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A New Literacy Coach and Two English Language Arts Teachers Learn Together: A Narrative Inquiry

Christiana C. Succar
University of South Florida, csuccar@mail.usf.edu

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A New Literacy Coach and Two English Language Arts Teachers Learn Together: A
Narrative Inquiry

by

Christiana C. Succar

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Secondary English Education
College of Education
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Janet C. Richards, Ph.D.
Patricia Daniel Jones, Ph.D.
Joan F. Kaywell, Ph.D.
Michael B. Sherry, Ph.D.

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Dedication

It is beyond words how to express a dedication to Leonard. You gave me the drive early in my career to be the best I can be and obtain the highest achievement possible! You never pressured me or put up walls to overcome; you just supported me in all my endeavors. Together, we have overcome so many obstacles, but this one was monumental. Thank you for always listening and supporting my ideas. I honestly would not be here today if it were not for your belief in me.

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Abstract

Literacy coaching is not new to education. Since the 2001 shift in the United States (U.S.) educational policy towards high-quality teacher training, accountability, and student achievement, literacy or reading coach positions have been a core part of the educational institution (U. S. Department of Education, 2003). However, with undefined coaching roles and inadequate coach training early in the initiative, minimal impact on effective teacher development and instructional shifts towards closing the achievement gap occurred (Dole, 2003; International Reading Association, 2004).

In the past ten years, more understanding of literacy coaches' roles and responsibilities has occurred with the publication of numerous manuals focused on coaching as well as education for coaches. For example, Toll (2014) defines literacy coaches as "partners with teachers for job-embedded professional learning that enhances teachers' reflection on students, the curriculum and pedagogy..." (p. 10). Literacy coaches recognize an essential role of coaching is collaboration and partnerships with teachers. For these relationships to happen, coaches must build connections with teachers. Thus, coaches must know adult learning theory and have strong interpersonal skills (Toll, 2014). However, scant empirical evidence is available regarding how coaches must build collaborative relationships as well as navigate other professional identities (Rainville & Jones, 2008) and responsive/directive distinctions between administration, teachers, and district initiatives (Ippolito, 2010).

This study adds to the extant literature using a narrative inquiry approach. I share a personal narrative of my lived experience as a new literacy coach along with two early-career English language arts (ELA) teachers as together; we navigated through their and my teacher practices of planning, teaching, collaboration, and building a professional learning community. As suggested by Clandinin (2013) regarding narrative inquiry, I did not devise *A Priori* questions to guide my study. Instead, following Clandinin's idea about *Wonderments*, I sought to find answers guided by the following Wonderments:

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate my roles and responsibilities to build partnerships with two ELA teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?
- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

I grounded this narrative inquiry in the tenets of social constructivism (Ben & Kosnik, 2006), sociocultural theory (Bruner 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), constructivism (Dewey, 1916, 1933; Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978), and change theory (Fullan, 2001, 2006).

Chapter One

Study Overview

Voyage to this Inquiry

The journey to this narrative inquiry has been a long, self-reflective one that I did not recognize until I embarked on this dissertation. Without conscious awareness, I began preparing for this inquiry during my first year of teaching. When I first entered the classroom in the inner-city of Miami, Florida, in 1999, I became aware that my students, who lived 30 minutes north of where I had attended school, did not receive the same public education as I received. The same school district educated us, but I resided in a middle-class white neighborhood in a community of teachers and parents who expected their children to attend college. Conversely, my students lived in public housing, among a community of parents and teachers who hoped their children would survive.

How do I know this? Aside from my experience as a public school student, from 1992-1999 I worked as a paralegal then a forensic social worker in the Miami-Dade Public Defenders' Office. Most of our incarcerated clients were former students from inner-city public schools. I interviewed our clients and families in the field to obtain familial and historical narratives for recommendation and mitigation. These narratives yielded rich information about our clients' experiences growing up in what mostly was a neighborhood war zone of survival and the revolving doors of contact with government support systems; one of those was the public educational system.

In 1994, when I entered the master's program in Secondary English Education at Florida International University, teacher education programs in the United States were faced with the pedagogical and theoretical dilemma of keeping the traditional approach to teacher education or implementing a constructivist view; I later witnessed this same paradox as a teacher in the K-12 public schools. Darling-Hammond (1992) reported that until the mid-1990s, teacher education programs followed the traditional bureaucratic system, where knowledge of what to do in schools and classrooms resided at the top of a sizeable hierarchal system. The top disseminated required textbooks, curriculum packages, memoranda, and directives, with no regard to individual teacher knowledge or varying student needs. This approach to instruction was known as processing, which lent itself to little investment in teacher preparation programs. Teachers were viewed as "semi-skilled workers who needed to follow a curriculum guide" (Darling-Hammond, p. 15).

With the loss of careers in manufacturing and a shift toward a highly competitive global economy in technology, the United States could no longer support the educational theory of standardized public school curricula and practice. A high school diploma did not guarantee a decent paying career, so individuals without higher education competed for itinerant low-paying jobs (The William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). The demand for advanced skills required higher education and expert subject area teachers who knew how to address the needs of the learner, rather than those who parroted the standardized curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 1992). Teacher education programs became faced with a philosophical and theoretical dilemma about how to

educate pre-service teachers. When I started graduate school in 1994 at Florida International University in Miami, Florida, this shift was beginning to take shape.

When I entered the program, the instructional delivery consisted of traditional and constructivist teaching methods. My coursework on the theory of education and educational history entailed traditional lecture and end-of-course exams. Whereas, the coursework on teaching multicultural literature and the recognition of Ebonics (coined in 1973 by Robert Williams as a conflation of ebony and phonics) as an accepted dialect of the English language required group work and project-based assessments.

In 1999, with the completion of my coursework and my work experience in public criminal defense, I thought I was equipped to teach English anywhere, from upper middle-class white neighborhoods to the inner-city schools in Miami. However, I was not ready for the mindset of some administrators and teachers in the public school culture.

After my first interview at Miami Central High School in Miami's inner-city, I accepted a position as a 10th grade ELA teacher. My first day on the job, the assistant principal handed me the keys to my classroom door, a class list, and wished me "Good luck." As I prepared my classroom, I found cabinets full of dusty, unused novels from the literary canon and stacks of *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)* worksheets on the countertops. While I cleaned out the cabinets and organized the books, I wondered what I was going to teach. My teaching practicum, like my experience in high school English class, consisted of learning and teaching traditional British and American literature. It was apparent that my predecessor had not cracked the covers on the literature prescribed by the county. When I cautiously asked my new colleagues about teaching with the novels left in my classroom, they referred me to their

FCAT practice workbooks and class sets of textbooks and workbooks as their curricula materials. Without any class sets of textbooks and only piles of FCAT worksheets, I had no materials outside of those novels. I felt powerless standing in front of my students, trying to convince them they had to read *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne, 1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (Hawthorne, 1851) when our principal reminded us how our students dodged drug dealers and bullets to make it to school.

I knew it was my job to prepare my students for their future...a better future, but it was not going to occur on day one with novels of the western literary canon (a prescribed list of books influential in shaping Western culture) in their possession. So, I embarked on a journey to find literature that identified with their sociocultural environment and hoped to prepare them for their academic future. Hence, my interest in literacy coaching took shape in my first-year teaching experience without my knowing it. I found short stories with characters and themes with which my students identified and linked those stories with the novels in my classroom. Though I read most of the literary canon in high school and college, it was difficult to accomplish this practice as a teacher. I consistently kept my students engaged through justifications of how and why the story characters and plot were relevant in their daily lives and future.

