permanent commitment to their own learning. As a teacher, the literacy coach must provide sufficient support to develop the knowledge and skills of classroom teachers so they can change student achievement. Literacy coaches should serve as curriculum experts as they assist teachers to evaluate

instructional materials currently in place against research-based standards. Furthermore, literacy coaches should be viewed as researchers; they are charged with answering questions few PhD-level researchers would be able to answer readily. As a school-level planner, literacy coaches should work with teachers to implement and support site-based reformers. Lastly, literacy coaches should assume the role and responsibility as a grant writer. They should be a seeker of funding sources for curriculum materials, personnel, technology, or professional development.

L'Allier et al. (2010) believed that there are seven research-based guiding principles for literacy coaching. These principles are (1) coaching requires specialized knowledge, (2) time working with teachers is the focus of coaching, (3) collaborative relationships are essential for coaching, (4) coaching that supports student reading achievement focuses on a set of core activities, (5) coaching must be both intentional and opportunistic, (6) coaches must be literacy leaders in the school, and (7) coaching evolves over time.

According to Bean and DeFord (2012), literacy coaches are eager to acquire as much information as they can about how to perform their role effectively. Bean and DeFord suggested a few recommendations for literacy coaches:

- Work with all teachers. Literacy coaches should ensure that teachers and administrators understand that he or she is there to assist in improving instruction for all students.

- Work first to establish a relationship of trust. Literacy coaches should listen carefully, maintain confidentiality, work from the teachers' agenda, be positive, and follow through.

- Work with the administrator. Literacy coaches should maintain a good
  relationship with the principal and keep him/her abreast of instructional
  improvements.

- Recognize and appreciate differences in teachers and how they work.
  Literacy coaches should recognize and celebrate differences in teachers.

- Recognize their own beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning.
  Literacy coaches must always be cognizant of their own beliefs and
  acknowledge that these beliefs can influence their interactions with teachers.

- Establish priorities. Literacy coaches must determine and prioritize what is
  more important in terms of influencing teacher practice and student
  achievement.

- Let the data lead. Literacy coaches must use the data to lead their work with
  the teachers.

- Be a learner. Literacy coaches must recognize that they are learners like the
  teachers they serve and support.

- Document their work. Literacy coaches must keep track of what they are
  doing and with whom they are working. This helps administrators and school
  boards understand the value of coaching and its cost-effectiveness.

Furthermore, Bean and DeFord suggested that it is important for literacy coaches to avoid
the following:

- Do not evaluate teachers. Literacy coaches should not be placed in an
  evaluative role.

- Do not act as an expert. Literacy coaches must work collaboratively with

teachers.

- Do not expect immediate change. Literacy coaches must realize that change takes time, as much as 4-5 years.

- Do not be invisible. Literacy coaches should be available and visible for teachers.

- Do not avoid conflict. Literacy coaches must embrace conflict and have difficult conversations.

Today, the literacy coaches' responsibilities are as varied as the myriad teaching contexts in which they work (Tatum, 2004). Literacy coaches assumed multiple roles depending on the needs of the students and teachers; however, according to IRA (2004), the primary responsibilities of the literacy coach encompassed support for the classroom teacher, instruction within and outside the classroom, assessment of student strengths and needs, and leadership within the school. This leadership included modeling, assisting, responsibility of a literacy coach was to provide professional development for teachers on effective practices and culturally informed teaching.

Literacy Coaching and Student Achievement

Recent studies about literacy coaching led to positive findings about its effect on classroom practices and student learning (Bean, Draper, Jackson, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010). This research concluded that 19 of the 20 schools in this study had a first grade. The Terra Nova was used to determine effectiveness of literacy coaching on student achievement. The Terra Nova assessment is a series of standardized achievement tests used in the United States designed to assess kindergarten through twelfth-grade student achievement in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies,

vocabulary, spelling, and other areas. On average, 50% of these first graders ended the

2006-2007 academic year scoring on the Terra Nova reading subtest in the proficient

range, and 29.8% of the students ended the year scoring in the at-risk range. In second

grade, 67.4% of students were proficient on the Terra Nova reading subtest, and 15.1%

were at risk. In third grade, 57.5% of students ended the 2006-2007 school year scoring

proficient or advanced on the statewide accountability assessment, while 26.6% scored at

risk. The average proficiency across the three primary grades, by school, ranged from

26.3% to 82.3% with a mean of 58.3%. Average percent at risk across the three primary

grades, by school, ranged from 10.5% to 45.3% with a mean of 23.7% (Bean et al.,

2010).

To explore the relationships among the activities engaged in by literacy coaches

and the achievement outcomes for students in their schools, an additional research study

divided coaches into two groups based on the total percent of effort spent on individual

and group coaching activities. The resulting two groups were labeled more coaching

schools and less coaching schools. To determine whether schools in these two groups

began the school year with equivalent student achievement, fall scores from the Dynamic

Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) scores

which were available for first, second, and third graders in 22 schools were used as an

assessment measure. There were no significant differences between the two groups of

schools on the fall DIBELS ORF measures, indicating that students in the two groups had

relatively comparable achievement at the start of the school year; however, there were

significant differences between the two groups of schools in end-of-year achievement in

first and second grade as well as overall. Schools in which coaches spent more time

coaching had a significantly greater percent of students who were proficient on the Terra

Nova in first and second grade and a significantly smaller percent of students who were at risk in first and second grade (Bean et al., 2010).

Balanced Literacy

The term balanced literacy originated in California (Honig, 1996). As a response to low reading scores on national assessments, the state implemented a new curriculum named balanced reading instruction. It focused on presenting skills-based teaching and meaning-based teaching during separate literacy blocks. The focus of the curriculum was the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics as a foundation for comprehension as well as presenting literature-based experiences (Asselin, 1999). Au, Carroll, and Scheu (1997) stated the balanced literacy approach acknowledges the meaning-making involved in the full processes of reading and writing while recognizing the importance of the strategies and skills used by proficient readers and writers.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) stated that balanced literacy seeks to combine, or balance, skill-based and meaning-based instruction to ensure positive reading and writing results in children. The balanced literacy framework is often conceptualized based on a view of scaffolded instruction or gradual release of responsibility in reading and writing to, with, and by the students (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Fitzgerald and Cunningham (2002) stated that balanced literacy instructional practices are often enacted using specific instructional routines such as guided reading, shared reading, interactive writing, independent reading and writing, and literacy centers. The uses of these instructional techniques are intended to allow for differentiated literacy instruction and are posited as a way of helping children gain access to developmentally appropriate literacy knowledge (Frey et al., 2005).

Balanced literacy is often viewed in a comprehensive and complex way. It is a

philosophical orientation that assumes reading and writing achievement are developed through instruction and support in multiple environments using various approaches that differ by levels of teacher support and child control (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Balanced literacy programs include community, home, and library involvement as well as structured classroom plans and the use of activities such as read-alouds, guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading and writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Educational researchers in reading argued that successful balanced literacy programs must combine a balance of teacher-directed instruction (including teacher modeling of skills, strategies, and processes) and student-centered activities (Snow et al., 1998). In addition, essential components of literacy should reflect principles of effective learning and teaching. Well-implemented balanced literacy programs must include elements of community, authenticity, integration, optimism, modeling, student control, and connectedness (Frey et al., 2005). To reach that goal, researchers suggest that teachers should

- emphasize reading, writing, and literature by providing long, uninterrupted periods of successful reading every day;
- create a positive, reinforcing, cooperative environment in the classroom;
- set high but realistic expectations for all students; and
- integrate reading and writing thoroughly across the curriculum (Pressley & Allington, 1998).

A balanced literacy approach is also built on a comprehensive understanding of literacy which attends to word identification, phonics, comprehension, reading for enjoyment, and writing. All those components are necessary elements of a balanced

approach to literacy learning (Spiegel, 1998). In addition to being comprehensive, a balanced approach must be flexible to work with all children. The teachers must have the knowledge and the flexibility to recognize what the children know and need to know in teachable moments, and the teachers must have multiple strategies for those moments (Spiegel, 1998).

Assessment is integral to a framework for balanced literacy. It begins with what children know and that provides evidence for what they can do. The primary purpose of assessment is to gather data to inform instruction which is aligned with student levels of competencies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Assessment allows teachers to see the results of their instruction and to construct over time theories about student learning. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) indicated that one of the most important purposes of assessment is to help build theory, which is the foundation of instructional decisions.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) specified that the components of a balanced literacy framework were linked by oral language and by topic of focus or content. In every component of the framework, children used language to learn and teachers used language to extend children's learning. Fountas and Pinnell indicated that the content of the teaching created an overarching web of meaning that helped children connect the various reading and writing activities in a purposeful way.

The elements of a balanced literacy program are not fixed but integrated. Each element requires differing levels of support from the teacher and respects the levels of independence of the students (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The framework developed by Fountas and Pinnell (1996) was a flexible organizational tool to engage children in a variety of literacy experiences while helping teachers refine their teaching. The value of each component depended on the organization and the effectiveness of teaching within it

(Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The elements of a balanced literacy program are

- Interactive Read-Aloud: The teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small groups. A carefully selected body of children's literature is used; the collection contains a variety of genres and represents our diverse society. Favorite texts, selected for special features, are reread many times.

- Shared Reading: Using an enlarged text that all children can see, the teacher involves children in reading together following a pointer. The process includes rereading big books, poems, songs, etc.

- Guided Reading: The teacher works with a small group who has similar reading processes. The teacher selects and introduces new books and supports children reading the whole text to themselves, making teaching points during and after the reading.

- Independent Reading: Children read on their own or with partners from a wide range of materials. Some reading is from a special collection at their reading level.

- Independent Writing: Children write their own pieces, including (in addition to stories and informational pieces) retellings, labeling, lists, etc. (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

This literacy framework is a conceptual tool for planning and organizing teaching. It includes four kinds of reading and four kinds of writing connected through extensions and themes and applied through teachers' observed evidence of children's progress (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In using the framework, teachers must consider a variety of

factors:

- The strength, needs, and experiences of the students;

- The nature of materials they have and can acquire;

- The requirements of the curriculum; and

- Their own experience, background, and level of confidence (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Using the framework presented by Fountas and Pinnell (1996), teachers could scaffold students as they developed skills and practiced their application during reading and writing tasks that are appropriately challenging. The opportunity to do this provided more systematic instruction of skills during involvement with literature and writing (Pressley, 2002). When students are skilled in reading and writing and their motivation is maintained through appropriately challenging literacy experiences, they read and write more.

The principles of a balanced approach to literacy call for teachers who are knowledgeable about language acquisition, literacy processes, instructional approaches, material, metacognitive strategies, motivational techniques, curriculum design, assessment, and developmentally appropriate practices (Williams, 1999). It also requires teachers to be reflective and to use their knowledge of appropriate practice in helping all students succeed (Cheek, Lindsey, & Flippos, 1997).

Interactive Read-Alouds

Many researchers have demonstrated that read-alouds are an effective way to introduce students to the joy of reading and the art of listening while developing their vocabularies, experiential backgrounds, and concepts of print and story (Morrow, 2003).

Primary teachers have long used reading aloud as way to introduce students to the pleasures of reading and books; however, the purpose of reading aloud has expanded to include instructional purposes (Moss, 1995). Some of the information demonstrated to children during interactive read-aloud events are how stories work, the relationship between page turning and moving through a story, how one reads, how one connects and monitors reading and meaning, voice inflection and change, how language works, and what written language looks like (Harste & Burke, 1988). In addition, interactive read-alouds create a space where meaning can be constructed through dialogue and classroom interaction. Barrentine (1996), stated that interactive read-alouds is an approach to reading that provides a way to engage students as they construct meaning and explore the reading process. According to Wiseman (2011), interactive read-alouds were important learning opportunities for emergent readers because teachers and peers can actively model and scaffold comprehension strategies, engage readers, and create a community of learners.

Wiseman (2011) further believed there were essential components of an interactive read-aloud. These components included the following: (1) books are chosen by the teacher to match the students' developmental, emotional, and social levels; (2) selections are previewed and practiced by the teacher; (3) a clear purpose for the read-aloud is established; (4) teachers model fluent and oral reading when they read the text; (5) teachers use animation and expression; (6); teachers periodically and thoughtfully question the students to focus students on specifics of the text; and (7) connections are made to independent reading and writing. Data suggest that classroom teachers are skilled at presenting many of these components of interactive read-alouds but many struggled with fluent reading (Wiseman, 2011).

Interactive read-alouds also benefitted understanding informational texts (Cummins & Stallmeyer-Gerard, 2011). These benefits included boosting student comprehension, developing student familiarity with the sound of informational text which aids in independent reading and writing, and increasing student background knowledge in content areas. Sipe (2008) shared that teachers expanded these benefits by using interactive read-aloud time for observation, discussion, and instruction. According to Cummins and Stallmeyer-Gerard (2011), interactive read-alouds, using informational texts, contributed to the ability to retain facts and ideas, which is helpful when synthesizing ideas.

Many elements contribute to successful interactive readings. Dialogue during interactive reading supports students as they construct meaning based on personal experiences. These meaning-centered interactions engage students with literacy information and demonstrate strategies that they can adopt during independent reading (Barrentine, 1996). Not every read-aloud needs to be interactive, but this approach provides a way of expanding teacher techniques for engaging students with books and literacy information. In addition, interactive read-alouds are an important pedagogical tool for readers in the classroom. Not only do they provide opportunities for children to develop literacy skills, they also create a community where children can learn together (Wiseman, 2011). Peck (1989) suggested that interactive read-alouds are paramount in a child's literacy development.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is another balanced literacy approach for reading instruction. This approach was originally developed in New Zealand to involve young children in a story while attending to the print (Holdaway, 1979). One of the main purposes of and

benefits of shared reading was that children can act and be readers.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), shared reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of a big book or other enlarged text while guided and supported by a teacher or other experienced reader. Students observe an expert reading the text with fluency and expression. The text must be large enough for all the students to see clearly so they can share in the reading of the text. It is through shared reading that the reading process and reading strategies that readers use are demonstrated.

In shared reading, children participate in reading, learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning, and begin to perceive themselves as readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Some of the benefits of shared reading include the following:

- Allow students to enjoy materials that they may not be able to read on their own.

- Ensure that all students feel successful by providing support to the entire group.

- Students act as though they are reading.

- Help novice readers learn about the relationship between oral language and printed language.

- Assist students in learning where to look and/or focus their attention.

- Support students as they gain awareness of symbols and print conventions, while constructing meaning from the text.

- Assist students in making connections between background knowledge and new information.

- Focus on and help develop concepts about print and phonemic connections.

- Help in teaching frequently used vocabulary.

- Encourage prediction in reading.

- Help students develop a sense of story and increases comprehension.

Parkes (2000) suggested additional benefits of shared reading. These included

- Creating a welcoming and supportive climate.

- Acknowledging the childrens' contributions as those of readers and writers.

- Providing opportunities for children to participate in a variety of ways.

- Showing the role of the author and illustrator.

- Modeling strategies the students may soon acquire in guided and independent reading.

- Drawing children into the reading through the intrigue, fun, and excitement of the book.

- Increasing familiarity with book language through texts beyond the children's independent level.

- Modeling fluency.

- Demonstrating how readers decide the most appropriate response to a text.

However, Parkes (2000) further suggested that the main outcome of shared reading should be the delight and joy as meaningful language flows through the children, with some of it lingering long enough for savoring and exploring.

According to Fisher and Medvic (2000), a sense of community was developed with the shared reading approach. The time is taken to arrange for a small group of students or, when appropriate, the whole class to gather in an area near a big book,

chart/easel, wall story, or text written on the chalkboard so all participants can easily see the enlarged text and engage in the experience comfortably. Having a few items on hand during a shared reading will allow the teacher or other experienced reader greater flexibility during the experience. Some items may include chalk/whiteboard, pointing stick, file cards, file cards, post-it notes, or highlighter marker. These may be used during a session to reinforce teaching objectives for students.

Shared reading also provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to model the integrated use of the cueing systems and strategies for reading that can be applied to unfamiliar reading. New concepts and strategies are best introduced during shared reading before guided practice or independent reading takes place. The shared reading experience also provides the opportunity for the teacher to share different genres, or types of books, with students and familiarize them with some of their text features (Taberski, 2000). A variety of print materials can be used during shared reading which include big books, lap books, wall charts/stories, poetry, chants, legends, songs, morning message, classroom news, or constructed texts.

A shared reading session may be conducted in many ways, depending on the needs of the students and the teaching objectives determined by the teacher (Routman, 2000). Shared reading with strong teacher support and guided reading with less teacher support are two ways the teacher can give students practice and immediate feedback as they develop the skills and strategies necessary for successful decoding and comprehension.

Au et al. (1997) stated that shared reading offers pupils variety in experiences. Students developed a basic sight vocabulary as well as reading fluently. A student's self-concept tended to improve as well as confidence in learning. Meaningful experiences

also accumulated using the shared reading approach. Teachers served as role models during shared reading, which assists pupils to enjoy literature.

Guided Reading

Guided reading is another balanced literacy approach in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for understanding text complexity (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Guided reading instruction consists of a small group of students (usually between three and six) who read multiple copies of the same text under the teacher's guidance (Taberski, 2000). The text is one chosen by the teacher on the student's instructional reading level. The children can almost, but not quite, read independently (Fountas & Pinnell 2012).

A primary goal of guided reading is for the student to develop a self-extending system of reading that enables them to discover more about the process of reading while they are reading. As children develop these understandings, they self-monitor, search for cues, discover new things about the text, check one source of information against another, confirm their reading, self-correct, and solve new words using multiple sources of information (Iaquinta, 2006). Guided reading is a teaching approach used with all readers, struggling or independent. It has three fundamental purposes: meet the varying instructional needs of all the students in the classroom, teach students to read increasingly difficult texts with understanding and fluency, and construct meaning while using problem-solving strategies to figure out unfamiliar words that deal with complex sentence structures (Fountas & Pinnel, 1996).

Guided reading helps students to understand concepts or ideas not previously encountered in their learning (Iaquinta, 2006). Similarly, guided reading provides the necessary opportunity for teachers to teach reading strategies based on student needs. It

reinforces problem solving, comprehension, and decoding; and it provides opportunities to establish good reading habits and strategies. The most critical element is the skillful teaching that helps young readers learn the effective strategies they need to become independent readers (Iaquinta, 2006). In addition, guided reading also reinforces problem solving, comprehension, and decoding. It provides opportunities for establishing good reading habits and strategies (Iaquinta, 2006). Guided reading is an important best practice associated with today's balanced literacy instruction and it has quickly become one of the most important contemporary reading instructional practices in the United States (Fawson & Reutzel, 2000).

Guided reading requires teachers to arrange literacy environments that promote opportunities for all students to be a part of the learning community (Vlach & Burcie, 2010). During guided reading, teachers can work with texts and generate questions. First, teachers should begin the lesson by generating a list of questions for before, during, and after the reading of the text. This can begin as an oral lesson to focus on the discussion by activating prior knowledge, making predictions, identifying details, determining the main idea, identifying clunks, sharing information, and generating questions to locate new information. Eventually, the students can reach a stage where they record questions before, during, and after reading texts in a journal or by posing questions for their peers to answer (Troegger, 2011). The most important part of small group instruction begins in the planning. Thoughtful teaching in small groups is a lot different than sitting and listening to a group of students read. According to Ford and Opitz (2008), guided reading instruction required the following instructional preparation to ensure students are grouped appropriately:

1. Assess students to determine instructional reading levels (IRLs). At IRL,

students should sound like good readers and comprehend well.

2. Look for trends across classroom data. Cluster students into groups based on their IRLs, their skills, and how they solve problems when reading. Make groups flexible, based on student growth and change over time. If you must compromise reading level to assemble a group, always put students into an easier text rather than a more difficult one.

3. Select a text that gives students the opportunity to engage in a balanced reading process. If a student looks at words but doesn't think about the meaning or consider the pictures, find an IRL where the student uses all the information the text offers. If there are more than a few problems for students to solve during reading, the text is too difficult.

4. Plan a schedule for working with small groups, and organize materials for groups working independently. Independent work should be as closely connected to authentic reading and writing as possible; try things like rereading familiar texts or manipulating magnetic letters to explore word families. Choose a focus that the group needs, and then can plan accordingly.

In addition, to improve guided reading, it is important to have a nice balance between narrative and informational texts. Different texts are written with different structures, and exposing students to them puts them at a greater position to comprehend a variety of texts both in and out of the classroom (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Likewise, during guided reading, students should not be doing round-robin reading. Round-robin reading allows students to read orally from a common text, one child after another, while the rest of the class follows along in their copies of the text. Students do not get enough practice during this technique and they are not developing reading comprehension (Diller, 2007).

Teachers model what ideal readers do by explicitly talking aloud as they read, making children aware that they are predicting, making an inference, or changing their ideas about what is happening in a story (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007). Next, once all the reading groups had completed their activities, the class comes back together as a whole group to share their new learning.

Skillful teachers use their knowledge of literacy development and literacy processes to decide where to go next independently of the commercial materials they use, when to intervene and when not to, when to draw children's attention to which features of text, and how to model and explain strategies in ways that children can make their own (Iaquinta, 2006). Another powerful way to scaffold the learning during guided reading instruction is to combine the use of instructional-level texts with more challenging texts (Glasswell & Ford, 2011). In addition, teachers can be much more flexible with text levels than we previously have thought. When a reader engages in reading and the text is challenging, teachers can support that reader in developing their skills, strategies, and confidence in two main ways. The first way is to find an appropriately leveled text for the student: one that the student can read more comfortably. By doing this, the learning has been scaffold using the text (Glasswell & Ford, 2011). Additionally, when planning instruction and text selection for small groups, it is important to remember to not let the level of the text be the only thing that guides your planning. Teachers should be more concerned with organizing around areas of the student needs (Glasswell & Ford, 2011). Flexible scheduling for small-group instruction, access to curricula emphasizing explicit instruction, and use of data to monitor progress all increase implementation (Coyne, Richards, Shultz, & Singh, 2009). Furthermore, selecting and then introducing texts for a group of students who share similar developmental needs during instruction in small

groups creates a context that supports learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Teachers need to direct children's attention to using multiple sources of information in a skilled way: This can be done by giving children the opportunity to read many texts that offer just the right amount of challenge (Iaquinta, 2006). Additionally, effective instruction teaches students to integrate and relate new information, concepts, and strategies (Coyne et al., 2009). The teacher, therefore, must select reading assignments that are challenging but not frustrating (Joshi, 2005). Likewise, teachers who can pay close attention to reading processing can help to provide their students with rich learning experiences that help them value both reading and learning (Compton-Lilly, 2008). Another important aspect to remember is to ask open-ended questions where children provide explanations rather than one- or two-word responses (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007).

Materials and Texts

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) recommended using texts that are at the students' instructional levels. By using appropriately leveled material, the students could apply the desired skill or strategy with assistance from the teacher or their peers (Taberski, 2000). The text should offer a limited amount of new things to learn because students should be able to apply their existing strategies to the text while the use of guided reading allows students to acquire a small amount of new learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), when books are matched to readers, teaching can be powerful because we are engaging the young reader in successful reading processing skills.

According to Pressley (2002), using appropriate materials is also extremely motivating for a child. By working with materials at the instructional level, competence

expands. In addition to increasing motivation, when students can read the text, they will then be able to participate in book discussions (Taberski, 2000). These discussions help students to further their understanding of the text while motivating them to continue to read because the students will view the reading experience as meaningful and nonthreatening. On the other hand, if the material that is used is at a student's frustration level, motivation will be hindered. The use of frustration-level material usually requires students to focus on the decoding component of reading instead of affording them the opportunity to practice using comprehension skills and strategies because they often do not sustain the reading long enough to practice these skills (Taberski, 2000).

Ford and Opitz (2008) believed students may withdraw from any instructional activity if they perceive success is impossible. As a result, comprehension and fluency is directly affected by their motivation because if they do not believe that they will be successful with an assigned task, they will not put forth the effort to complete the task (Simplicio, 2003). This lack of confidence in their reading ability can lead to high anxiety and low self-esteem (Simplicio, 2003).

Guided reading texts should be previously leveled into four categories – early emergent, emergent, early fluency, and fluency – to ease the implementation process by teachers. By leveling texts, teachers can find the appropriate instructional match for each student (Simplicio, 2003). The teacher should have multiple copies of the same text so each student in the guided reading group has a copy of the book.

In addition to having access to varied levels, students also need to be exposed to both narrative and expository texts (Stinnett, 2009). Both narrative and expository texts uniquely benefit readers. Ford and Opitz (2008) found that two thirds of the texts that were used during guided reading were narrative texts. Narrative texts typically include

figurative and descriptive language and expose students to an array of different story structures while requiring students to think about the characters, events, settings, and conclusions. Within the narrative genre, students need additional instruction in how to read the different types of fiction texts; for example, reading a mystery will require different comprehension strategies than reading fantasy (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002). Comprehension of narrative texts is greatly improved when students receive instruction in making personal connections to the story (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002). Expository texts introduce students to low frequency concept related words in addition to complex sentence structures (Stinnett, 2009). In turn, these texts provide fact-based truths for the reader written in a clear, concise, and organized manner which is educational and purposeful.

Informational texts require students to focus on the specific text structure that was used by the author. Teachers need to instruct students in how to learn from informational texts while utilizing the text structure (i.e., compare, summary, sequence, cause and effect; Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002). In addition to informational and narrative texts, students should also be afforded the opportunity to work with plays, poetry, and directions during guided reading instruction (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002).

Teacher Fidelity with Program Implementation

The goal in guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). The successful implementation of new instructional programs depends on the individual teachers (Hacker & Tenent, 2002). Successful guided reading implementation was found to be correlated with extensive professional development in guided reading. Lesley, Olivarez, Button, and Griffith (2009) examined the relationship between cooperating teachers and

student teachers during guided reading instructional time. They found that when compared to their minimally trained peers, cooperating teachers who underwent several years of schooling and professional development in guided reading pedagogy were better equipped to coach their student teachers in the guided reading process and implement effective guided reading instruction for their students.

Independent Reading

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) defined independent reading as the practice whereby children read on their own or with a peer from a wide range of reading materials which include books at their independent reading levels. Little or no teacher support is needed, and the reader independently resolves difficulties that occur while reading for meaning. Sanden (2012) indicated that independent reading contains components such as teacher support and an embedded instruction with a student focus. The term independent reading is most often found in explanations of reading workshops, of which independent reading is a significant component. Reutzel (1999) explained that in a reading workshop, individual students are engaged in reading opportunities while the teacher conducts small group lessons or conferences with other students and is also available to provide academic assistance. Calkins (2001) added that independent reading occurring during reading workshop is usually silent, except in emergent and beginning readers. Calkins emphasized that independent readers benefit from book talks with other students or teachers.

The idea of independent reading is that students bear the responsibility for their own reading. They select their own books, read independently, and take responsibility for working through encounters that occur in the text (Routman, 1994). Although the process of independent reading suggests that children self-select books and are

responsible of their own reading, teachers must ensure a wide variety of leveled books for all students (Routman, 2000). If students are to extend their learning and practice applying reading strategies independently, they need texts that provide both support and challenge (Rog & Burton, 2002). Without guidance from the teacher, some students constantly choose books that are above their reading ability and become discouraged and pessimistic toward reading. Other students may have to be encouraged to increase the quality of their reading (Routman, 1994). A leveling system for books facilitates the process of selecting materials that are developmentally appropriate for each student. Independent reading provides students with an opportunity to apply reading strategies without guidance; challenges the reader to decode words independently; promotes fluency through rereading; and builds confidence through sustained, successful reading.

Setting a Clear Purpose for Reading

Fisher, Flood, Frey, and Lapp (2004) believed that before reading, a clear purpose must be established. It is imperative that discussions be held about what you are reading before, during, and after reading. Conversations relative to story book reading offer power and help students make connections to what is in the story and their own lives.

Fisher et al. (2004) suggested a few helpful hints for setting a clear purpose for reading: (1) preview and read the book to yourself before reading aloud to children and determine places where the reader will pause to ask questions; (2) plan enough time to read to ensure the story will be enjoyed; and (3) set a clear purpose for the interactive read-aloud. The reader should introduce the book, read the title, and state the author and illustrator. The reader could discuss the pictures or art work and have students share predictions about what the book is about. Trelease (2001) stated the more children get to practice behaviors connected with speaking, listening, reading and writing, the easier it

becomes for them to become rich and passionate readers.