At the end of my second year of instruction, I wrote a grant proposal that linked contemporary literature with which my students identified to the traditional class sets of novels. With the grant awarded in my third year, I developed a curriculum that combined students' sociocultural backgrounds to the literature they read through character, theme, and plot. My tenth graders read eight novels in one school year. For each novel, I designed weekly comprehension quizzes tied to the standards and assigned one

quarterly project connecting a contemporary and traditional novel to the students' lives and the characters' lives. Of the six tenth grade English sections that year, my students scored the highest on the FCAT's annual reading summative examination. Though I did not know it at the time, this constructivist teaching approach provided opportunities for students to use their schemata (prior-knowledge) and cultural and social beliefs to make meaning of a text. Yussof et al. (2012) add the constructivist approach to the reading comprehension process makes students active participants in high cognitive level activities that enhance academic performance.

After my third year of teaching, I wrote and received numerous grants. Each one focused on acquiring contemporary novels aligned with my students' life experiences while meeting the academic rigor and district standards. In 2014, after 15 years in the classroom, I left teaching to accept a position as a Response to Intervention (RtI) coach, in which I guided teachers in the use of data-driven instruction. The use of data to drive instruction was natural in my curriculum and lesson planning and was becoming an integral part of teacher practice. Since the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) in 2004, a strong emphasis on reducing the misdiagnosis of learning disabilities came in effect with the pre-identification strategy entitled *Response to Intervention* (RtI). This strategy focuses on understanding students as individual learners and using assessments to meet students' needs as part of a class, in small groups, and one-on-one (International Reading Association, 2004). With the educational climate of the time, my experience of meeting students at their individual needs, and using data to drive my instruction, I believed my position as an RtI coach was a perfect fit.

As I began to work with ELA teachers, I was surprised to learn others did not approach their teaching as I did. They focused on the traditional method of imparting knowledge to students with no consideration of sociocultural factors. Also, in my doctoral studies, I learned my teaching style (i.e., connecting students' cultural and social backgrounds to their educational experience) was not defined clearly in educational research (Green & Rex, 2007). I learned the connection between students' sociocultural background and education is complex. The body of literature known as sociocultural theory seeks to understand how culture contributes to learning and human behavior (Howard, 2010). In the educational context, teachers must understand how culture influences one's process of learning. Howard (2010) adds that culture has been misunderstood and misinterpreted in the educational context. The definition of culture is through an anthropological lens (e.g., human development), which fails to make explicit how culture manifests in schools and the learning processes of culturally diverse students.

I then recognized my progressive teaching approach was not the norm. Though I understood a connection existed between students' backgrounds and what they learned, I did not know the theoretical or practical implications. Green and Gee (1998) and Green and Rex (2007) add to the connection between student learning and cultural and social background through their substantial research on discourse, social practices, and learning. Green and Gee's (1998) early research in education focused on discourse analysis, which recognizes the interplay between sociocultural practice and knowledge in the classroom. Green and Rex's (2007) later work revisits the research on classroom discourse and interaction, concluding the research continues to evolve as "we construct

new understandings of the consequences of classroom discourses and interactions” (p. 580). Therefore, continued research will provide further considerations of the connection between sociocultural practice and learning in other classrooms.

I also learned the influence of teachers’ beliefs and practices about their craft play a significant role in understanding how students learn. Some teachers I worked with believed if a student earned poor grades, it was the student’s fault, not their teaching methods. It was not a common belief to change one’s teaching practice to fit a student’s needs. The educational research on teachers’ beliefs and practices about their craft ranges from the theory of direct transmission to that of constructivist beliefs. The *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (2009) on teachers’ beliefs and practices refer to Kim (2005) and Staub and Stern (2002) to define these two belief systems. With a transmission view, the teacher’s role is to communicate knowledge in a clear, structured way to passive recipients and ensure calm and concentration in the classroom. Adherence to a constructivist view occurs when teachers and students actively participate in the process to obtain knowledge.

A constructivist teaching and learning approach foster the philosophy behind the 2014 education adoptions of the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) and RtI to drive instruction. The standards require students to build on prior knowledge and use evidence-based practices through higher-level processing. The curriculum is designed for students to build on previous experiences as knowledge, as part of continuous knowledge construction across subject areas (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School, 2010). Response to Intervention addresses the varied needs of a learner through a multi-tiered system of support, where

the learner is always engaged through teacher-designed lessons dependent on the learner's current level of comprehension (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School, 2010, p. 10; International Reading Association, 2004). This pedagogical shift to meet individual student needs is necessary for student academic success.

The constructivist approach to learning influenced my pedagogy as a classroom teacher, as an Rtl coach, and as a literacy coach since 2016. The literacy coach position allows me to combine my constructivist view of teaching literature and the use of data to drive ELA instruction. As a classroom teacher, my beliefs and practices about constructivist theory did not expand beyond my students. As an Rtl coach, I dismissed the ELA curriculum with my role of implementation and tracking of bi-weekly academic growth assessments. As a literacy coach, I now compose, teach, and implement ELA curriculum to teachers and students. Moreover, teachers and I work together to use data to make ELA curriculum decisions for individual student needs. Our stories are intertwined with our beliefs and practices and reflected in our skills to build relationships, model, coach, teach and implement curriculum alongside one another.

In 2016, when I applied for the literacy coach position, I did not anticipate working in an elementary school. My credentials of a masters in Secondary English Education, 15 years of secondary ELA teaching experience, and work on many curriculum development committees fit the criteria for middle and high school literacy coaches. I was shocked to receive a call for an interview with an intermediate elementary school principal. This intermediate elementary school was unique in that it served students in grades three through six and housed more than 1,000 students, with a growing

population of students from low socioeconomic and minority families. I interviewed for the position and learned this job was perfect because of my skills as an RtI coach and experience in Title 1 schools. I was offered the position shortly after that, and I accepted immediately. Though my work encompassed grades three through six, I was excited to work with the third grade because of the shift in reading acquisition. From second to third grade, students move from learning to read to reading to learn. Also, in sixth grade, as students experience developmental, social, and emotional changes, the ELA curriculum is a powerful tool to enhance academic and sociocultural knowledge. Thus, with my educational, professional, and sociocultural experience in education, I believed I provided rich experiences to support the growth of teachers' beliefs and practices in these intermediate grade levels.

These rich experiences are evident in my journey as a literacy coach working with two ELA teachers. Our stories are a few of many voices that may remain uncovered within educational institutions. During my journey, I have wondered about teachers' perceptions of me as their literacy coach who worked alongside them: Will our beliefs and practices bridge relationships and partnerships? How will we establish a professional learning community? How will these teachers' beliefs influence my opinions on literacy coaching practices, and how will I affect their beliefs, practices, and perceptions? These questions, coupled with the desire to hear other voices from ELA teachers, have helped develop this study. Such wonderment invites dialogue with others and delineates ways I illuminated my experience as a literacy coach working alongside two early-career ELA teachers.

My evolution as a literacy coach. In 2014, my former assistant principal, currently, a principal, asked me to join her as an Rtl coach in a K-5 elementary school. Though I had never worked at the elementary level, the position would give me the opportunity to work on a larger scale with teachers and students who struggled with literacy. This position involved collaboration with teachers in ongoing professional learning communities to (1) identify their lowest-performing students (academically or behaviorally), (2) implement secondary interventions, (3) track the progress and fidelity of the interventions, and (4) discuss quarterly progress monitoring.

Since for most of my teaching career I worked with students identified as performing below grade-level and implemented reading interventions in my ELA classroom, I thought this position was a smooth transition from working with students to working with teachers. My perception quickly changed when I discovered teachers distrusted me and opposed my views. I soon recognized if I wanted to become effective in my position, I needed to overcome several hurdles. The first hurdle was some teachers' perceptions who voiced the statement, "These students can't learn."

As a teacher, I ignored these comments, but as a coach, I no longer shut my classroom door and overlooked different teachers' perceptions. Though this mindset only involved a handful of teachers, in general, teachers must be equipped to teach all students. If teachers labeled students as failures when they were beginning their school career, what were their chances of success? Why don't teachers realize they are setting students up for failure? The teachers I worked with were frustrated because they did not have the tools to teach students with different needs. Their classroom environment was conducive to traditional teaching methods. Though they were told to utilize differentiated

teaching methods, they were not provided with the professional development to change their craft.