Think-Alouds

Kymes (2005) stated that the think-aloud is a technique by which the individual voices her or his thoughts during the performance of a task such as reading. It simply means someone is thinking out loud. Kucan and Beck (1997) noted that think-aloud accomplishes three goals: (1) it provides a method of inquiry to understand intellectual processing related to reading; (2) it serves as a method of instruction; and (3) it is an attribute of social interaction. Pressley et al. (1992) stated that the think-aloud has evolved to incorporate an increased representation of reading.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) believed that as children work with text, they develop a system of strategies that allows them to focus on the information from various sources. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) grouped these sources of information into three categories: meaning cues, structural or syntactic cues, and visual cues. It is not the words that are important but rather the thought processes children use to decode new words while developing meaning from the text. The think-aloud provides a sequential framework for teachers to support struggling readers in helping them make meaning with a variety of texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). According to Wilhelm (2001), the steps involved in the think-aloud process are (1) choose a brief section of text, (2) select a few strategies, (3) state the purpose for reading and to focus attention on strategies used, (4) read the text aloud to students and model the chosen strategy as you read, (5) have students note the text, (6) brainstorm cues and strategies used, (7) teach students to generalize the strategies, and (8) emphasize the think-aloud with follow-up lessons. Farr and Conner (2004) believed the think-aloud assists learners to acquire the ability to draw on background knowledge as they read; formulate predictions; correct and revise those

predictions as gather more textual information; and develop and adapt images as they read, while frequently monitoring their reading comprehension.

Writing

Writing is a complex process involving planning, content selection, organization, revision, consideration of the audience and purpose, mastery of the English skills, and sustained attention (Burns, 2006). Quality writing occurs in the classroom where students write about things that matter to them and where a language-rich, supportive environment fosters their desire to see themselves as writers and increases their ability to capture their ideas and feelings proficiently (Fullan, 2007). Children need a purpose for writing and to speak their own voices with clarity and accuracy (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). According to Tompkins (2013), the addition of a writing workshop in a balanced literacy classroom increased the quality of student writing. Through a writing workshop, students learn about the writing process which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

The Writing Process

Writing is a process in which the writer must pass through many phases. Each phase of the writing process becomes a scaffold for the next. Students must be actively involved in the writing process through hands-on activities that take place before, during, and after the actual writing process (Reimer, 2001). Writing is an evolving progression in which the writer begins by forming a structure for the writing and ends with publishing his or her writing. The structure or scaffold is known as the prewriting phase. Within this stage, students begin the process of gathering ideas for later use. Prewriting can take on many shapes and forms such as reading, brainstorming, clustering, debating, mapping, or free writing (Reimer, 2001). Some of these strategies can be present during the

prewriting stage.

The next stage within the writing process is the drafting. During this stage, students are beginning to put their thoughts and ideas on paper. They are beginning to determine the direction that they would like their writing to go. Even though this stage is more structured than the prewriting phase, it still allows for spontaneity and creativity because students may still form new ideas and directions for their writing (Reimer, 2001).

Once the students have completed the drafting stage, they begin the revision stage. This stage may include adding, rearranging, deleting, or substituting words to form a clearer picture. According to Burns (2007), revision is the stage with which most writers struggle. The writer may become so absorbed in their writing that they forget about their audience or purpose for writing entirely (Reimer, 2001). Without instruction during the revision stage, students tend to revise at the word or sentence level which has no impact on the quality of writing (Reimer, 2001). When revising with criteria, introduce one scale at a time so students can learn its features and scoring. Too many aspects at a time just yield a diffused focus, and little is mastered (Burns, 2006).

The next stage within the writing process is editing. This stage is the most appropriate time to integrate language arts instruction which includes teaching the language conventions (Burns, 2006). When students have their own pieces of writing in front of them and have just finished struggling with how to punctuate dialogue, they are ready to learn how to make their content more accessible to the reader (Kolling, 2002). When students are truly taught strategies to revise and edit, they will show improvement in both content and conventions (Kolling, 2002). During this phase, it is important that the teacher and student work together to help the student identify grammatical errors. Reimer (2001) also stated that it is important to teach the students what to look for rather

than to rely on the teacher to determine grammatical errors.

The final stage in the writing process for the students is publishing, which means polishing a draft and sharing it with a wider audience (Burns, 2006). During sharing, the listeners make five positive comments and suggestions and may ask the author questions. This stage also allows the young writer to experience the pride of having composed a piece and then reading it to an appreciative audience. It gives value and a sense of accomplishment to the students. Beginning a classroom library of student writing helps students appreciate one another's work. It can also become a launch pad or springboard for other students as they use ideas that are generated by their peers (Reimer, 2001).

Independent Writing

Independent writing allows students to take responsibility for their own writing. It provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate the processes and strategies that have been demonstrated through the other elements of the writing block. It is crucial that sufficient scaffolding of the processes and strategies required to successfully complete the task have occurred prior to students working independently. Some students will require more support than others and may need to be part of a small group constructing a joint text using interactive or an independent piece using guided writing (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011).

During this 20-minute block, students can compose their own texts and demonstrate their control of what has been modelled to them in previous parts of the session. In independent writing, students take responsibility for their own writing. The teacher's primary roles are to engage students in purposeful writing tasks, observe and record what is happening for each child, and provide feedback to students. The student is actively involved throughout the session (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011).

Sharing

Sharing is a crucial part of the Writer's Workshop. During this 15- to 20-minute session, students can share what they have done or are working on as well as share what strategies and processes they have used. It is important to spend time teaching the children how to be critical friends to their peers to ensure this is productive. This information is then fed back into future planning so it targets specific needs of children. The teacher's primary role is to put structures in place for effective sharing, facilitate the process, and provide feedback. Students are encouraged to be active members of the audience, share work with others, provide feedback to others and be an effective audience member (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011).

Balanced literacy strikes a balance between maintaining high levels of student motivation and meeting the demands of a challenging curriculum (Au et al., 1997). Students are provided with systematic, explicit instruction on skills and strategies in the context of meaningful activities. The balanced literacy approach allows for two workshops: one focusing on reading and one focusing on writing.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is defined as "teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning" (Hoy, 2000, p. 5). Teacher efficacy is a self-perception and not an objective measure of teaching effectiveness (Ross & Bruce, 2007). It has been studied both individually and collectively to predict teacher beliefs, teacher behaviours, and student outcomes. Ross and Bruce (2007) indicated that teacher beliefs about self-efficacy were essential components in student skill acquisition and that teacher beliefs tended to be highly stable over time. Bandura (1977, 1993) proposed that a person was motivated by the belief that the he or she can demonstrate the behaviours necessary to

achieve the expected outcome. The measurement of teacher efficacy developed out of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. Self-efficacy relies on two factors: (a) self-efficacy helps individuals decide if they can perform the required task and (b) outcome efficacy helps the individual determine if the task has been accomplished to a desired level (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Similar to the term self-efficacy, teacher efficacy is defined as teacher confidence in their abilities to promote student learning.

The concept of teacher sense of efficacy – teacher judgments about their abilities to promote student learning – was identified almost 30 years ago as one of the few teacher characteristics related to student achievement in a study by the Research and Development or RAND Corporation in 1976 (Armor, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, King, McDonnell, Pascal, Pauly, & Zellman, 1976). The RAND researchers wanted to determine if teachers had the power to control the reinforcement of their actions and to improve the teaching and learning process. The researchers created the construct of teacher efficacy; and in 1977, RAND researchers defined it as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 137). As a result of the work of Rotter (1966), Bandura (1977) and the research conducted by the Rand Corporation (Armor et al., 1976), teacher efficacy has become an important construct to the field of educational research. Teacher efficacy has also been linked to the content that teachers teach, the pedagogies they employ, and their perspectives on teaching diverse students.

A teacher's sense of efficacy has been shown to influence many types of student

outcomes including academic achievement. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization (Allinder, 1994). They also are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students.

Anita Woolfolk, another leading researcher in teacher efficacy, cautioned not to mistake efficacy for effectiveness (Shaughnessy, 2004). Teacher effectiveness is defined as the integration of teacher qualifications, classroom practices, and characteristics and experiences (Little, Goe, & Bell, 2009).

Little et al. (2009) further believed that teacher effectiveness is comprised of the following:

- Ensuring high expectations for every student with an expectation to learn.

- Contributing to the positive academic results for student learning.

- Using diverse resources to engage students.

- Contributing to the development of diverse classrooms.

- Collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure success of all students.

Furthermore, as Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) pointed out in the same interview, further research is needed on establishing a connection between teacher efficacy and professional development since schools do not seem to focus on providing any support to developing a sense of an individual teacher's efficacy.

According to Shaughnessy (2004), the link between teacher performance and student achievement was already established, but what went into creating and maintaining a high level of teacher performance and teacher sense of self-efficacy had not been studied yet and presented an opportunity for further research. Woolfolk-Hoy

(2004), grounding her research in Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, identified several major principles to guide teachers in developing their sense of efficacy: modeling (to include peer modeling, peer tutoring, group work, and cooperative professional development); mastery experience; verbal persuasion; physiological arousal (to include providing clear succinct instructions and avoiding time and test pressures); and teach self-regulation strategies (Shaughnessy, 2004).

Building on the work of Bandura (1977), Hoy (2000) discussed other factors that can impact a teacher's sense of efficacy.

Vicarious Experiences

A teacher might observe another teacher using a particularly effective practice and thus feel more confident that through its use, he or she could be more successful in reaching her students.

Social Persuasion

In a school setting, this could take the form of either pep talks or feedback that highlights effective teaching behaviors while providing constructive and specific suggestions for ways to improve. Hoy (2000) viewed the school setting itself, especially the ways in which teachers new to the profession are socialized, as having a potentially powerful impact on a teacher's sense of efficacy.

Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is described across two dimensions, general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. Together they form the basis of a teacher's belief in his or her overall ability to impact positive change in the students. General teaching efficacy focuses on a teacher's personal beliefs about the general relationship between teaching and learning that corresponds to the outcome expectancy (Bandura, 1977). In contrast,

personal teaching efficacy is a teacher's general sense of his or her own effectiveness as a teacher. A teacher may be convinced of his/her own ability to teach (personal teaching efficacy) but doubtful about his/her students' ability to teach in a manner that enables students to learn.

Ashton (1984) identified eight specific dimensions that ultimately form a teacher's sense of efficacy. These dimensions include

1. A sense of personal accomplishment: The teacher must view the work as meaningful and important.

2. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement: The teacher must expect students to progress.

3. Personal responsibility for student learning: Accepts accountability and shows a willingness to examine performance.

4. Strategies for achieving objectives: Must plan for student learning, set goals for themselves, and identify strategies to achieve them.

5. Positive affect: Feels good about teaching, about self, and about students.

6. Sense of control: Believes (s)he can influence student learning.

7. Sense of common teacher/student goals: Develops a joint venture with students to accomplish goals.

8. Democratic decision making: Involves students in making decisions regarding goals and strategies.

Teachers who score highly on these dimensions tend to view all students as reachable and teachable. Such teachers tend to believe that it merely takes creativity and increased effort to reach all students, including those with disabilities (Ashton, 1984). Teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy tended to be better organizers, plan their curriculum,

and exhibit more enthusiasm in the classroom (Ashton & Webb, 1986). They were more confident in the classroom and more open to trying new ideas or methods in teaching to assist their students in learning (Allinder, 1994). In contrast, teachers with low efficacy tended to correlate learning difficulties in their students with low ability (Frase, 2006).

Individual Teacher Efficacy

Teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to learn and use innovative strategies for teaching, implement management techniques that provide for student autonomy, set attainable goals, persist in the face of student failure, willingly offer special assistance to low-achieving students, and design instruction that develops student self-perceptions of their academic skills. Woolfolk-Hoy and Davis (2005) argued that teachers who feel efficacious about their instruction, management, and relationships with students may have more cognitive and emotional resources available to press students towards completing more complex tasks and developing deeper understandings. This is because teachers with a high sense of efficacy may be less afraid of student conflict and more likely to take greater intellectual and interpersonal risks in the classroom.

Teachers' Collective Sense of Efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy is "the perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004). Hoy and Miskel (2008) argued that a school's system of shared beliefs binds the teachers together and gives the school a distinctive identity. Like self-efficacy, collective efficacy is associated with the tasks, level of effort, persistence, shared thoughts, stress levels, and achievement of groups. Studies have demonstrated that higher aggregate teacher and collective efficacy is associated with increased rates of parental involvement, increased school orderliness, teacher innovation, teacher familiarity with colleague's

courses, reduced suspensions and dropout rates, and higher achievement across elementary and secondary schools. Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk (2000) found the collective efficacy of a school had a greater positive impact on student achievement than the locale of the school (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural) and individual student demographic variables (i.e., race, gender, and socioeconomic status).

Implications for Teachers

Throughout their careers, teachers must strive to maintain a competent teacher identity while continuing to serve their students. This can be challenging particularly considering the increasing complexity of the teaching task (Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Some scholars argue that teachers with higher senses of efficacy may be more prone to experience burnout because they tend to set higher standards and expectations (Fives, Hammana, & Olivareza, 2007). Faced with rapid changes in student populations and reform movements, teachers may feel threatened and, in lieu of seeking professional development to build mastery, may engage in behaviors designed to preserve their sense of self. While it may preserve sense of self, resistance to change may come at the cost of serving important populations of students. For this reason, it is important for administrators to consult teachers prior to and during reform movements to identify the types of professional development experiences necessary for building mastery, carefully monitoring and adjusting the level of arousal, and providing the feedback that persuades teachers they can be successful (Gregoire, 2003).

Conclusion

Due to the importance of learning to read, teachers have been using individual approaches for teaching methods. Many times, unfortunately, the outcome performance of their students has negatively affected the teacher's efficacy as cited in previous

research. Now, these previously utilized approaches have been combined into a comprehensive framework which is known as balanced literacy. The balanced literacy framework is comprised of interactive read-alouds, guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading as well as the function of writing.

One of the unique features of balanced literacy instruction is the use of a literacy coach. This person has received specialized training in the instructional routines and, in turn, provides support to the regular classroom teacher by monitoring, modeling, collaborating, and providing resources and professional development. Under the guidance of the literacy coach, the classroom teaching environment should show improvement, and the use of literacy coaches is now being embraced as a means of creating positive teacher efficacy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. This chapter outlines a description of the mixed-method design used in the study. The chapter also includes research questions; the research design; procedures for data collection and data analysis; and a description of the participants, setting, and limitations.

Research Question

What is the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework?

Setting and Participants

This study took place in five Title 1 elementary schools in a school district located in the piedmont region of South Carolina. Three of the elementary schools were in the inner city of the district. Two were in the rural part of the district. The total student population for this district was approximately 5,350. The total student population for the five elementary schools was 1,887. The average poverty rate for each elementary school was 86%.

The total number of survey participants in Grades 3-5 was potentially 40. The total number of participants for focus groups was 20. All teachers were certified and highly qualified. Each elementary school had employed a full-time site-based literacy coach for the past 3 years. Literacy coaches were receiving ongoing staff development within the district and through the South Carolina Department of Education. Each literacy coach provided job-embedded professional development to all teachers in the

form of co-teaching, modeling lessons, observing lessons, providing nonevaluative feedback, and seeking reading resources. The researcher informed the superintendent about the nature of the study and obtained permission before proceeding (Appendix A). In addition, the researcher informed all Grades 3-5 ELA teachers about the nature of the study and obtained their permission before proceeding (Appendix B).

Research Design

This study followed a mixed-methods design. The mixed-methods design is defined as, "An approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing or integrating of both approaches in a study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 244). This methodology was chosen to provide a more complete understanding and validation of the research utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data.

Creswell (2014) described the importance of qualitative research as a way for the researcher to immerse himself/herself in the everyday life of the setting that is being studied. It is an inquiry process of understanding where the researcher can develop detailed reports from their research. The objective of quantitative research is a more definitive approach to inquiry that relies on classifications to explain the research that was conducted (Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2003) further stated that quantitative research determines the outcomes or effects of a certain issue.

By using a mixed-methods approach, the benefits of qualitative and quantitative designs are merged which could possibly yield valid results. Creswell (2003) concluded that a mixed-methods approach also can provide the best understanding of the research study because it can examine a broader perspective.

Quantitative

The purpose of the quantitative study was to determine if literacy coaching increased teacher efficacy in balanced literacy instruction. An online survey instrument, Survey Monkey, was administered to 40 participants (Appendix C). All third- through fifth-grade teachers in the five participating elementary schools were invited to participate in the survey. The survey used a five-point Likert scale which included the following options: strongly agree (1), agree (2), undecided (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). A Likert scale was chosen because participants were familiar with this type of scale, making it easier for them to share their answers (Chavez, 2013).

Qualitative

The purpose of the qualitative study was to further determine if literacy coaching increased teacher efficacy in balanced literacy instruction. Open-ended questions based on themes from the quantitative analysis were administered to a random sampling of 20 teachers who were selected using an online random name generator. Randomly selected participants from each of the larger groups of participants allowed for generalization of thoughts and positions of groups (Trochim, 2006). Five focus groups were used to gather additional information about the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy and balanced literacy program. For this study, each focus group was made up of four to six teachers, depending on the teacher population of Grades 3-5. The researcher ensured each elementary school was equitably represented. Randomly selected participants were invited by email to participate in the appropriate school focus group. The text of the invitation email is included in Appendix D. Follow-up phone calls were made to potential participants who failed to respond to the email invitations. Selected focus-group members were given the opportunity to decline the invitation to participate in the

focus group.

Survey Information

An electronic survey was chosen because all participants had access to complete the survey through the district's email system. Response rates for electronic surveys have been found to be like those for mailed surveys. In addition, respondents were more likely to type more thorough answers than they would write on a paper survey. An electronic survey was less expensive and allows for quicker responses. Also, an electronic survey provided data collection tools that allowed more accurate data reporting and ease of working with data (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). Zheng (2011) indicated 80% of electronic survey responses are collected within 7 days after email invitations are sent, with another 11% collected in the second week. The close-ended survey remained open for responses for 2 weeks. An email was sent at the end of the first week to remind teachers to participate.

Survey Development

The online survey, which was a 5-point Likert scale, measured the degree of agreement with a set of statements ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An information email about the survey was crafted to inform the participants of the purpose of the survey and invited them to participate (Appendix C). The seven categories included the components and statements relative to balanced literacy (guided reading, independent reading, shared reading, and read-aloud, independent writing); clear purpose of balanced literacy; and modeling think-alouds for their students. Once the survey was validated, the survey was released to the participants through email. The online survey was accessed directly by the teachers who participated in the study.

Survey Validation

Six third- through fifth-grade teachers at the researcher's school pretested the study survey. Research indicated pretesting the survey allowed the researcher to determine what questions work, determine if the survey was a good length, and ensure questions were understood (Meta Connects-Research, Practice & Social Change, 2015). Feedback from these teachers was used to fine tune the survey. The survey was also reviewed for clarity by the district's literacy coordinator.

Data Analysis

Data were collected from two data sources: (a) an online survey using a 5-point Likert scale and (b) interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using the frequency distribution method which allowed the researcher to determine how often different scores occurred on the 5-point Likert scale. The researcher used the survey questions for focus groups to verify the quantitative data. The researcher analyzed qualitative data by looking for overlapping themes in the open-ended data.

Research Question

What is the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework? The online survey results were to determine the intensity of each participant's thoughts for each given item. The researcher highlighted themes and patterns from the quantitative and qualitative data.

Internal and External Validity

Internal validity or reliability was determined by comparing two sources of data. Suter (2006) stated that there are many issues when critiquing qualitative research. External validity is accommodated by thick descriptions so readers can determine how closely their situations match the research situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). In this

study, reliability and validity were determined in a similar manner. Each school was treated equally. Questions for the open-ended survey were derived from these themes and patterns.

Limitations

State assessment data included ELA data for 2010 through 2014. ELA state assessment data for 2015 and 2016 were not included as South Carolina implemented two distinct assessments; therefore, no comparative analysis could be given. The findings of this study were limited to the experience of participants from the five elementary schools in the piedmont region of South Carolina; therefore, the generalization of the study was limited. In addition, not all participants in this study taught at the same elementary school and therefore not all participants had the administrator or literacy coach. Administrators and literacy coaches could have varied in the level of coach-teacher coaching interaction which could have affected teacher efficacy.

It is possible that the findings of this research only pertained to this district given other factors involved such as training of literacy coaches in the district, expectations in the job descriptions of literacy coaches, experience level of teachers, or knowledge of balanced literacy instruction. Some of the participants transferred from another elementary school within the district; therefore, they had a different literacy coach and administrator during the collection of survey and interview data by the researcher.

Delimitations

The researcher only included close-ended Likert scale responses in the survey rather than including open-ended responses which could have made some of the teachers not have a willingness to take and complete the survey with truthfulness. The researcher only involved ELA teachers in Grades 3-5 at each elementary school.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. The study occurred in five Title 1 elementary schools which were in the piedmont region of South Carolina. The survey participants included all ELA teachers in Grades 3-5 at each of the five elementary schools. The researcher surveyed all teachers to gain a better perception of how the literacy coach impacted balanced literacy instruction.

The data were analyzed and reviewed using a mixed method of collecting survey data, including open- and close-ended responses. All responses determined the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. The online survey was accessible for potentially 40 teachers in Grades 3-5 at each elementary school. Twenty teachers were randomly selected using an online random sampling generator to participate in focus groups. Focus groups equitably represented each elementary school.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. Previously cited research suggested that teacher quality is the most important predictor of student achievement and teacher efficacy. In an effort to experience successful implementation, professional development through literacy coaching was implemented in the district to be studied. The research question posed was, "What is the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework?"

The researcher identified five Title 1 elementary schools in a school district located in the Piedmont region of South Carolina. ELA teachers in Grades 3-5 were surveyed and interviewed to determine the impact of literacy coaching when teaching balanced literacy instruction.

In designing the study, Chapter 3 identified the methodology for the research as a mixed-methods approach. An online survey (Appendix C) was administered to ELA teachers in Grades 3-5 who worked with a literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year. Focus groups were also used to gather data for the study. The researcher contacted 20 survey respondents, all of whom voluntarily permitted contact, to gauge their interest in responding to interview questions. The random selection of the interview participants allowed for Grades 3-5 ELA teachers to be equally represented in the interview process. Focus-group questions were formulated after survey data were compiled to further investigate and clarify respondent opinions regarding if and how their literacy coach increased their efficacy when teaching balanced literacy. The findings were displayed

through various tables or quoted responses to report data for analysis during the research.

Participants

The participants in the study represented teachers of Grades 3, 4, and 5 with varied years of experiences who were from a combination of five elementary schools in the chosen school district. The researcher selected these grade levels because trend data from the South Carolina ELA assessment indicated Grades 3-5 students were scoring below the state's average. Surveys were administered to 38 certified teachers with a response rate of 94.7%, or 36 total respondents. This total, however, also included responses of teachers who were employed in the district in 2015-2016 but have since transferred or moved within or outside of the school district. From the survey respondents, 20 teachers were randomly selected to participate in the interview.

Participants for the follow-up focus groups were selected randomly from the group of survey respondents who willingly gave permission after selection. After the researcher received permission from all teacher candidates, selections were made using a random sampler generator. Each elementary school was equitably represented, with a total of 20 interview candidates for focus groups. The researcher conducted interviews with five focus groups which represented Grades 3-5 ELA teachers from each of the five elementary schools. Each focus group consisted of four or five participants.

Survey

Seven questions were administered on the online survey. Questions were selected based on the tenets of balanced literacy instruction. Survey data from each question are displayed in a table. Each table shows the total number of participants across the five elementary schools. The tables also show the various results from the Likert scale questions asked to each participant. After the surveys were completed, an analysis of the

responses was made on each question to identify themes of study.

Results

Table 1 shows the survey data results from question one. Data indicated 30

teachers, or 81%, strongly agreed that guided reading was important for their students'

success after working with the literacy coach for 1 year. The data further showed that

six, or 16%, of teachers agreed that guided reading was important. The data showed that

only one teacher responded as undecided. The data further indicated that none of the

teachers surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that guided reading is important after

working with the literacy coach.

Table 1

Survey Results: Guided Reading

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that guided reading is important for the success of my students.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	81.08%	30
Agree	16.22%	6
Undecided	2.70%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Table 2 illustrates teacher perceptions of independent reading after working with

the literacy coach in 2015-2016. Twenty-six participants responded that they strongly

agree that independent reading is important to the success of their students. There were

no teachers who responded as undecided, disagree, or strongly agree.

Table 2

Survey Results: Independent Reading

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that independent reading is important for the success of my students.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	72.22%	26
Agree	27.78%	10
Undecided	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Table 3 illustrates results about the importance of shared reading after working with the literacy coach. Twenty-three teachers strongly believed that shared reading is important to the success of their students. Thirteen teachers reported they agreed that shared reading is important to the success of their students. No teachers responded undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Table 3

Survey Results: Shared Reading

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that shared reading is important for the success of my students.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	63.89%	23
Agree	36.11%	13
Undecided	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

When asked about the importance of independent writing to students' success after working with the literacy coach in Table 4, 23 teachers responded as strongly agree.

Thirteen teachers responded they agree that independent writing is important to student

success. No teachers reported as undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 4

Survey Results: Independent Writing

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that independent writing is important for the success of my students.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	63.89%	23
Agree	36.11%	13
Undecided	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Table 5 reports teacher responses about the importance of interactive read-alouds

for the success of their students. Again, 23 teachers responded as strongly agree. Twelve

teachers responded as agree. One teacher responded as undecided if interactive read-

alouds are important for the success of their students. There were no teachers who

responded as agree or disagree.

Table 5

Survey Results: Interactive Read-Alouds

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that interactive read-alouds are important for the success of my students.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	63.89%	23
Agree	33.33%	12
Undecided	2.78%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Teachers also responded to the importance of setting a clear purpose for students when reading. After working with the literacy coach for 1 year, Table 6 data shows 20 teachers reported strongly agreed. Sixteen teachers responded as agreed. There were no teachers who reported as undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Table 6

Survey Results: Setting a Clear Purpose When Reading

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that I can set a clear purpose for my students when reading.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	55.56%	20
Agree	44.44%	16
Undecided	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Table 7 reports data on teacher efficacy on modeling think-aloud to their students

after working with the literacy coach. Twenty-five teachers reported strongly agreed.

Eleven teachers reported they agreed that modeling think-alouds is important to the

success of their students. No teachers responded as undecided, disagreed, or strongly

disagreed.

Table 7

Survey Results: Modeling Think-Alouds

After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I_____ that I can model, to my students, how to think about what they read-when they read.

Answer Choices	Responses	Participants
Strongly Agree	69.44%	25
Agree	39.66%	11
Undecided	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0

Summary

Each of the survey questions addressed teacher responses to the use of specific

instructional elements of a balanced literacy framework. The data showed that in all

cases, most of the teachers strongly agreed that their work with the literacy coach

influenced each of the seven tenets of balanced literacy. After data collection from the

survey, it was determined that teacher interviews would clarify and further validate the

survey responses.

Interviews

Interview questions were formulated to validate the survey data. Most common

phrases and words from the survey data were used to craft seven of the interview questions. The eighth interview question was posed so the researcher could gain an overall perception of the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework.

A focus-group protocol was developed for this study. The protocol served as an agenda for the group by outlining topics to be discussed. In addition, the protocol allowed discussion to flow in a logical manner and set norms for the group by defining member participation guidelines (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). Protocols for this study's focus groups are included in Appendix E and Appendix F. Members of a focus group met face-to-face with a facilitator to discuss important aspects and themes of the topic (Rossi et al., 2004). Focus-group participants had the opportunity to share ideas with others in the group as they discussed programs based on their own individual experiences. Through their discussions, participants shared their observations and beliefs about the literacy coach and balanced literacy. They identified program strengths and weaknesses and recommended changes based on their experiences.

Focus-group responses and discussions were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. Transcripts were thoroughly reviewed and coded to identify themes found in focus-group responses. Themes were reviewed and applied to the elements related to the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in balanced literacy instruction. Interview questions were developed based on alike statements from the survey. Questions for the interview included

1. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in guided reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing

professional development in guided reading that makes you feel this way?

2. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent reading that makes you feel this way?

3. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in shared reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in shared reading that makes you feel this way?

4. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent writing? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent writing that makes you feel this way?

5. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in interactive read-alouds? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in interactive read-alouds that makes you feel this way?

6. How effective was your literacy coach with helping you set a clear purpose for your students when reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do to make you feel this way?

7. How effective was your literacy coach when showing you how to model

think-alouds for your students while reading? Specifically, what did your

coach do or not do that makes you feel this way?

8. After working with the literacy coach in 2015-2016, what recommendations

do you have to make our literacy coaching initiative more effective?

The researcher analyzed the focus-group transcripts to identify common themes.

Diverse themes were highlighted for each question. Similar themes were highlighted in a

few questions.