Even though the diversification of my teaching craft came naturally, I learned that was not the case with most of my colleagues. My first few years of teaching in an inner-city school gave me the foundation to learn how to diversify my teaching craft. Most teachers at the school where I worked as an Rtl coach never met such student adversity. Over the past four years, the school demographics shifted, and teachers faced diverse clientele with multiple needs. I also faced similar frustration. After 15 years of teaching at the secondary level and ignoring these negative labels while working within the confines of my classroom, I did not know and did not receive any support or instruction on how to change what had expanded into a schoolwide mindset.

The second hurdle was coming to understand how teachers viewed my role. In my naiveté, I thought teachers considered me their equal, and we were in school to work together to address students' needs. However, they viewed me in an evaluative role and assumed I would report their failures to the principal. This belief stemmed from the lack of trust of coaches pulled into supervisory duties when tasked by the administration to work with specific teachers (Toll, 2014). Thus, I learned I needed to build relationships with teachers in a non-evaluative role. The research on literacy coaching states that the ability to create and foster genuine relationships is the foundation of responsive, successful literacy coaching (Dozier, 2006). Coaches must learn how to build trusting non-evaluative relationships.

The third hurdle was the recognition of teachers' various beliefs and practices. It never occurred to me that teachers' beliefs and practices intervened in my role as an Rtl

coach. I believed the data were our bridge of understanding and enough to fulfill my role in the development of professional learning communities. What I did not recognize was teachers needed to trust me; part of trust is building relationships. To build relationships, individuals must respect one another's beliefs and practices. However, Knight (2007, 2016) and Toll (2008, 2014) extend relationships and refer to the relationship between a teacher and a coach as a partnership. Partnerships occur from the establishment of long-term relationships that recognize one's different beliefs and practices. Partners are equals who listen and honor each other's feelings. Partners support different decisions and recognize the unique traits everyone brings to the partnership (Knight, 2007, 2016; Toll, 2008). Toll (2014) adds, "coaches [must] recognize that the quality of their relationships may be the strongest factor in whether they make a difference in their school" (p. 27).

I believed if these three hurdles remained in place, there would be no positive impact on increased teacher knowledge or student achievement. Thus, during my first semester as a coach, I spent many hours reflecting on how to overcome those obstacles to build collaborative partnerships and institute educational policy. I knew teachers did not join the teaching profession with the belief that students could not learn, but I realized to change that mindset, I had to build trust through relationship building, listening, and mutual respect. I thought that these coaching behaviors might be the missing pieces to change teachers' mindset about students.

Relationship building leads to trust, which leads to teachers and coaches working together and, most importantly, building in-depth knowledge to teach all students effectively. To build relationships with teachers, coaches must know the characteristics

of adult learners (McKenna & Walpole, 2008). First, coaches must form partnerships with teachers where they are equals in the process of change. Second, teachers must have a sense of self-efficacy where their beliefs and practices are deemed necessary. Third, coaches must understand “the school environment of individual teachers, their relationships with one another, and their histories...” to build a school learning community (McKenna & Walpole, p. 21). If only I had the support system in place as an Rtl coach; if only I had possessed that knowledge as I embarked on my new role as a literacy coach. With the shift from teachers working in isolation to building professional partnerships, reflective teacher practice, and building school-based professional learning communities, it is paramount in my role as a literacy coach to effectuate those changes.

New era: Coaching and professional learning communities. The educational reform acts of the new millennium in the United States set ambitious goals for student learning, which required changes in teacher practice in the classroom. One difference was the establishment of school-based professional learning communities. To enforce the policy, in 2001, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) required states to ensure added high-quality professional development for all teachers. Unfortunately, the new legislation did not clearly define high-quality professional development. Putnam and Borko (2000) and Borko (2004) revealed that existing professional development was inadequate, fragmented, intellectually superficial, and did not consider how teachers learn. In the study, they discovered teachers learn in their classroom, among their school communities, and through professional development. In Borko’s (2004) review of the research on professional development, he discovered “strong professional learning

communities can foster teacher learning and instructional improvement” (p. 6). This form of teacher training recognized learning occurs in a sociocultural context where teachers’ knowledge integrates with their practice.

The No Child Left Behind legislation contained the educational reform language to move away from the traditional in-service training methods of hiring outside experts (Day & Sachs, 2004). It allowed for the creation of professional learning communities with teachers at the forefront of teaching, learning, and communicating their practice. This shift in school culture was not simplistic. Researchers discovered many factors come into play with the move away from the traditional banking model in the teaching of imparting knowledge on the unknowing to the constructivist approach of creating a community of learners. Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) learned one of the significant factors of successful professional learning communities is communication among colleagues and building trust and relationships. Dooner, Mandzuk, and Clifton (2007) add that to build long-lasting relationships, it is necessary to consider the nature or stages of collaboration.

Embedded coaching. One major component to the implementation of collaborative structures in schools is through embedded coaching. An embedded literacy coach is assigned full-time to one school site to build and foster continuity in professional learning communities. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) emphasize the process of building schools into learning communities is complicated and time-consuming. One effective way to build learning communities is through a job-embedded professional development model. Though various U.S. educational initiatives mention this model, it is not clearly defined (Crofte et al., 2010) and tough to implement

without multiple factors in place, such as well-trained embedded coaches, longevity, and collaboration. Moreover, Darling-Hammond's (2010) research on professional development in the United States notes well-designed professional development is relatively rare and "nationally only 17 percent of teachers reported a great deal of cooperative effort made among staff members" (p. 23). Much work needs to be done to create a school culture of learning communities among faculty and staff.

Embedded coaching: District focus on long-term support. Since former Florida Governor Jeb Bush's 2001 reading initiative *Just Read Florida*, school-embedded reading or literacy coaches play a significant part in addressing the state's literacy problem. Initially, federal and state funds were allocated to districts to hire full-time embedded reading or literacy coaches in the lowest-performing elementary and middle schools. Florida's reading or literacy coach programs provided a prescriptive model of roles and responsibilities and an outline of requirements for the position. The overall goal of the reading or literacy coach was to improve students' reading ability by helping teachers implement effective research-based instruction in reading and other content areas (Just Read Florida, 2016; Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010).

In addition to a general description of roles and responsibilities, the state suggested basic coach qualifications and ways to operate at the school level. Coaches were expected to work with new teachers and struggling teachers by mentoring, modeling, observing, and providing feedback. The state also offered annual training at a three-day conference focused on reiterating the state's key messages: roles of coaches, how they prioritize their time, and ideas for implementing research-based instruction (Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010). Apart from the basic roles and responsibilities

and annual workshops, school districts were left to their own devices on training coaches to execute their required functions. This reality made coaching even more difficult with seasoned and struggling teachers who viewed their positions as autonomous. There was an assumption that collaborative relationships between teachers and coaches happened organically. However, coaches often faced resistance from teachers who adhered to these cultural norms that undermine coaching efforts (Donaldson et al., 2008; McKenna & Walpole, 2008).