Table 8

Survey Results: Common Themes from Focus-Group Interviews

Questions	Common Themes–Focus-Group Responses
Question 1–guided reading	Modeling Supportive
Question 2–independent reading	Importance of independent reading Seeker of resources
Question 3–shared reading	Modeling Co-Teaching
Question 4–independent writing	Providing professional development Lack of emphasis
Question 5–interactive read-alouds	Modeling Supportive
Question 6–setting a clear purpose	Supportive
Question 7–think-alouds	Modeling
Question 8–recommendations	Addition of literacy coaches in schools Continued modeling Workload of literacy coaches

Summary of Focus-Group Data

All focus groups were given the opportunity to discuss the impact of literacy coaching and teacher efficacy in guided reading, independent reading, shared reading, interactive read-alouds, and independent writing. Further quantifying data gave insight into teachers setting a clear purpose for reading, modeling think-alouds, and recommendations for the literacy coaching initiative in the district. Themes were highlighted in all focus-group responses. Similar themes were noted in many questions. Respondents echoed similar comments for questions. Some responses were contradictory to the majority opinion.

Question 1

Interview respondents from all focus groups offered insight into question 1, which regards the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy and guided reading. Two themes emerged from these interviews: modeling and support from the literacy coach with guided reading instruction.

Modeling

Focus Group 1 discussed how modeling supported the success of their students in guided reading. Respondents stated, "Our literacy coach modeled how to pull groups, how to manage time, what to have other students doing while you're pulling guided reading groups"; and

> The literacy coach would come in and model as many times as you like. It doesn't matter if you've seen her model guided reading twenty times, if you say, I need a refresher, I want you to come in, she would do that.

A Focus Group 2 respondent shared comments about modeling, stating, "She would come into the room and model a guided reading lesson for myself and other co-workers,

colleagues that needed training or just wasn't sure how they should be going." Focus Group 4 respondents discussed varying comments about their literacy coach. Respondents stated, "Our literacy coach did some modeling for effective guided reading instruction. As far as coming into the actual classroom, my classroom, I didn't receive modeling. I only received modeling during the PDs during those Tuesday afternoons"; "I had not had any experience with the literacy coach coming into my classroom to model any guided reading instruction or we have not had any meetings with our literacy coach as a PLC team"; and

> With guided reading, we really focused more when we met with our grade level groups. Therefore, we could learn a little bit more about how to separate the kids but as far as coming into my classroom, she didn't come into mine.

Focus Group 5 respondents discussed how their literacy coach provided modeling during guided reading instruction. One respondent stated, "Our coach has helped me set up balanced literacy by modeling all the components from the read-alouds to the guided reading. She has been a model for me."

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was the support teachers received from the literacy coach. Respondents from various focus groups shared their comments.

Supportive

Focus Group 1 respondent stated, "Our literacy coach is very effective in helping us implement guided reading. She helped us level our students and put them in guided reading groups." Focus Group 2 respondents echoed comments from Focus Group 1. Respondents stated, "She's always very good with me about pulling out that Fountas and Pinnell Continuum booklet and letting us look at different specific skills that each child

might need to work on. I've found that to be pretty helpful"; and

> I would say that our coach did help me a lot with Fountas and Pinnell. She gives
> you a lot of resources to teach you how to structure your guided reading because
> that is what I found that I had problems with.

Focus Group 3 respondents shared their reflections, with one respondent sharing a different opinion, stating,

> Our literacy coach did a fantastic job in helping people and to co-teach, but I feel
> like I was trained very well in college for guided reading to where I've even
> known stuff with the district. She hasn't helped me, but I haven't asked. I do
> know she has helped others in the building.

Focus Group 4 respondents offered similar opinions about the support received from their literacy coach, stating, "Tuesday afternoon professional development sessions that the literacy coach has led have been helpful where she gave the teachers an opportunity to share their strategies for guided reading instruction and how to work with students to target specific skills"; and

> I've had questions and she has been extremely helpful with the scheduling, that's
> really the biggest challenge for me with guided reading is finding the time to have
> all your groups and to get everything, the independent reading, guided reading,
> shared reading, all the aspects of the balanced literacy approach.

A Focus Group 5 respondent stated,

> I think she did an excellent job, especially in the professional development part.
> She was able to provide us with examples of what we should do and explicit
> directions and how to go about with guided reading, so I feel that the professional
> development part was most helpful.

Question 2

The second tenet of balanced literacy, independent reading, was discussed during focus-group interviews. Per participant responses, two themes emerged about independent reading. The first theme that emerged was the importance of independent reading to student success. The second emerged theme was the literacy coaches seen as a seeker of resources to support the implementation of independent reading.

Importance of Independent Reading

Focus-group participants shared that the literacy coach stressed the importance of independent reading for student success. Respondents from Focus Group 1 stated,

> Our coach stressed the importance of independent reading versus silent reading.
> She's given us several different things we can use during our smart time which is
> for their independent reading such as reading logs. She is always giving us stuff
> that we can use for independent reading;

and

> Our coach stressed the importance of independent reading versus silent reading.
> Independent reading is you're reading with a purpose while reading by yourself,
> of course. The silent reading would be just staring at a book to fill time while the
> teacher is doing something else.

A Focus Group 2 respondent stated,

> Really, all I can recall we worked with it more as a team more so than I have
> heard from the literacy coach about how to find best fit books, but she does stress
> the importance in meetings that these kids need to read independently so that they
> can enjoy reading.

A Focus Group 3 respondent stated,

Even though they're short, students have the expectations in front of them. They

know that silent reading is part of independent reading. All these things are

emphasized every day. They had that purpose and that carries them through. The

literacy coach was invaluable during that part.

Focus Group 4 participants reiterated responses about the importance of guided reading.

A respondent stated,

Perhaps the most effective independent reading professional development that I

received from the literacy coach was independent reading. I knew what

independent reading was. I took that PD session with the literacy coach and I

used it. During independent reading now, I know that students are reading on

independent reading levels. They have an intended focus on what they are

supposed to be looking at, what strategy, what skill that they are to be looking for

as they are reading. I think that was most powerful.

Seeker of Resources

Teacher responses indicated the literacy coach provided various resources to

enhance independent reading instruction. A Focus Group 1 respondent stated, "She's

given us several different things we can use during our smart time, which is for their

independent reading, such as response logs. She is always giving us stuff during

independent reading." A respondent in Focus Group 2 stated,

She did some research and found a rubric that shows what would level A, B, C

and D independent reader so that your students are following on that spectrum

based on what observations of their reading is like in class.

A Focus Group 3 respondent stated, "I worked with her a lot on strategies to know that

they're reading. She gave me some forms and some ideas for holding the kids

accountable during independent reading." A Focus Group 5 respondent stated, "Our literacy coach provided us with graphic organizers, which was a strategy used to keep our students engaged during independent reading."

Question 3

Focus-group participants discussed the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy and shared reading. Similar responses were prominent from interview data. Again, modeling was highlighted as an emerging theme. The second theme that emerged was the impact of co-teaching during shared reading instruction.

Modeling

Many focus-group participants provided diverse comments about the impact modeling had on their shared reading knowledge and instructional practices. Some positive comments were noted. Focus Group 1 respondents shared, "She does just as well endorsing shared reading as she does guided reading and independent reading. She always does an excellent job of modeling, like I said, even if we've seen it before"; and "It was really interesting that she used a song and song lyrics to show us how to model shared reading with our students that we can pull those songs into that." Focus Groups 4 and 5 respondents shared, "She showed me, modeled for me, the way to share texts with the whole group and let it be a fifth-grade text where everybody's eyes are on the same text. That provided me with some clarity"; "The literacy coach did come in my room and model shared reading. We've been using shared reading for years, but what I found really helpful was her modeling directly day after day"; and

> She models everything she tells us to do. There's never a time when she doesn't because with balanced literacy, some of us were kind of in the dark on what exactly it meant, and she models for us in the faculty meeting. She models in the

classroom.

Contrasting comments were discussed about the impact of the literacy coach modeling shared reading to increase teacher efficacy. Focus Group 2 respondents shared, "She hasn't done as much direct modeling and co-teaching of this because this seems to be an area where we do some part of the shared readings or she's not really concerned, would you say, about that particular component"; and "I feel like we do a lot of shared reading within our own lesson planning, but as far as modeling and co-teaching, I haven't seen as much of that as I had guided reading and independent reading." One respondent in Focus Group 3 shared, "Once again, she hasn't done anything pertaining personally to me. I do know that she has helped one of my team members." A Focus Group 4 respondent shared, "I have not had any opportunity with having the literacy coach model in my classroom . . . shared reading instruction with my students."

Co-Teaching

The researcher found co-teaching was a prominent theme shared by interview participants. Focus groups shared their comments about how the literacy coach used co-teaching as a strategy to augment their understanding of shared reading. Focus Group 1 respondents shared, "Our coach, with the shared reading, is very explicit as the differences between these different types of reading. When she co-taught in my classroom, I found my students to become actively engaged with the book"; and

> She stressed to us not to use the popcorn reading method for shared reading, but to find other strategies that include multiple people at a time. She came in and co-taught a shared reading lesson to show me strategies for shared reading that are inclusive of differing ability levels.

A Focus Group 3 respondent shared, "I would say that the literacy coach was highly

effective with this. She would come in and co-teach a whole lesson, with some modeling. When she did this for teachers, that was a big step for us." A Focus Group 4 respondent shared,

> During shared reading, again my literacy coach came in and co-taught with me for a period. She showed me, modeled for me, the way to share texts with the whole group. That provided me with some clarity. I've known shared reading is but seeing that and being able to co-teach with somebody helped me clarify some questions and things that I had specifically how to run it in the classroom. That co-teaching and modeling was helpful for me.

Question 4

Interview participants further discussed the impact of the literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in independent writing. One common theme that emerged from focus-group responses was professional development. The second theme that emerged was that writing was not a school or district priority.

Providing Professional Development

Various focus groups provided comments about the impact of professional development to support independent writing instruction. Focus Group 1 respondents stated,

> She's taken several days, whatever she needs, to help feel more comfortable about independent writing. She's also offered a writing workshop for teachers in the morning if we were willing to come. We would come in at 7:00 and stay for 30 minutes, before homeroom started. She would work with us on how to improve writing. I thought that was really good that she would do that;

and "As soon as text dependent analysis was implemented, she brought us topics and

PowerPoints to help us teach it. She has helped a lot with this." Focus Group 4 respondents stated,

> My literacy coach provided us with a presentation on text dependent analysis. This became a focus for her when South Carolina started with text dependent analysis. She has shown us many presentations and given us sample STEM questions that we could use in our classroom;

and "With writing, I feel that ideas were given in professional development. I would ask questions during this time to get more suggestions for my classroom." A Focus Group 5 respondent stated,

> She did a great job of providing us with examples because text dependent analysis was so new. She showed us how to come up with a way to score our students, that where everybody was not getting the same grade, but graded in the same way.

Lack of Emphasis

Various focus groups were concerned that writing has not been an ongoing focus with the literacy coaches. Focus Group 2 respondents shared,

> Independent writing is an area that I feel like I personally like more help with. I personally don't have a whole lot of independent writing time. And as far as having a structured block of independent writing time in my schedule, I honestly don't do that as much;

and "Just like free writing or even the writing process, I don't think we've gotten too much training on that." Focus Group 3 respondents stated, "Actually, I think writing is something we struggle with a lot"; and

> I feel like as a district, writing itself is weak across the board. I feel this way because I don't think the district has implemented a unit that everybody can share.

I know we have asked a lot and we have not gotten that.

Respondents in Focus Group 4 stated, "I cannot recall any experiences that the literacy coach has given in regards to writing. All of our, if I'm not mistaken, all of our PDs have been centered on the reading aspect";

> I think our team last year found text-dependent questions online that matched our shared reading when we found out about the South Carolina Ready test. We did that on our own. I don't remember any PDs and I have not had any modeling in my classroom by the actual literacy coach again;

and

> I can reiterate what my colleagues have shared as far as writing instruction from the literacy coach. Her focus has been reading and those literacy comprehension skills was her focus. We have not had any in-class modeling or professional development from our literacy coach in writing.

Question 5

Participants in all focus groups discussed the impact of the literacy coach on interactive read-alouds. Two themes emerged from respondents: The literacy coach was supportive and continued to model.

Supportive

The literacy coach supported teachers in interactive read-alouds. Various respondents shared further comments. Focus Group 1 respondents shared, "We have had multiple sessions with interactive read-alouds during and after school teacher meetings. Then there would be constructive criticism as well as positives"; and "She really reinforced the importance of pre-planning your questions so that your questions that you ask during your interactive read-alouds lead them towards what that is and being specific

and purposeful in your planning." A Focus Group 2 respondent shared,

> She did a good job of really showing us how to make it be interactive, how to
> have thinking points on each page and plan with some questions on a sticky note
> or something like that so you have talking points to address with the students you
> are doing it with.

Focus Group 4 respondents shared, "I think we've had more interactive read-aloud PDs than anything else"; "I feel like this is the strongest area of professional development with our literacy coach has been with interactive read-alouds. She has, especially last year, had a major focus on interactive read-alouds"; and "Interactive read-alouds is where I've had so much assistance with."

Modeling

Most focus groups commented on the impact of modeling interactive read-alouds by the literacy coach. Focus Group 1 participants stated, "She always volunteers to do interactive read-alouds for us"; and

> When Ms. ____ came in and she modeled how it was okay to let them talk a little
> bit and maybe even get off track of what it is just to build that rich conversation
> about the book and to show me that it was okay sometimes.

A Focus Group 2 participant stated, "There was a lot of modeling in classrooms and during professional development." Focus Group 3 participants stated, "She does a read-aloud with us and model how to do that interactive read-alouds"; and "Our coach actually did model during one of our in-services, she walked us through the stopping, and how the wait time was crucial." Focus Groups 4 and 5 respondents shared, "She has modeled in our faculty professional development sessions"; and

> I think the biggest take away is that the literacy coach modeled how to model

thinking with the students, not just read the book and then move on but really think aloud and talk to the students about what I'm thinking and how I interact with the book.

Question 6

The researcher asked respondents to discuss how effective the literacy coach was when setting a clear purpose for reading. The two themes of study that emerged were the support of the literacy coach and collaboration between the literacy coach and teachers.

Supportive

Various respondents shared how the literacy coach was supportive in establishing a clear purpose for reading during balanced literacy instruction. A Focus Group 1 participant shared,

> She's always there when you need her. She helped me pinpoint some things that I was trying to find and how I wanted to do it. I was starting out too broad. She helped me. To me, that was wonderful and to me that is also sending a purpose for my students in reading.

Focus Group 2 respondents shared, "She's always pushing us to make sure that whatever we're doing connects back to reading and there's a clear purpose for it like, why did you do that"; and

> She has been really good with me in terms of setting specific goals for those children while they're reading. Some children, we need to build fluency with reading. For some children, it's making sure you understand what you read. She's been very helpful for me in terms of helping me set goals and make sure that each little subset of students that I work with does have a clear purpose even if it's a totally different purpose for each one.

A Focus Group 3 respondent shared, "I feel like our literacy coach, if we come to her with a problem, she's going to help us. Over the years, she has helped us figure out questions and activities that they can do while they're reading." A Focus Group 4 respondent shared,

> I've learned through the PDs that we are to have a specific focus for our students when they're reading and I've learned to carry that on into my classroom, an intended focus. I make that an intended focus every day when we are doing guided reading and shared reading.

Question 7

The researcher asked all focus-group participants about the impact of the literacy coach on modeling think-alouds. Modeling was the emerging theme from highlighted responses.

Modeling

Many respondents shared how modeling by the literacy coach was effective in learning how to effectively employ think-alouds in their classrooms. Respondents from Focus Groups 1 and 2 shared,

> She modeled it for us. We've had grade level meetings where she has read a book to us and modeled how to think aloud and how to write your thoughts in your journal or on chart paper or on sticky notes so that we can do that with our kids;

and "Just being able to model it and think aloud in terms of what the child might be going through while they're trying to handle that text, I felt like that was really helpful." A respondent from Focus Group 3 shared, "When she would read books to us, she definitely modeled doing that think aloud. While it does seem easy, sometimes you have to think about it before reading." Respondents from Focus Groups 4 and 5 shared,

My literacy coach modeled in faculty meetings on Tuesdays and on professional

development that we had throughout the year. She modeled them in my

classroom as well. Thinking aloud is important for teachers to do while they are

modeling for their students. She would model for the teachers how to model

think-alouds;

and "She does her read-alouds in each meeting, but she modeled for us and asked

questions and things. She set it up and gave us ideas and suggestions as to how to be

interactive with the children."

Question 8

The researcher gathered concluding responses on how the district's literacy

coaching initiative can be more effective. Three themes emerged from all respondents:

the addition of literacy coaches in schools, continued modeling by the literacy coach, and

how the job responsibilities of literacy coaches need to be decreased.

Addition of Literacy Coaches

Focus-group respondents shared the need for additional literacy coaches in all

schools. Focus-group respondents shared,

I think it would be awesome to have a primary level literacy coach and an

intermediate level coach. That could get you more support in terms of how to

prepare them for standardized testing versus in the primary grades, how to give

them support for foundational skills and learning how to read. It's two totally

different ballgames when you think about K-2 versus 3-5. I think it would be a

great support;

I think the initiative is very important and I feel like every school should have a

literacy coach. The initiative is wonderful and every school needs one.

I wish that we could have another reading coach to focus directly on the upper

grades and maybe one on the lower grades because some coaches have experience

in the primary level;

We almost need two literacy coaches. If there was one, maybe a primary and

upper or even just two because it would greatly benefit all teachers. It would be

great if we had two literacy coaches, with both having that background for

elementary and primary; and

I think it is very beneficial to have two literacy coaches because a lot of the kids

we are dealing with are at the early childhood level. Even though they get to the

fifth grade, we still have some that struggle with reading. So, it's good for her to

have that background and actually have been in the classroom and know what

we're experiencing.

Continued Modeling

Further recommendations about the effectiveness of the literacy coaches were

shared with the researchers. Focus-group respondents shared various opinions about the

importance of modeling. A Focus Group 2 respondent shared, "Being accessible, being

open and willing to help out in any kind of way, continue with the modeling and continue

with a lot of interactive type lessons." Respondents in focus groups shared, "I need more

classroom modeling because I am a visual learner. I learn by seeing someone else do it

and then I can take it back and do it the way I need to with my students"; "I think the

most effective way of making the literacy coach more effective, she may need to come

more in the actual classrooms, do more modeling. Do more modeling in regards to

reading. Do more modeling with writing"; "I think the coach should be a little more

frequent in the classroom to model for those teachers who may need that modeling, that

extra modeling within the classroom"; "I think she was very effective with the new teachers as far as going in and modeling for them. We need more modeling as veteran teachers"; and

> To make it more effective, I think the focus should be getting into all classrooms more often. The modeling piece is what's missing. Every teacher might not need the same thing. Whereas I would personally want more modeling with guided reading, somebody else might need more modeling with shared reading. It could be based on each teacher, but I definitely think getting into the classroom more is needed.

Workload of Literacy Coaches

The researcher gathered a final recommendation from focus groups. Participants shared how the literacy coach is overwhelmed with job responsibilities. Focus-group respondents shared,

> I just really feel like she is overworked. In order to do the job, they are required to do, you are going to have to provide more support. I think they are so busy. They are trying to get in observations, they're trying to do this and that, but they just don't have time to probably be thoughtful about one little thing. They have to do so much;
>
> I think the state itself is not sure what we're doing that makes it hard for the literacy coaches to know what they are supposed to be doing and that makes it hard for them to tell us. They are not sure. I think the state is implementing too much too fast which makes their job hard;

"I think she is stretched to reach all teachers. I can say from her point of view; she probably needs to be here more often. She sometimes feels like she's stretched

completely. This is hard"; and "We need another literacy coach because she is completely stretched, trying to hit every teacher and help everybody."

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. Teacher survey responses and interview questions were analyzed. Quantitative analysis yielded the literacy coach was very effective in guided reading instruction, while the majority of teachers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that the literacy coach had a positive impact in their implementation of a balanced literacy program. After study of the survey data, the researcher conducted focus-group interviews to provide more information regarding teacher perceptions of the influence of literacy coaching.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 further interprets survey and focus-group data to substantiate research found in the literature review. Strengths and areas for improvement are noted regarding the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. Based on data findings, the researcher provided recommendations for the school district to enhance the literacy coaching initiative. The researcher also provided recommendations for further research to be conducted about literacy coaching and its impact on teacher efficacy and balanced literacy instruction.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when employing a balanced literacy framework. Literacy is an essential skill for all students. Teachers must have the knowledge and skills to assist children in becoming competent readers (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Literacy coaching to increase teacher efficacy and student achievement in reading has been an essential component to various educational reforms. In this chapter, the researcher summarizes results and findings regarding the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 when implementing a balanced literacy approach. Based on survey and focus-group data, recommendations were made to the researcher's school district to enrich and address areas of improvement with its literacy coaching initiative. The researcher provided recommendations for further study of literacy coaching and its impact on teacher efficacy.

Restatement of the Problem

Literacy coaching has been implemented in the researcher's school district for the past 3 years. Simultaneously, the balanced literacy approach was employed to address the diverse literacy needs of all students. Because both initiatives were relatively new to the district, the researcher sought to study the effectiveness of implementation of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework.

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with quantitative and qualitative data gathered and analyzed. Data gathered for this study included survey and interview data on the basic tenets of a balanced literacy program. Teachers in Grades 3-5 were selected as survey and interview participants.

Research Question

The research question was based on the recent implementation of literacy coaching and balanced literacy in the researcher's school district. This study sought to answer the following research question and conduct a program evaluation of the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework.

What is the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework for teachers in Grades 3-5?

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

Findings were discussed and organized by survey and interview responses. Data gathered from survey participants and members of focus groups were cross-referenced and reviewed for commonalities and differences. Quantitative data findings indicated that literacy coaching had a great impact on their self-efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. In analyzing focus-group data, several themes emerged, with some overlapping. These themes were (1) modeling, (2) supportive, (3) importance of guided reading, (4) seeker of resources, (5) co-teaching, (6) providing professional development, (7) lack of emphasis, (8) addition of literacy coaches, (9) continued modeling, and (10) overwhelmed literacy coaches. Through the use of a survey and focus groups, the following conclusions were made regarding the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy and each tenet of balanced literacy.

Guided Reading Results

Research participants discussed the impact of literacy coaching on guided reading. Survey results showed a clear majority of teachers felt the literacy coaching improved their teacher efficacy with guided reading. After working with the literacy coach in 2015-2016, 81% of the teachers strongly agreed that guided reading was

important to the success of their students. Focus groups also expressed how their literacy coach increased their efficacy in guided reading instruction.

Shaw (2009) stated there are three levels of coaching activities. The third is the most formal and intense level of coaching, which includes modeling. Shaw stated that level 3 builds on teacher expertise through reflective practices. These activities may include in-class support such as co-teaching and modeling. This study's focus-group data support Shaw's findings as modeling was a common theme that emerged from respondents. One respondent stated, "Our literacy coach would come into the room and model a guided reading lessons for myself and colleagues that needed training or just wasn't quite sure how they should be doing guided reading." Another focus-group respondent stated,

> The literacy coach came in and did lessons, specific lessons to help if you felt like you were struggling with a specific skill. She came in and modeled a lesson with my students. That was helpful in guided me specifically with my daily guided reading lessons.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) stated that guided reading instruction involves the teacher working with a small group of students who have similar reading processes or skills. Grouping students can be a challenge for teachers; however, focus-group responses indicated that modeling by the literacy coach had a positive impact on their guided reading instruction. Teachers believed that modeling provided further insight into how to effectively group students for effective guided reading instruction which validated guided reading research conducted by Fountas and Pinnell. Respondents shared,

> Our literacy coach is very effective in helping us implement guided reading. She
> helped us level our students, put them in guided reading groups, she has modeled

how to pull groups, how to manage time, what to have other students doing while

you're pulling a group. She has been very helpful for guided reading;

and "She helped me a lot with Fountas and Pinnell. She gives resources to teach you to

structure your guided reading because that's what I found that I had problems with."

Another common theme that emerged from focus groups regarding guided

reading was the amount of support received from the literacy coach. According to

Shanklin (2007), literacy coaches acted as facilitators in the teaching and learning

process. Rather than being an evaluator, literacy coaches must serve as a support if they

are to make desirable changes in instructional practices. Focus-group respondents shared

how the literacy coach served as a support system during the implementation of guided

reading. One respondent stated, "I think the literacy coach has provided so much and

she's always available at any time to help you with anything else that you might need."

Another respondent shared, "She's done several meetings on our Tuesday afternoons to

give us a lot of guidance and support. She gave us a lot of strategies to use in our guided

reading group."

According to survey data, 2% of teachers were undecided about the impact of the

literacy coach in guided reading instruction. Conversations with the fourth focus group

shared varied opinions about the impact of literacy coaching during the implementation

of guided reading. These participants expressed the scarcity of modeling of guided

reading instruction by the literacy coach. Deussen et al. (2007) stated that if literacy

coaches are to be successful, a healthy portion of their time must be invested in working

consistently with the students in the classroom. Focus-group respondents shared, "Our

literacy coach did some modeling for effective guided reading instruction. As for coming

into my classroom, I didn't receive any modeling"; and "I had not had any experience

with the literacy coach coming into my classroom to model any guided reading instruction or we have not had any meetings with our literacy coach as a PLC team."

Bean and Isler (2008) further indicated that literacy coaches should provide ongoing support for novice and veteran teachers as this helps teachers to increase their knowledge base about how to teach reading. Focus-group responses from this study support Bean and Isler's suggestion.

The results from this survey and focus-group data specified the literacy coach had a positive impact on teacher efficacy and guided reading. Most teachers shared how modeling provided much support in implementing guided reading with fidelity. Although a few responses were outliers, the majority of survey data and responses indicated that literacy coaches greatly supported teachers inside and outside of the classroom environment by providing resources, feedback, and consistent modeling and co-teaching.

Independent Reading

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) stated that independent reading involves children reading on their own from a wide range of materials on their independent reading level. Little or no teacher support is needed, and the reader independently resolves difficulties that occur while reading for meaning. However, Sanden (2012) believed that independent reading contains some level of teacher support which helps to provide a focus for students while reading independently. Survey data indicated that the support of the literacy coach provided a focus for independent reading instruction which was important for the success of their students. Seventy-two percent of teachers strongly agreed that the literacy coach believed that independent reading was important for student success; 27% of teachers agreed that literacy coaching positively impacted independent

reading instruction. Focus-group responses validated the survey data. Respondents discussed how the literacy coach provided clarity and an intended focus for independent reading. In addition, the importance of independent reading was an emerging theme from focus-group discussions. Respondents stated,

Our coach stressed the importance of independent reading versus guided reading. Independent reading is you're reading with a purpose. The silent reading would be just staring at a book to fill time while the teacher is doing something else. Independent reading is purpose driven, you're looking for a certain idea while reading;

She provided insight to students who were pretending to read. They were sitting for ten minutes and hadn't turned one page. They were struggling. Getting just right books for them was so helpful and it wasn't challenging for them anymore;

During my independent reading now, I know that students are reading on their individual independent reading levels. While they are reading, I am taking a group and I am doing some guided reading as well. While these children are still doing their independent reading, they have a focus. I think this was most powerful;

and "Our literacy coach does a great job of supporting and stressing the importance of independent reading."

Further conversations with focus groups validated the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in independent reading. Another theme that emerged from focus-group discussions was the literacy coach as a provider of resources. Shaw (2009) stated that the first level of coaching support, which is the least formal, involves the literacy coach developing and providing resources for teachers. Walpole and McKenna (2013)

further reiterated that the literacy coach must be a seeker of resources for curriculum

materials, personnel, technology, or professional development. Focus-group responses

substantiated the research of Shaw and Walpole and McKenna. Respondents stated, "My

literacy coach provided a checklist and timed observation sheet where you would list the

student in the class and you would observe your students every five-ten minutes during

independent reading time"; and "She's given us several different things we can use

during our smart time which is for their independent reading, such as response logs.

She's always giving us stuff that we can use for independent reading."

Survey data indicated that all teachers strongly agreed or agreed regarding the

impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in independent reading. Most focus

groups shared positive feedback about the literacy coach's role and support with ensuring

that independent reading is taught with fidelity. However, Focus Group 2 provided

comments that varied from the majority opinions. Respondents believed the literacy

coach has encountered resistance with the implementation of independent reading which

could impede teachers' collective sense of efficacy and possibly affect student

achievement. According to Woolfolk-Hoy (2004), collective efficacy is the perception of

teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty have a positive effect on students.