A growing body of literature exists on literacy coaches' roles in the prescriptive and how-to sense of the position (Casey, 2006; Deussen et al., 2007; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Killion, 2008; Puig & Froelich, 2007; Smith, 2007; Toll, 2005, 2007, 2014; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). However, there is scant empirical evidence on the various identities (Rainville & Jones, 2008) and responsive/directive (Ippolito, 2010) distinctions coaches must navigate to fulfill their various roles and responsibilities. The division between the theoretical and empirical evidence of a literacy coach's roles and responsibilities and the building and navigating of collaborative relationships are pivotal to successful coaching. A need exists for research to address the relevance of building relationships to execute a literacy coach's roles and responsibilities. In this study, I addressed the beliefs and practices of a new literacy coach as I built relationships with teachers and staff to execute my roles and responsibilities of continuous growth in teacher practice, collaborative relationships, and developing professional learning communities in an era of curriculum reform, high stakes testing, and teacher performance pay.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I engaged in a narrative inquiry to provide in-depth, rich insight into human experience (Clandinin, 2013). The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to document my lived experiences (e.g., role, responsibilities, and perceptions) from a personal and professional standpoint as a new literacy coach in a public intermediate elementary school, serving students in grades three through six, in central Florida. Additionally, I sought to discover how I envisioned my roles and responsibilities as a literacy coach through building relationships with two early-career ELA teachers, and what impact I had on their teaching practice and professional growth as they developed and strengthened their knowledge of intermediate ELA pedagogy. I also studied in what ways the two teachers' beliefs impacted my professional development.

Research Puzzle

Puzzle. Qualitative researchers usually devise *A Priori* questions to guide their work. Clandinin (2013) suggests a better frame for narrative inquiry is as a research puzzle rather than *A Priori* questions. The following research puzzle reflects my wonder about how I planned to fulfill my roles and responsibilities as I: (a) built relationships, modeled, and coached; (b) established professional learning communities; and (c) paid attention to teachers' beliefs and practices as a new literacy coach. In other words,

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate between my roles and my responsibilities to build partnerships with two early-career ELA teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?

- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

Methodology

Given my interest in story-telling and its importance in revealing an individual's life experiences, it felt natural to turn to narrative as a method to document and understand my experiences as I entered on my journey as a literacy coach. The power of narrative story illuminated the beliefs and perceptions of my experiences in my narrative and those of two colleagues as we embarked on our respective roles together. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) emphasized that story is the portal in which individuals enter the world to construe their experiences and make them personally meaningful. Narration may occur through the telling of stories or living stories (Clandinin, 2013). In this study, I commenced with living stories, as my two participants and I experienced the phenomena of working with one another.

The storied nature of discourse frames the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Richards, 2011; Riessman, 2008). For example, in one of her narrative inquiries, *Every Word is True: Stories of our Experiences in a Qualitative Research Course*, Richards (2011) captured the storied nature of discourse. As she taught the weekly course, Richards' recorded her experience and that of her students through data collection in the form of notes she kept and emails from and among her students about what they felt, perceived, and thought about their experiences. In her data analysis, Richards read and reread the narratives drafted from the data collection. Guided by Horwitz's research on narrative analysis, she first determined the students wrote with focal and secondary points in mind. Then, guided by a modification of

Horwitz's (2001) research on common themes in narrative analysis, she identified common themes across the narratives. As a result, the storied nature of discourse in the classroom environment and the framing for data collection (i.e., reflective notes, email correspondence) by the participant-researcher and student participants drove the form of data analysis.

In this study, I turned to Daiute's (2014) dynamic narrative approach and Labov's (1972) narrative elements to structure my narrative. Daiute's four guiding principles were adopted for this study: use, relation, materiality, and diversity. These principles provided a template for my research. Use is the sense of place and is essential to the telling of the narrative. Relation refers to stories told from a three-dimensional space (past, present, and future experiences). Materiality connects to narratives that are rooted in life, and diversity explains differences within and across individuals.

Labov's narrative elements provide a cohesion that builds the narrative structure. The narrative elements are abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, and closure/coda. Like the plot in a story, these elements include a beginning with a setting or exposition, rising complications or conflicts, a problem, evaluations towards resolution, and closure or the "here and now" of the situation (Bamberg, 2012). The discussion of these principles, their purpose above, and the narrative elements are in more detail in Chapter Three of this study.

Theoretical Underpinnings

I grounded this study in four theoretical frameworks: social constructivism (Beck & Kosnik, 2006), sociocultural theory (Bruner 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), constructivism (Dewey, 1916, 1933; Piaget, 1954; Richardson, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978), and change

theory (Fullan, 2001, 2006). Together, the theories provided a way for me, as a literacy coach, to co-construct knowledge alongside the teachers with whom I worked within a social context (social constructivism), negotiate and co-construct knowledge as a learning community (sociocultural theory), to construct relationships with teachers in a natural sense (constructivism), and reflect on what impact our co-construction of knowledge has on our teacher beliefs and practices (change theory). Each theory is described below.

Social constructivism. Social constructivism is “an approach that encourages all members of a learning community to present their ideas strongly, while remaining open to the ideas of others” (Beck & Kosnik, 2006, p. 7-8). Social constructivism bridges the social and cultural challenges and tensions faced in teacher education and the profession. Through the social construction of knowledge, learners build trusting relationships that will develop socioculturally and intellectually. Beck and Kosnik propose three concepts around social constructivism. These three concepts are integration, inquiry, and community-the first concept of integration grounds social constructivism in the Vygotskian constructivist belief. Integration is the idea that there is a link between knowledge and experience and theory and practice. So, the integration of education and experience constructs knowledge. Next, the concept of inquiry reflects an individual’s spirit of inquiry, which sparks active learning. Beck and Kosnik (2006) emphasize “social constructivists maintain that all knowledge is subject to constant reassessment and critique, nothing being taken as fixed or absolute, as beyond examination and reconstruction” (p. 24). The learner partakes in continuous dialogue, co-learning, and reflection. As the two concepts occur in the learning process, the third

concept of a sense of community emerges, a community of not just cooperative learning, but a sense of the emotional expression, support, sharing, and inclusion. Together, these three concepts emphasize that social constructivism brings together social interactions and the role of culture to create knowledge.

Sociocultural theory. Sociocultural theory posits that individuals learn from interaction with others and then on their own cognitively. Vygotsky (1978) states “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p. 57). As individuals develop their knowledge, they consistently refer to their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Bruner (1990) explains the “zone” is the area of investigation in one’s thinking where the student is cognitively ready to take on new information but needs assistance and social interaction to understand fully. A more experienced individual may scaffold the information for the learner to support the grasping of the knowledge. In the zone, modeling or collaboration helps facilitate intentional learning. Overall, the sociocultural theory of teaching and learning is “the creation of a learning environment conceived of as a shared problem space, inviting the students [teacher learners] to participate in a process of negotiation and co-construction of knowledge” (Kozulin et al., 2005, p. 246). The idea is the learning experience corresponds to the student’s [teacher learner’s] prior knowledge. So, the student begins to build understanding from past and present experiences.

Constructivism. Constructivism is the belief that learners construct their own knowledge of their surroundings and the world by engaging in the process, interacting

with their peers, and reflecting on those experiences. Unlike social constructivism, in constructivism, the emphasis is not on the co-construction of knowledge but an individual understanding of personal experience. Richardson (1997) defines constructivism as the position where “individuals create their own understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come in contact” (p. 3). Dewey (1916, 1933) was a constructivist theorist who believed if we teach with the traditional approach of rote learning, we rob our children of their futures. Children should engage in sustained inquiry: study, ponder, question, and arrive at a conclusion. Moreover, he and Piaget (1954) believed in social interaction as relevant to learning as we learn from experience.

Vygotsky (1978), like Dewey, believed children and adults construct their own knowledge, and development is part of the social construct. “Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). Hence, constructivists actively participate in learning from the most basic forms of knowledge to the most advanced forms of inquiry. Viewing learning as a social activity acknowledges “the diversity of perspective involved in the formation of community and a community of inquirers and teachers” (Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999).

Change theory. Change theory acknowledges the nature of change in teacher education; it is what teachers consistently do to improve their practice. Fullan (2001, 2006), who has written extensively on educational change, emphasizes that change in practice are:

- (1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies),
- (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches (i.e., new teaching strategies or activities), and
- (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying new policies or programs). (p. 25)

Richard, Gallo, and Renandya (2001) add, “The study of teachers’ beliefs forms part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work” (p. 1). As I approached this study from the constructivist perspective, I believed teachers constructed their own knowledge from the world around them. As their literacy coach, I am a change agent in how they conceptualize their work and face new information and theories.

Significance of the Study

The shift toward high-quality instruction—initiated first in 2001 with the educational reform act *No Child Left Behind* and then the added focus toward Common Core State Standards in 2012—has continued the emphasis for high-quality teacher professional development at the district and school levels. The 2001 reform carried the implementation of embedded literacy coaches at the school level to provide support for teachers to teach reading successfully. As discussed earlier in this chapter, though a body of research on literacy coaches’ roles in the prescriptive and step-by-step sense of the position exists (Casey, 2006; Deussen et al., 2007; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Killion, 2008; Puig & Froelich, 2007; Toll, 2005, 2007, 2014), there is minimal evidence on the various identities (Rainville & Jones, 2008) and coaching stances (Ippolito, 2010) they

must navigate to build collaborative relationships and professional learning communities or on the high-quality training necessary to effectively implement the common core standards. This study may also be valuable to teachers, coaches, and administrators because it provides insight into the navigation of various identities through building relationships among staff, the strength of partnerships, and how to create a community of learners to improve teacher practice and positively impact student learning.

Definitions Important to the Study

Beliefs and practices about teaching. The two beliefs about teaching addressed in this study are direct transmission and constructivist beliefs about teaching (defined below).

Classroom discourse. Students draw on linguistic, contextual and social presuppositions stemming from the exposure to other social milieus and groups to take part in and interpret the communications of others (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1986).

Collaboration. Collaboration implies that teachers are working together as partners, co-creating together, and striving for similar outcomes. Knight (2007) emphasizes “Collaboration, at its best, is a give-and-take dialogue, where ideas ping-pong back and forth between parties so freely that it’s hard to determine who thought what” (p. 28).

Common core state standards (CCSS). Drafted and adopted through the U.S. Department of Education, common core state standards are national guidelines for what every K-12 student should know in reading and math in preparation for 21st-century entry-level careers, college and job training programs (Common Core State Standards, 2017).

Constructivist theory. Constructivist teaching holds “the learner brings past experiences and cultural factors to construct new knowledge in [a] given situation” (Khalid & Azeem, 2012, p. 170).

Direct transmission (also known as the traditional teaching approach). Students are passive recipients of knowledge. Just stated, “It involves coverage of the context and rote memorization on the part of the students” (Khalid & Azeem, 2012, p. 170).

Discourse analysis. In the educational setting, discourse analysis is defined as “how discourse processes and practices shape what counts as knowing, doing, and being within and across events in classrooms and other educational settings” (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 170).

Embedded coaching. This involves full-time instructional coaching alongside teachers and students. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) and Hirsh (2009) state job-embedded professional development (JEPD) refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and designed to enhance teachers’ content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning.

Literacy coach. This term carries various meanings, depending on the school district and school site. For this study, a literacy coach is an educator who works alongside teachers to provide coaching, modeling, and professional development to implement various instructional programs and practices (International Literacy Association, 2017).

Literacy coach roles and responsibilities. The main one is to build relationships with teachers and staff to implement best literacy practices to improve student performance so that all students are successful. The primary emphasis on

literacy coaching is to provide support for teachers in a non-threatening sense through modeling and coaching (Knight, 2008).

Response to intervention (Rti). Response to intervention are systems put in place at the school level to identify and assist academically struggling students. The Florida Department of Education adds, “The multi-tiered system involves the systematic use of multi-source assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources to improve learning for all students, through integrated academic and behavioral supports” (Florida Department of Education, 2017).

Partnership. A partnership involves individuals who learn to respect one another, listen to one another, honor each other’s feelings, support different decisions, and recognize the unique traits everyone brings to the partnership (Toll, 2008).

Professional learning communities (PLC’s). These build a school culture that ensures all students learn; they include a culture of collaboration and a focus on student success (Dufour, 2004).

Reading coach. At times, used interchangeably with the term literacy coach.

Relationships. For this study, I will focus on teacher relationships with colleagues, other school staff, and administrators. Professional relationships among teachers adhere to how teachers ask for and provide help to one another (Wang & Haertel, 1994).

Student achievement. Student achievement is defined by the standing of subject-matter knowledge, understandings, and skills at one point in time (NBPTS, 2016).

Teacher knowledge. Teacher knowledge encompasses professional and personal-experiential knowledge. Professional knowledge is the knowledge of pedagogical principles and skills, and the knowledge of the subject matter taught (Grossman & Richert, 1988, p. 54). Personal knowledge is our experience, which allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Wisdom is in the mind, body, and how we conduct our practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25).

Teacher self-efficacy. Teachers' self-efficacy stems from their beliefs about their abilities to impact student learning, despite the difficulties, challenges, or barriers that students might bring into the classroom (Guskey & Passaro, 1994).

Timeline

Though conducting a dissertation study is a long process, this study took more than two years because of professional changes that impacted the time to develop and complete the study. *Figure 1* below reflects the timeline for the completion of this dissertation.

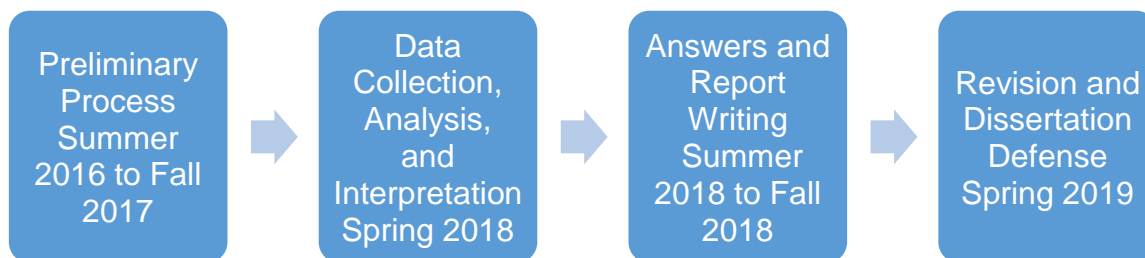


Figure 1. Timeline of the development and completion of this dissertation.

Limitations of the Study

As I engaged in the research process and drew conclusions, I strived for clear explanations through truth (O'Dea, 1994), verisimilitude (Schwandt, 2007) and reflexivity

(Johnson, 1997). Truth is the characterization of authenticity, which gives the narrative researcher the epistemic respectability necessary to conduct narrative research (O’Dea, 1994). Next, verisimilitude strives for plausibility and refers to truth. Narratives have a general criterion followed that lends itself to the truth and reality of the experience (Schwandt, 2007). Schwandt adds it is “A style of writing that draws readers into the experiences of respondents in such a way that those experiences can be felt” (p. 313). Once the experience is relatable to the reader, it becomes known as knowledge-bearing, and truth is evident through the conventions of the genre.

Moreover, through reflexivity, we actively engaged “in critical self-reflection about [our] potential bias and predispositions” (p. 284). In the hermeneutic tradition (Byrne, 1996), my participants and my beliefs and practices manifested through our common dialogue. As I conducted this study, I only used direct accounts, cross-checked information with the instruments discussed in Chapter Three, and used participant feedback and peer review for verification and insight.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed how my personal and professional background led me to this narrative inquiry. I presented my philosophical teaching beliefs and how I executed them in my teaching practice. I provided research to support my belief systems, historical and present perspectives on education, the importance of my current role as a literacy coach, and the relevance of this study. I also included my research puzzle, methodology, and theoretical underpinnings that support this inquiry. Finally, I included definitions of common terms utilized as well as the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides a review of the literature. First, I state the research puzzle. Then, I give the historical context, discuss the parameters of literacy coaching and why literacy coaching is needed, and present the pertinent research on literacy coaching in education. I organize the literature informing the study into four sections: the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches, the beliefs and practices of literacy coaches, literacy coaches building professional learning communities, and teachers' beliefs and practices.