Collective efficacy is often associated with tasks and level of effort by the group. To

substantiate Woolfolk-Hoy's theory of collective efficacy, respondents from Focus Group

2 shared,

> Independent reading, I'll be honest with you. It's been a toughie for our school.
>
> Not everybody bought into it and they didn't see the benefits of it as much as
>
> guided reading or some of the other elements of balanced literacy. She's had to
>
> be very fair and she's had to pull back from some situations because some people

were taking it personal that you're saying you're not doing independent reading with fidelity; and

She goes to great pains not to make someone feel like they are doing what needs to be done. She was saying, "This is what the legislation suggests that we do. This is what balanced literacy suggests that we do." She would often tell us what it looks like and what it doesn't look like. Independent reading has been one of those that we are struggling with and she's stayed on that this year for the longest period trying to get us organized and on board.

Focus-group responses and survey data indicated the literacy coach has been influential in the implementation of independent reading. Respondents shared how the literacy coach has provided clarity between independent reading and silent reading. Modeling in classrooms and during professional development sessions have been ongoing. Teachers feel supported as the literacy coaches have provided valuable instructional resources and materials to implement independent reading with fidelity.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of a variety or print materials which include big books, basal texts, poetry, songs, or stories (Taberski, 2000). Au et al. (1997) stated that shared reading improves reading skills and develops sight vocabulary as well as reading fluency. Teachers model shared reading experiences for their students. Survey data indicated that the majority of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that shared reading is important for the success of their students. Survey data indicated that the literacy coach impacted teacher efficacy in shared reading. Focus-group discussions validated survey data. Participants shared how the literacy coach provided clarity of shared reading instruction. As with

previous discussions, participants reiterated the impact of co-teaching and modeling by the literacy coach in shared reading. In a report released by IRA (2004), several standards provided guidelines for literacy coaches. One standard stated that literacy coaches should possess knowledge and experience. Shaw (2009) further shared that literacy coaches should provide in-class support such as modeling and co-teaching. To support these conclusions, respondents stated, "Our literacy coach is very explicit as the differences between these different types of reading and what shared reading is versus independent reading versus guided. She is very explicit as far as what shared reading would look like" and

> Again, my literacy coach came in and co-taught with me for a period. She modeled with me for a period. She showed me, modeled for me, the way to share texts with the whole group and let it be a fifth-grade text where everybody's eyes are on the same text. As the teacher, you're modeling reading strategies that will help them while they are reading independently reading a book on their level. That provided clarity for me. I've known what shared reading is but seeing that and being able to co-teach with somebody and seeing that modeling by the coach helped clarify some questions and things that I had about specifically how to run it in the classroom.

A few focus-group participants shared different thoughts regarding the impact of literacy coaching in shared reading. Respondents shared that more support was needed to implement independent reading with fidelity. Respondents felt that more modeling and co-teaching were needed to understand the importance of shared reading. Frost and Bean (2006) shared similar opinions about the importance of literacy coaches working with all teachers. They believed that coaches should be there to help all teachers become better at

their craft and to improve student learning. Again, responses from focus groups verified this statement. Respondents shared, "I have not had any opportunity with having the literacy coach model in my classroom . . . shared reading instruction with my students"; and "She hasn't done as much direct modeling and co-teaching with me because this seems to be an area where we all do some part of shared readings or she's not concerned, would you say, about that particular component."

The results from the survey and focus groups showed that literacy coaching impacted teacher efficacy in shared reading with most teachers. The results of this data further indicated that modeling and co-teaching had a positive impact on the delivery of shared reading instruction. Through various focus-group responses, teacher felt the literacy coach's expertise of shared reading clarified many erroneous beliefs.

Independent Writing

Independent writing is a balanced literacy component that allows children to write their own pieces (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The teacher's primary roles with independent writing are to engage students in purposeful writing tasks, observe and record student progress, and provide feedback to individual students (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). According to survey data, 63% of the teachers strongly agreed that literacy coaching was important to the success of their students in independent writing; 36% of the teachers agreed that literacy coaching impacted student success in writing. Focus-group responses validated most of this data; however, some participants shared the need for more support and professional development with writing as the state's assessment recently focused on text dependent analysis. Text dependent analysis refers to questions that compel students to synthesize answers based on exact evidence within a reading passage and exhibit their ability to explain the meaning behind that evidence

(Fisher & Frey, 2015).

Focus-group conversations indicated that teachers had a higher sense of efficacy after working with the literacy coach in writing. Woolfolk-Hoy and Davis (2005) believed that teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to learn and use innovative strategies for teaching. Responses from focus groups supported this belief. Respondents stated,

> When I first started working with text-dependent analysis, it was very new to me, so I didn't know where to begin, how they should cite their evidence, or what the state wanted to see in their writing. She came in and helped me and now I can help my class score their own writing;
>
> The literacy coach was very effective, highly effective in this domain. She demonstrated with what we call a text dependent analysis. We broke it down day by day until the children understood the entire process. The specifics were there. She walked us through each part. That was very, very effective for me; and
>
> Last year, when we discovered we were going to have the text dependent analysis, our literacy coach did a great job in providing us with examples and modeling the way that students should be writing, because text dependent analysis was so new. We all were kind of. . . . I know myself, I was in the dark. I was used to narrative writing. She helped me a tremendous amount with the ReadWorks website and going in and selecting text-dependent analysis prompts, because that was a challenge for me. So I found that area was most beneficial and helpful because I was used to saying, "What do you do on a hot summer day?" Everybody can respond to that, but when you must read the text and then come up with a prompt to go along with that, she was a lot of help in that area.

However, not all responses were positive. After focus-group discussions, the need for professional development by the literacy coach was evident. According to Tatum (2004), one final responsibility of the literacy coach is to provide professional development for teachers on effective practices. Focus-group responses supported these findings. The second level in literacy coaching support is providing professional development presentations (Shaw, 2009). Focus-group responses supported these findings. Respondents shared,

> I feel like as a district, writing itself is weak across the board. In our grade level meetings, our literacy coach provided us with examples of TDAs [text dependent analyses] and things we can do. She provided us with resources that she was given, but I think we're all questioning what we're doing;

> I cannot recall any experiences with the literacy coach in regards to writing. All of our PDs, if I'm not mistaken, have been centered on the reading aspect: independent reading, shared reading, interactive reading, things of that nature. I don't think we received any type of writing PDs. I gathered the writing aspect on my own research about how to effectively teach writing. I cannot recall any PDs in that session; and

> I think that our team last year found text-dependent analysis online that matched our shared reading when we found out about the SC Ready test. We did that on our own. I don't remember any PDs by the actual literacy coach.

Survey and focus-group data showed teachers were at different levels of confidence in independent writing. The impact of literacy coaches on teacher efficacy in writing varied with some teachers and focus groups. However, most teachers believed that writing is becoming a greater focus for literacy coaches, especially with the

implementation of the new state assessment.

Interactive Read-Alouds

An interactive read-aloud involves the teacher reading aloud to the whole class or small group. Wiseman (2011) stated that teachers must choose books that match the developmental level of students. Furthermore, teachers periodically engage students in conversations through higher level questioning which focuses on specifics of the text. Survey data indicated that 63% of teachers strongly agreed that literacy coaching increased teacher efficacy in interactive read-alouds. Survey data further indicated that 33% of teachers agreed that literacy coaching increased teacher efficacy in interactive read-alouds and its importance to student success. A few teachers, 2%, were undecided if literacy coaching impacted teacher efficacy in interactive read-alouds. Focus-group responses validated survey data. Most participants felt confident in conducting interactive read-alouds in their classroom. Participants stated that modeling provided clarity. Respondents stated,

> Our coach did one during one of our in-services. She walked us through the stopping and how wait time was crucial. That was also to give students time to process and sometimes do a short turn and talk. Sometimes a lot of clarification comes from the students' conversations as well. This was I would say, an effective thing for me because I was not as comfortable with interactive read alouds. That was something she had to bring to me;

and "In terms of our exposure to interactive read-alouds in the PD sessions and the modeling that the literacy coach has done and understanding the difference between the interactive read-aloud and the shared reading, I think that's been very beneficial."
Although 2% of teachers responded as undecided about the impact of literacy coaching in

interactive read-alouds, the researcher noted one participant who had a contrasting opinion. The respondent stated, "I haven't had too many lessons modeled. I'm not comfortable with doing things outside of what I'm already doing. I have resources, but it would be nice to see somebody else do it."

Walpole and McKenna (2013) stated that literacy coaches must provide sufficient support to develop the knowledge and skills of classroom teachers so they can change student achievement. Teachers shared how they gained self-confidence after working with the literacy coach in interactive read-alouds. Previously stated responses from focus groups supported this belief. In addition, survey data indicated most teachers believed support of the literacy coach was important to the success of their students.

Setting a Clear Purpose for Reading

Previously cited research indicated that setting a clear purpose for reading helps students gain more from the text. Survey data indicated the majority of teachers believed literacy coaching impacted teacher efficacy in setting a clear purpose for reading. Survey data further indicated that 55% of the teachers strongly agreed, while 44% agreed. The researcher found that fewer teachers responded strongly agreed than the other survey questions; however, focus-group responses indicated that teachers felt confident and proficient with setting a clear purpose for reading. The researcher did not note any conflicting opinions.

Focus-group participants believed teacher-coach collaboration had a positive impact on executing this practice in their reading instruction. L'Allier et al. (2010) stated that collaborative relationships are essential for coaching. Furthermore, Bean and Isler (2008) stated that the literacy coach should work cooperatively and collaboratively with teachers to solve problems they may face. Collaborative conversations help all teachers

to become better at their craft and to improve student learning (Frost & Bean, 2006). Focus-groups responses authenticated these statements. Respondents stated,

> She comes in our classroom and takes notes on what she sees in our classroom so that we can meet and come up with common trends. If we see the same things, then we can make adjustments in our instruction. One thing she mentioned this past week is student engagement. So after having these conversations, we were able to say what we could do to push our students further and be more engaged;

and

> She helped my students set their purpose for reading. She came in and we worked together with our students to find out what their reading purpose was. She was also able to help us come with a goal that we would keep our students engaged during reading.

All research data indicated the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in setting a clear purpose for reading was important for students when reading. Previous comments from respondents expressed the importance of setting goals with their literacy coach. Teachers expressed how goal setting encouraged student growth. Bandura (1997) stated that general teaching efficacy focuses on a teacher's personal beliefs about the relationship between teaching and learning that attributes to the outcome expectancy. In addition, Ashton (1984) stated there are eight specific dimensions that form a teacher's sense of efficacy, with one being a sense of personal accomplishment. When teachers have a sense of personal accomplishment, they view the work as meaningful and important. One respondent affirmed these theories, stating,

> My literacy coach has been good with me in terms of setting specific goals for my students while they are reading. I have learned that some students need to work

on fluency with reading. For some children, it's "we need to work on making sure you understand what you read." She's been very helpful for me in terms of setting goals and makes sure that each subset of students that I work with does have a clear purposes event if it's totally different purpose for each one. I now see how important that is to set a clear purpose for our students while they are reading.

Modeling Think-Alouds

The think-aloud is a reading strategy that can be incorporated into the tenets of balanced literacy. According to survey data, approximately 70% of teachers strongly agreed and 30% agreed that literacy coaching increased teacher efficacy in modeling think-alouds. Focus-group responses indicated modeling by the literacy coach helped with understanding and implementing think-alouds in their ELA classrooms. Previously cited research indicated that modeling is one of the most intense coaching activities that help to build teacher expertise. Again, focus groups supported this research. A respondent shared,

> I have seen the modeling that has been done by our literacy coach in our faculty meetings and how she incorporated think-alouds during an interactive read-aloud. The modeling in our professional development meetings is a good way to affirm what we are supposed to be doing.

Focus-group discussions also indicated some teachers felt self-assured about modeling think-alouds. One of Ashton's (1984) theories of a teacher's sense of efficacy stated that a positive affect enables a teacher to feel good about teaching, about self, and about others. To support Ashton's theory, one respondent stated,

> I think modeling think-alouds is her strength. Every time she does the read aloud

or every time she does it with kids, whoever, she's very consistent on. "Let me

tell you what I am thinking for her. Let me show what this is thinking for me.

What are you thinking about this?" Sometimes in faculty meetings, I feel like it's

the end of the day and I am like "Really?" But it's really beneficial because she's

showing us how to do it for the students. She's showing us. All I will say, four

years ago, I was not comfortable with these kinds of things. Because it wasn't my

style of teaching. But now, it's almost like second nature because she showed it

to us so many times that we're all reading and going "Okay, this is what I think

of. What do you all think of?" And it's just become so natural for the whole

faculty and me.

Survey and focus-group data suggest strong degrees of the impact of literacy coaching on

teacher efficacy when modeling think-alouds. Focus-group responses further indicated

how modeling increased their level of understanding with think-alouds. After working

with the literacy coach for 1 year, data affirmed most teachers feel modeling think-alouds

during their reading instruction is important to the success of their students.

Conclusion

This study was a formative assessment in a school district regarding the

implementation of literacy coaching and its impact on teacher efficacy when employing a

balanced literacy framework. The researcher conducted the study to provide information

on the program's strengths and areas for program improvement.

Shanklin (2007) indicated that coaches take on various roles in a school setting.

They work with the classroom teacher to improve reading instructional practices. They

serve as facilitators in the teaching and learning process. Literacy coaches also provide

ongoing teacher support in curriculum and instruction.

Several strengths were found within the literacy coaching initiative. Respondents shared that literacy coaches conducted monthly research-based professional development on the various tenets of balanced literacy instruction. Survey and focus-group data indicated that guided reading professional development was strong, as this was the first balanced literacy tenet implemented. Respondents further discussed literacy coaches providing direct services to classroom teachers through modeling, co-teaching, and collaborative conversations. Literacy coaches periodically modeled for teachers and students. Interactive read-alouds also appeared to be a strength as literacy coaches modeled this component in weekly and/or monthly professional development sessions or in classrooms.

The researcher found additional strengths with the literacy coaching initiative and balanced literacy instruction. Survey data indicated that teachers were strongly favorable to all tenets of balanced literacy and support by the literacy coach. Several focus-group discussions corroborated survey findings. Teachers further expressed the literacy coach's guidance in getting organized for instruction, especially guided and independent reading.

Further discussions indicated that guided reading, interactive read-aloud, and independent reading have been positive focuses for schools and the district. Focus groups revealed literacy coaches and most teachers have implemented these programs with fidelity.