Research Puzzle

I employ the following research puzzle to structure and inform the inquiry, by the literature review below:

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate between my roles and responsibilities to build partnerships with two English language arts teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?
- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

Literature Review

Historical context of literacy coaching. For decades, reading instruction, unlike the disciplines of English or language arts, science, and math, was either embedded in the instruction of other subject areas or consisted of short intensive pullout sessions of students from their regular classrooms (Wren & Reed, 2005). However, with the increase of minority and low-income students, this method only widened the reading achievement gap between middle-class whites and their minority low-income peers (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). Under *No Child Left Behind*, a shift in educational policy occurred towards an emphasis on high-quality professional development for teachers and accountability of student achievement. Also, included in the bill was the *Reading First Initiative* (RFI), which contained funds to hire reading coaches to work directly with teachers and establish high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction in grades K-3 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

At the state level, departments of education established smaller reading initiatives to address closing the reading gap among students; the Florida Department of Education's *Just Read Florida*, discussed in Chapter One, established reading as a state score value. The explicit goal of this state initiative was for every child to be able to read at or above grade level by 2012. Three main components comprised this initiative: (a) professional development for educators, (b) increased parental involvement, and (c) community and corporate participation. As part of the educator component between 2003-2009, federal and state grants initially provided for over 2,000 reading coaches in K-12 schools.

Early in this initiative at the school level, high-quality teacher professional development was problematic. The unclear coaching roles and lack of adequate coaching training impacted teacher knowledge, quality and results. (Dole, 2003; International Reading Association, 2004). Bean and Isler (2008) add, “one day or even multi-day workshops often do not prove the support teachers need to help them think more reflectively about how they can improve instruction to better meet the needs of the students in their classrooms” (p. 1). Joyce and Showers (2002) reiterate that effective educator training must be consistent and generate a deep understanding of the material. One way to provide adequate training is to define reading coaches’ roles at the school level clearly. The *International Reading Association* (2000a, 2000b) and the *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* (2005) published a position statement about the roles and responsibilities of reading coaches and included reading specialists and literacy coaches in *Standards for Reading Professionals* (2004b). Both focus on the literacy coach’s primary roles and responsibilities working with teachers, relaying their expertise on reading research and requirements, and building knowledge together through collaborative work in professional learning communities.

In 2006, Dole et al. conducted a study that focused on how the Florida Department of Education followed the *International Reading Association’s* guidelines. They learned the defined roles and responsibilities of reading professionals throughout the 50 states were not homogeneous. In Florida, the amount of time reading or literacy coaches spent with teachers varied between 100% and 75% of the time. Moreover, the requirements to become a reading or literacy coach were not as definitive as “they included one or more of four possible requirements: additional course work above a

bachelor's degree, exit exams, teaching experience and a practicum" (p. 197). Additionally, before the initiatives of the late 1990s and early 2000s (i.e., the Reading Excellent Act of 1998 & Reading First in 2001), there were no reading or literacy coaches at the district, school, or classroom level. With the *Reading First Initiative*, the role of literacy coaches changed from classroom instruction to emphasis on leadership and professional development roles (International Reading Association, 2004). Subsequently, it is essential to look at the evolution of literacy coaches in the last decade given the shift toward research-based practices in the early part of the millennium and the full implementation of the Common Core State Standards in 2014.

What is literacy coaching and why is this position needed? In the last 10 years, literacy coaches have evolved into "partners with teachers for job-embedded professional learning that enhances teachers' reflection on students, the curriculum, and pedagogy for the purpose of more effective decision making" (Toll, 2014, p. 10). A literacy coach's primary responsibility is to support teachers' needs and concerns about literacy instruction (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2010; Shaw, 2007; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). Though the focus of the literacy coach position is on the implementation of initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards (Toll, 2014; Wepner, Strickland, & Quatroche, 2014), the shift towards building relationships between coaches and teachers is evident.

The role of literacy coaches as partners alongside teachers requires knowledge of adult learning theory, change management, group dynamics, emotional intelligence, and cultural proficiency (Aguilar, 2011). Adult learning theory posits that adults learn differently from children (Cave, LaMaster, & White, 2006). Change management

requires the approach to coaching as structured as well as thoroughly and smoothly implemented with lasting benefits (Change Management, 2017). Understanding group dynamics and emotional intelligence distinguishes colleagues as co-learners and does not tread on their self-efficacy and identity as professionals (Walpole & Beauchat, 2008). Cultural proficiency is where the teacher being coached is “educationally responsive to diverse populations of students” (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2006, p. 5). As reflected above, building partnerships with teachers is a complex process.

Moreover, Toll (2008, 2014) emphasizes the importance of partnerships between teachers and coaches. She states the term ‘partnership’ reiterates the message of collaboration, mutual respect, listening, honoring, and supporting one another’s beliefs and practices while recognizing the unique traits each person brings to the partnership. Hicks (2002) adds that relationships give meaning to practice. How do literacy coaches begin building relationships with teachers without seeming judgmental or authoritative, yet still conduct observations, provide feedback, model, facilitate, and present information? These essential components are central to my narrative inquiry as a new literacy coach.

Research on literacy coaching in education. Though variations of the coaching model are not new to education (Hall, 2004) under *No Child Left Behind*, the *Reading First Initiative* directed funds specifically for school-embedded literacy coaches. The need to do something to address the growing achievement gap and the frustration over the traditional one-day workshops resulted in a widespread expansion of coaching across urban districts (Russo, 2004) and the entire State of Florida (Florida Department of Education, 2006). This initiative was one of the most significant federal projects,

placing coaches at the forefront to improve reading outcomes for student performance in low-performing schools (Bright & Hensley, 2010).

Though the Reading-First model initially focused on grades K-3, states like Florida, through federal and state funds, expanded the initiative and hired 2,000 additional reading or literacy coaches across the State in K-12 schools (Just Read Florida, 2017). Under Reading First, schools faced three main tasks. First, the reading curricula and materials must focus on the five essential components of reading as defined by the initiative. Second, schools must provide professional development and coaching on the implementation of scientifically-based reading practices and how to work with struggling readers. Third, school faculty must diagnose struggling readers and provide interventions and progress monitoring (Reading First Impact Study, 2008).

With these guidelines in place, school districts relied on literacy coaches to provide the necessary support to advance the goals of the initiative; despite this call, the initial Reading-First coaches, though experienced teachers, had little or no prior coaching experience (Deussen et al., 2007). Moreover, states and districts were left to determine clear roles of coaching positions and provide adequate coach training. So, early in the initiative, without clear coaching roles or coach training, high-quality teacher training was problematic (Dole, 2003; International Reading Association, 2004).

In response to the lack of clarity, under the *Standards for Reading Professionals* (2004b), the *International Reading Association* (2000a, 2000b) and the *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* (2005) published a position statement to clarify the roles of reading coaches, reading specialists, and literacy coaches. The statement emphasized the literacy coaches' primary roles and responsibilities were to work with

teachers, relay their expertise on reading research and requirements, and build knowledge together through collaborative work in professional learning communities. This position statement caused a frenzy of reflective articles and how-to books about the roles of coaching, from what coaches did themselves to what they believed about the role of a coach (Casey, 2006; Dozier, 2006; Toll, 2005; Puig & Froelich, 2007; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

In the last ten years (2007-2017), with the end of *No Child Left Behind* and the rise of the Common Core State Standards, the research on reading or literacy coaching has expanded its focus beyond the three core tasks as defined by the *Reading First Initiative*. Also, researchers such as Deussen et al. (2007) learned the implementation of coaching policies and programs varies widely between schools. Because of the broad range of roles and responsibilities, it is difficult to pinpoint the overall effectiveness of reading coaches. Despite these issues, there remains a strong push to employ reading or literacy coaches in schools across the United States (Dean et al., 2012).

Due to the limited empirical studies of coaches and coaching before 2007 (Walpole & Blamey, 2008), the fading of the *Reading First Initiative*, and the growing knowledge about the diverse roles and responsibilities of reading or literacy coaches, I focused on research in the last 10 years (2007-2017). However, I included Wren and Reed's 2005 publication with the *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* on "Literacy Coaches' Roles and Responsibilities" and the *International Reading Association's* 2004 brochure on "The Role and Qualifications of Reading Coaches in the United States." The latter two pieces of literature have been seminal in researchers' publications of articles and books in broadly defining the roles of reading or literacy

coaches. Moreover, in 2010 and 2015 these recommendations reemerged with a shift from the emphasis on reading to literacy. This period is pertinent because of the shift from the constraints of the federal initiative to states' and districts' implementation of their initiatives and how the roles and responsibilities of coaches have evolved through the growing knowledge of the many factors involved in coaching.

Roles and Responsibilities of Literacy Coaches

With the *Reading First Initiative* under the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, K-3 education witnessed a strong focus on closing the achievement gap through the implementation of Reading-First Coaches. Traditionally, in a similar role known as reading specialists, they worked directly with struggling readers using scientifically-based reading strategies to close the achievement gap. However, with the *Reading First Initiative*, reading specialists were asked to serve as reading or literacy coaches, to provide teachers with scientifically-based reading research and strategies for struggling K-3 grade readers (Wren & Reed, 2005).

With this change in roles, the *International Reading Association* (2004) and the *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* (2005) published recommendations for reading or literacy coach roles. The *International Reading Association* members looked at Bean's (2004) research on effective literacy instruction, which developed three levels of literacy instruction: level one, to build relationships with colleagues; level two, to collaborate on lesson plans and student assessments; and level three, to model, co-teach, and provide feedback. *The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* provided five recommendations for the literacy coach's role:

1. Literacy coaches are resources for the teachers and provide support in a nonjudgmental way.
2. Most of the literacy coach's time is spent working with teachers and on their own professional development.
3. The literacy coach does not work with students unless it is to demonstrate lessons to teachers.
4. The literacy coach focuses on the five areas of instructional support for teachers: theory underlying instruction, demonstration of activities, observation of teachers practicing new lessons, feedback and reflection about instruction, and supporting collaboration among teachers.
5. The coach facilitates frequent staff meetings devoted to examining samples of student work and assessment data, to help teachers interpret assessment information and use the information to provide more focused instruction based on student needs. (Wren & Reed, 2005)

In 2006, the *International Reading Association* and *National Council of Teachers of English* came together and established standards for secondary level literacy coaches. They determined coaches needed to know how to implement valid assessment practices, how to teach literacy, and how to work with adults and facilitate change (International Reading Association, 2006). Also, to assist coaches with these standards, the University of Colorado in conjunction with the *International Reading Association* and the *National Council of Teachers of English* established the "Literacy Coach Clearinghouse" (2006) for information about literacy coaching.

In Deussen et al. (2007) examination of literacy coaches across five western states, they discovered literacy coaches were experienced teachers but inexperienced in coaching roles. More than half had advanced degrees while only 38% had advanced training in literacy. They divided their coaching responsibilities into five categories: data-oriented coaches, student-oriented coaches, managerial coaches, and two teacher-oriented coach categories. All the coaches juggled various duties, but the amount of time spent in each of these roles varied from state to state. In three of the five states, coaches were asked to spend 60% to 80% of their time with teachers. The data revealed data-oriented coaches spent 45% of the time on data, student-oriented coaches spent 14% of the time with teachers, managerial coaches spent a substantial amount of their time keeping the school running, and teacher-oriented coaches spent 41-52% of their time with teachers.

The researchers determined from these findings that one strong consideration in the study of reading or literacy coaches is the regional variations in labor markets and educational backgrounds. Furthermore, coach training varies from state to state and how individual coaches perform their duties changes from person to person. Shaw (2009) learned that in Title 1 schools, coaches could not institute the recommended coaching roles and responsibilities because they focused on raising test scores, scripted instruction, and year-long test preparation. Consequently, Shaw emphasized, in keeping with the Standards for Reading Professionals, reading specialists (now reading or literacy coaches) needed proper training to “build essential knowledge, skills and dispositions to be effective” (p. 10). Walpole and Blamey (2009) conducted a study on the implementation of the Reading Excellent Act Georgia state initiative, where

principals and coaches worked alongside one another to build a literacy program for their school. The study involved 14 principals and 17 literacy coaches. Through this process, the researchers learned that principals and coaches viewed the coach's role as either director or mentor. As director, the coach's role is as a curriculum developer, trainer, and formative observer. As a mentor, the coach designs professional development, facilitates teacher groups, and demonstrates instruction inside and outside the classroom.

Likewise, in a study of 20 literacy coaches in Pennsylvania Reading-First schools, Bean et al. (2010) reported similar roles and time allocation. Coaches reported time as follows: 23.6% with individual teachers, 21.1% as management, 20.6% with school-related tasks, 14.2% planning and organizing, 12.1% working with groups of teachers, and 8.2% working with students. Cornell and Knight (2009) reminded us, through the International Reading Association's adoption of Dole's (2004) definition, that a literacy coach is anyone who "supports a teacher in their daily work" (p. 203). Unlike other forms of coaching, literacy coaching does not subscribe to "a set of common core duties, a theory, or how coaches perform their jobs" (Cornell & Knight, 2009, p. 203).

With the 2009 launch of national education standards backed by 48 states and two territories of the United States, a shift from reading standards to literacy standards was about to occur with the states' adoption of a common core set of standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017). In anticipation, the *International Reading Association* changed its name to the *International Literacy Association* (2010) and published a new set of standards for reading specialists or literacy coaches

adapted from McKenna and Stahl (2009). *Figure 2* below reflects the standards for reading specialists or literacy coaches from 2004 versus 2010:

<p>Standards for Reading Professionals, International Reading Association (2004):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundational knowledge 2. Instructional strategies and curriculum materials 3. Assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation 4. Creating a literate environment and 5. Professional development 	<p>Standards for Reading Specialist/Literacy Coaches, International Literacy Association (2010):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundational knowledge 2. Curriculum and instruction 3. Assessment and evaluation 4. Diversity 5. Literate environment 6. Professional learning and leadership
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Figure 2. Standards for reading specialists/literacy coaches from 2004 and 2010.

The key differences of the above set of standards are the added 2010 standard of diversity and the modified standard of professional learning and leadership. The combined standard of diversity stresses literacy practices must include awareness, understanding, respect, and a value of the differences in our society. Professional learning and leadership remove the evaluative component from the previous standards and focuses on modeling and continued improvement of one’s practice.

Matsumura, Garnier, and Resnick’s (2010) three-year longitudinal study begin to reflect the change in standards for literacy coaches discussed above. Their study followed the implementation of a district initiative of a comprehensive literacy coaching program called Content-Focused Coaching (CFC) and the pre-existing literacy coaching social resources. The social resources of influence considered were “principal leadership, school-level norms for teachers’ professional community, and participant characteristics” (Matsumura, Garnier, & Resnick, 2010, p. 250). Their study involved 29 randomly assigned urban elementary schools, 15 schools that participated in the CFC

program, and 14 schools that continued only with the literacy coaching resources standard for the district. The participants consisted of 11 literacy coaches and 193 fourth and fifth-grade teachers.