Teachers positively favored the literacy coach as a provider of resources. Shaw (2009) stated that developing and providing resources should be a first level of support for all teachers. Several focus-group conversations indicated the literacy coach shared or provided resources (i.e., reading journals, classroom libraries, graphic organizers, time management sheets).

Varying responses from focus groups indicated fidelity of implementation is needed to continue development of the literacy coaching initiative so it successfully meets the needs of all schools and teachers. Although all survey data indicated literacy coaching was strongly favorable to most classroom teachers, some focus-group discussions contradicted the majority opinion. The role of the literacy coach may need to be clarified for some schools. One focus group consistently expressed the lack of modeling or classroom support by its literacy coach. Only one teacher expressed this concern in another school.

Survey data indicated that writing was a strong focus of literacy coaches. Again, focus groups consistently shared the lack of focus in writing. Many felt the district and literacy coaches were not providing enough support or resources to prepare students for the new state writing assessment. More professional development in writing was suggested by many teachers.

Further findings indicated literacy coaches gave different emphasis to different areas of balanced literacy. One school focused heavily on interactive read-alouds and independent reading. Other schools focused on guided reading and more writing. Teachers have suggested all literacy coaches should have the same focus.

Research indicated that a literacy coach must be viewed as a learner, teacher, researcher, curriculum expert, school-level planner, and grant writer (Walpole & McKenna, 2013). Based on focus-group recommendations and concerns, areas of improvement should be addressed to ensure all literacy coaches are viewed in a supportive and positive manner.

Recommendations for the District

The literacy coaching initiative is in its fourth year of district-wide

implementation. During this time, the district adopted the balanced literacy approach as its core reading program. To support the implementation of balanced literacy and increase student achievement, a full-time literacy coached was placed in each elementary school. Based on findings from this study and focus-group discussions, to make the district's literacy coaching initiative more effective, it is recommended that the following concerns be addressed: (1) provide more professional development in writing; (2) provide additional literacy coaches; (3) continue modeling in classrooms by the literacy coach; and (4) evaluate the workload of literacy coaches.

Most teachers expressed the need for professional development in writing. It is recommended that the district makes this a primary focus as the state's new writing assessment is in full implementation. Literacy coaches should continue to seek ongoing training so effective professional development and classroom support can be given to all teachers. The district's literacy coordinator should continue to conduct conversations with administrators and coaches to ensure all literacy coaches are providing training during professional development Tuesdays and weekly grade-level planning. Bean and DeFord (2012) stated that literacy coaches must determine and prioritize what is most important in terms of influencing teacher practice and student achievement. The district should ensure that writing is a top priority for all literacy coaches, which will support teachers.

Furthermore, it is recommended that additional literacy coaches are added in each elementary school. Teachers expressed the need to have one literacy coach for primary grades. They also shared the need to have a literacy coach for Grades 3-5. Teachers believed having two coaches with appropriate certification for each grade-level span would better meet the needs of all teachers and learners.

The third recommendation relates to literacy coaches modeling in the classroom. Data from this study indicated that modeling had a positive impact in many tenets of balanced literacy, especially guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading. Teachers recommended that coaches continue modeling as this increases their efficacy. One focus group provided different opinions about modeling. These participants felt more modeling should be conducted with all teachers. It is recommended that a survey be conducted to determine the effectiveness of modeling in each school. Furthermore, it is recommended that literacy coaches create a weekly schedule so principals can determine how many modeling sessions are being conducted by the literacy coach. As cited earlier, modeling and co-teaching is the most intense activity of the literacy coach and offers the highest level of in-class support (Shaw, 2009).

The final recommendation emerging from the data involves the workload of literacy coaches. Focus-group responses indicated that coaches are too busy and they cannot get to all teachers. Although the addition of literacy coaches could ease the workload, it is recommended that the district's literacy coordinator and executive director of early childhood and elementary education conduct individual conversations with literacy coaches to determine the duties they are asked to perform beyond coaching. Deussen et al.'s (2007) findings supported this recommendation as much of the time spent as a literacy coach was on activities that were managerial or administrative tasks. Further research indicated that an ideal workweek schedule for literacy coaches consists of the following: (a) 40% working with students, (b) 20% engaging in collaborative conversations with teachers and classroom observations, (c) 10% providing observation lessons, (d) 20% planning and preparing for professional development sessions, and (e) 10% engaging in professional book studies (Froelich & Puig, 2007).

The researcher further recommends that individual conversations be conducted with literacy coaches to determine their daily roles and responsibilities. If literacy coaches are to be successful, a healthy portion of their time should be invested in working consistently with teachers and students.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. The study sample was from a small district in the piedmont region of South Carolina. The researcher used survey and focus-group data to conduct this study. The following recommendations for further research based on data collected during this study may be helpful to others when studying this topic.

- Conduct a study of the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades Kindergarten through 2 when employing a balanced literacy framework. This could further provide data on the effectiveness of literacy coaching in the school district.

- Conduct a study to determine the impact of literacy coaching on student achievement at each grade level.

- Conduct a study to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teachers with different levels of teaching experiences and educational degrees.

- Conduct a study that encompasses the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy after working with the literacy coach for several years.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. Previously cited

research indicated literacy coaching is a promising initiative to promote student achievement. Many districts have embraced the literacy coaching initiative within the past few years. The study's findings indicated that literacy coaching was increasing teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literary approach. Survey and interview data confirmed previous research findings about the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy.

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Appendix A

Superintendent's Permission to Study

Wanda Frederick

2274 White Pine Court, Lancaster, SC 29720
803-804-5741
WFrederick@chester.k12.sc.us

9/30/2016

Dear Dr. Bain,

My name is Wanda Frederick, and I am the Executive Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Education in the Chester County School District. I am honored to have been a student and graduate of the Chester County School System. I am proud of this school district, what it stands for, as well as the accomplishments and achievements I have witnessed during my years as a teacher, school administrator and district office administrator.

As I enter into the last year as a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University, I am required to do a dissertation study. The topic of my study is *The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teacher Efficacy, When Employing a Balanced Literacy Framework.* This study will examine how literacy coaching impacted teacher efficacy for teachers in grades three through five as they implemented the balanced literacy approach during the 2015-2106 academic school year.

With your permission, I would like to use a cohort of ELA teachers in grades three through five at Chester Park School of the Arts, Chester Park School of Inquiry, Chester Park Center of Literacy through Technology and Great Falls Elementary. I will administer two surveys to all ELA teachers in grades three through five in these selected schools. The participants will be asked to complete a brief closed-ended survey on balanced literacy, using Survey Monkey. Based on trends and patterns of this quantitative survey responses, I will ask the same participants to complete a second survey (Survey Monkey), which will consist of open-ended questions.

Participation will be voluntary and I will protect against breach of confidentiality by using a password protected computer to handle participant data. I understand that the data collected will not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Chester County School District and

Gardner-Webb University. There are no known risks to participants and all responses will be identified as anonymous. The principal of each school will receive a permission to study; however, I wanted to secure your approval before actively beginning this process. If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me by email at WFrederick@chester.k12.sc.us or by phone at 803-804-5741. I appreciate you very much. I look forward to hearing from you soon,
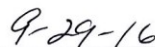
Sincerely,

Wanda F. Frederick

I agree for Ms. Wanda F. Frederick to conduct research through four elementary schools within the Chester County School District. I agree that she may administer surveys by following appropriate guidelines and procedures.

_____   9-29-16
Superintendent   **Date**

Appendix B

Teacher's Permission to Study

Teacher Letter for Permission to Study

My name is Wanda Frederick, and I am the Executive Director of Early

Childhood and Elementary Education in the Chester County School District. As I enter

the last year as a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University, I am required to do a

dissertation study. The topic of my study is The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teacher

Efficacy, When Employing a Balanced Literacy Framework. This study will examine

how literacy coaching is impacting teacher efficacy for teachers in Grades 3-5 as they

implemented the balanced literacy approach during the 2015-2106 academic school year.

Therefore, I would like to survey all ELA teachers in grades 3-5 in the Chester County

School District.

The survey will be sent within the next week about balanced literacy instruction

in your classroom. This survey, through Survey Monkey, will be sent to your school's

email address on Monday, October 10, 2016. Due to our sensitive email filtering system,

it will go to your junk or Clutter inboxes. PLEASE check for this email in one of these

inboxes. It will take less than 10 minutes and I will leave the window open for two

weeks, with an ending date of October 24, 2016.

I will protect against breach of confidentiality by using a password protected

computer to handle participant data. Data collected will not be provided to anyone

outside of the research team without permission from the Chester County School District

and Gardner-Webb University. There are no known risks to participants and all responses

will be identified as anonymous. The principal of each school will receive a permission

to study, also. I will send a personal email to you as a reminder to check for the survey in

your junk or Clutter inboxes. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to

email me at WFrederick@chester.k12.sc.us or at 803-581-9539. I wholeheartedly and

sincerely will appreciate your input as well as you taking the time to complete the surveys!

Sincerely,

Wanda F. Frederick

Appendix C

Balanced Literacy Survey

Balanced Literacy Survey

In an effort to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy in the Chester County School District, you are invited to participate in a research study entitled, "The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teacher Efficacy When Employing a Balanced Literacy Framework. This study will examine how literacy coaching is impacting teacher efficacy for teachers in grades three through five as they implement the balanced literacy approach during their reading instruction. This study is being conducted by Wanda F. Frederick (Executive Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Education) and my advisor, Dr. Stephen Laws (Gardner-Webb University).

There are on known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no coasts to you for participating in the study. The questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned should provide more general benefits.

Your participation is voluntary. By completing this survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

I will protect against breach of confidentiality by using a password protected computer to handle participant information and data. All responses will be identified as anonymous and no identifying information will be provided.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Wanda F. Frederick @ (803) 374-5583 or wfrederick@chester.k12.sc.us.

1. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that guided reading is important for the success of my students.

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Undecided
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly Disagree

2. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that independent reading is important for the success of my students.

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Undecided
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly Disagree

3. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that shared reading is important for the success of my students.

      A. Strongly Agree
      B. Agree
      C. Undecided
      D. Disagree
      E. Strongly Disagree

4. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that independent writing is important for the success of my students.

      A. Strongly Agree
      B. Agree
      C. Undecided
      D. Disagree
      E. Strongly Disagree

5. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that interactive read-alouds are important to the success of my students.

      A. Strongly Agree
      B. Agree
      C. Undecided
      D. Disagree
      E. Strongly Disagree

6. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2016 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that I can set a clear purpose for my students when reading.

      A. Strongly Agree
      B. Agree
      C. Undecided
      D. Disagree
      E. Strongly Disagree

7. After working with the literacy coach during the 2015-2106 school year focusing on the tenets of balanced literacy, I _____ that I can model to my students how to think about what they read- when they read.

      A. Strongly Agree
      B. Agree
      C. Undecided

D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

Appendix D

Permission to Participate in Focus Groups

Email Inviting Teachers to Participate in Focus Group

You have been randomly selected to participate with other grade 3-5 ELA teachers in a focus group to discuss the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. This focus group is a follow-up to the balanced literacy research survey teachers were invited to complete. This group provides an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts about literacy coaching and its impact on teacher efficacy when implementing balanced literacy in their classroom during the 2015-2016 school year. Information gathered from this focus group will be used as part of a formative assessment of the program and is part of a dissertation study. This study seeks to discover the overall effectiveness of literacy coaching by determining the impact of coaching on teacher efficacy and how it supported the implementation of balanced literacy in your ELA classroom.

The focus group will meet once and participation in the group will require approximately forty-five minutes to one hour of your time. Your participation in the group is confidential. Your name will never be made public or recorded in data.

Please indicate your willingness to participate or your desire not to participate in the group by responding to this email upon receipt. By indicating your willingness to be a member of this focus group, you give your consent to participate in this study. The focus group will meet at your elementary school on_____ (data and time to be determined once data collection begins). Focus groups will be facilitated by Walter Jones or the researcher.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Wanda Frederick

Appendix E

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol

Date

Welcome and Introductions
- Facilitator
  - As facilitator, the researcher will encourage discussion within the group
- Participants

Purpose and Assurances
- The purpose of this focus group is to discuss the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. Each focus group member will have the opportunity to share his or her thoughts about a series of questions.
- Conducting this focus group is a part of research conducted for a dissertation study designed to complete an evaluation of literacy coaching and the impact on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework – its strengths, weaknesses, needs, etc.
- Everyone's thoughts and opinions are welcome and respected.
- Discussion will be audio taped to analyze the points discussed.
- Participation in the group and thoughts shared are confidential.

Questions
1. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing on-going professional development in guided reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in guided reading that makes you feel this way?

2. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing on-going professional development in independent reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent reading that makes you feel this way?

3. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing on-going professional development in shared reading? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in shared reading that makes you feel this way?

4. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing on-going professional development in independent writing? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in independent writing that makes you feel this way?

5. How effective was your literacy coach when modeling, co-teaching and providing on-going professional development in interactive read-alouds? Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do when modeling, co-teaching and providing professional development in interactive read-alouds that makes you feel this way?

6. How effective was your literacy coach with helping you set a clear purpose for your students when reading?
Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do that makes you feel this way?

7. How effective was your literacy coach when showing you how to model think-alouds for your students while reading?
Specifically, what did your literacy coach do or not do that makes you feel this way?

8. After working with your literacy coach in 2015-2016, what recommendations do you have to make our literacy coaching initiative more effective?

Appendix F

Informed Consent Script for Interviews

Informed Consent Script for Interviews

The interview in which you are about to participate involves research for Wanda Frederick's doctoral dissertation. The purpose of the research is to determine the impact of literacy coaching on teacher efficacy when employing a balanced literacy framework. This is not an endeavor on Wanda Frederick's part as the Executive Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Education through my regular job role. Rather it is part of her doctoral studies at Gardner Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina

Participation in the study involves the completion of an interview with a building administrator which will last approximately 45 minutes. The interviews will be recorded via audiotape, and all the information will be confidential and kept in locked cabinets in the home of the researcher.

If at any point, you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you may refuse to answer. You may also refuse to participate in the research at any point, and you may ask me to not use information that you have already disclosed, and you may ask me to turn off the tape recorder at any point.

There will not be any identification of names on the tapes, and participants' names will not be available to anyone. The results of the research will be published in the form of a dissertation and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. The information will help our educators, policy makers and others to better understand the impact of literacy coaching in our schools. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Wanda Frederick.

Do you want to be interviewed?

Do I have your permission to tape record your responses?