The Content-Focused Coaches trained in five content areas: build knowledge of theory on effective coaching, plan and reflect on instruction, assist during lesson implementation, differentiate instruction, and build a learning community. In the first four content areas, the survey results showed the teachers at the CFC schools participated more frequently than non-CFC school teachers. The teachers who worked with Content-Focused Coaches participated more regularly in the coaching activities, moderately in weekly grade-level team meetings with the coach, and minimally co-teaching a lesson with the coach. On the other hand, teachers' coaching experiences were negatively predicted in school cultures with pre-existing professional learning communities. This study was unique because it addressed both training activities for coaches (including differentiated instruction) and the environmental factors related to coaching. The study, along with the modified standards for literacy coaching, reflected not only the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of coaching but a change in the focus of the research about this position.

Building relationships. As the role of the literacy coach continues to evolve, one aspect of successful coaching—and a tenant to working with adult learners—is building relationships. Since the fading of the *Reading First Initiative* and the autonomy of states and districts to hire coaches without federal constraints, a research focus has emerged on relationship building in literacy coaching. Since coaches are tasked to work with amenable and resistant teachers, coaches must tread lightly on advice and listen

and learn from their colleagues. An early study by Ippolito (2010) classified relationships between literacy coaches and teachers as responsive and directive. The results of the study showed coaches must maneuver between these two relationships to build supportive relationships with teachers and make concrete suggestions about instructional practices. In Smith's (2012) study of three middle-school coaches, building positive relationships with teachers was identified as one of the two main steps to foster change and growth in a school. Also, Smith added building relationships is the stepping stone to effectuate positive teacher change and, on a larger scale, complex school structures.

Coburn and Woulfin (2012) studied the coach's ability to mediate the relationship between policy and teachers' classroom practice. Like Ippolito (2010), coaches needed to learn how to strike a balance between administrative directives and maintain a responsive relationship with the teachers. Coburn and Woulfin (2012) learned, even though coaches were messengers of policy initiatives, they played a key role in the influence of teachers' variable responses. Coaches "supported teachers in making changes in their practice by helping them learn new instructional approaches and integrate them into their classrooms" (p. 13). They influenced teachers' practice through classroom demonstrations, co-teaching, one-on-one assistance with instructional planning and logistical organization. In the end, teachers linked coaches' messages to the policy in place; thus, the teachers viewed the coach as acting at the behest of the principal.

Moreover, in Smith's (2012) study, the coaches revealed building relationships was a complicated process. Coaches build positive relationships through the check-in

process of casually stopping by a teacher's classroom to say hello, fostering a desire from the teacher to be coached, being flexible with teacher meetings and observations, establishing a clear purpose for observations, and subtle approaches to feedback.

Correspondingly, Hakeem and Woodcock (2015) co-constructed a participatory case study of an experienced literacy coach and reflections on building relationships with teachers and administration. The coach defined professional relationships as being carried out on a continuum and partnerships as multidimensional. Upon reflection, Hakeem redefined her coaching relationships as relational and on a continuum between collegial to close. Through her experience, Hakeem learned there are two characteristics to these types of relationships: non-judgmental empathy and confidentiality. The former fosters mutual engagement in discussion, which leads to empathy. The latter builds trust, which she terms as "foundational" (p. 25). To reach relational coaching, Hakeem contends there are three tangible practices. First, the coach is given time for regular meetings with teachers. Next, resistant colleagues learn to trust the coach long before any academic coaching occurs. Finally, a coach listens and respectfully probes for what is said and not said. With these practices in place, "relational coaching becomes transformative" (p. 25).

Olienhout, McKinney, and Reeves' (2014) case study on three middle-school literacy coaches revealed the everyday practice of literacy coaching involved building trusting relationships. They learned relationships were fundamental to the success of the position. The coaches fulfilled this responsibility through symbolic gestures, selecting locations for interactions, and shaping the content of the discourse. The findings showed symbolic gestures built sustained relationships "through a willingness

to do just about anything” (Lowenhaupt, McKinney, & Reeves, 2014, p. 750). Next, coaches wanted to provide a safe space for teachers and coaches to interact. They believed a public space, such as the library, was a good place to meet, so both colleagues were on equal ground; “this supported the development of trusting relationships” (Lowenhaupt, McKinney & Reeves, 2014, p. 752). Finally, the coaches believed the discussion of the teachers’ content of their discourse centered on the curriculum, not the teaching style. The researchers concluded there is an understanding of the disparity between the actual implementation and the initial vision of coaching. Coaches first work to build trusting relationships long before they engage in difficult conversations about instruction.

Beliefs and Practices of Literacy Coaches

“It is important to investigate the many forces that influence coaches’ work and to understand the ways in which these influences affect how coaches feel about their work” (Cantrell et al, 2015, p. 563). The quotation above explains how coaching is not made up of a prescribed set of roles and responsibilities; it includes coaches’ beliefs and practices, which may be a strong factor in teacher and student success. To date, the stand-alone research on literacy coaches’ beliefs and practices about their work is limited at best. The only research I found on this subject was subsets to studies on coaches struggling to define their roles and responsibilities. Lynch and Ferguson (2010) conducted a study on the perceptions of literacy coaches to determine their roles, beliefs, and practices. The outcomes reported coaches faced limited principal involvement, resistant teachers, too many schools, role uncertainty, and limited resource materials. Coaches reported the need for regular meetings with the principal to

clarify the coach's role and the principal's role in supporting the coach. Second, some coaches faced resistant teachers due to personality differences, insecurities, and lack of knowledge of how to utilize the coach. Third, coaches assigned to more than one school reported a need to have more time to work with teachers to build relationships. Further, some coaches were uncertain of their role as a coach. Though they believed themselves to be competent, their roles steadily evolved as they learned along the way.

Overall, the researchers in the study above aligned their findings to the theory that literacy coaches serve several roles (Walpole & Blamey, 2008), coaches work closely with teachers to support, assist, and guide them (Bean & Carroll, 2006), and the first step of literacy coaching is to build relationships with teachers (Shaw, 2006). Similarly, in Lowenhaupt, McKinney and Reeves' (2014) study of the roles of three middle school literacy coaches, coaches served many roles to build relationships with their colleagues, to successfully navigate what they believed to be their role as a teaching model and co-structor of curriculum, and to be a provider of resources.

In a more relatable study to a literacy coach's beliefs and practices, Cantrell et al. (2015) conducted a study on literacy coaches' self and collective efficacy about their ability to influence student achievement. The literacy coaches served as intervention teachers and coaches. Data were collected on their efficacy in both positions. As first-year literacy coaches, the coaches started confidently in their positions. However, by the end of the year, the coaches were overwhelmed and faced with teacher resistance. In the second year, the coaches' self-efficacy improved as they felt more confident because of their growth in expertise and abilities. Additionally, the researchers reported a sense of self-efficacy influenced by social supports. The coaches received support

from mentors and professional development staff, feedback, and recognition. This level of support changed how the coaches felt about their work and abilities.

Over and above personal efficacy, the coaches reported on the importance of collective efficacy of the teachers. Coaches who initially faced teacher resistance witnessed a change in the faculty as they saw the success of the coaching model in their school. Furthermore, as the coaches grew confident in their role, the teachers opened to modeling and coaching.

Identity and power. Coaches juggle various identities and positions of power within their beliefs and practices. Rainville and Jones (2008) argue that like any social practice, the act of coaching takes on new and different relational dynamics in various contexts. These situated identities (Gee, 1999) allow coaches to maneuver between social, cultural, and political demands. Jones and Rainville's study describe one such coach's experience maneuvering varied identities upon building relationships with colleagues, as a concerned colleague, a friend, a co-learner, and an outsider. Additionally, coaches reveal positions of power as an expert, co-learner, and guiding teacher practice.

Similarly, Mangin and Dunsmore (2013) discovered how a new literacy coach struggled to position herself in her work with social, cultural, and political perspectives at play. She faced conflicting viewpoints about her role as the literacy coach and questioned her beliefs about what constitutes legitimate coaching practices. This literacy coach believed being tasked to work with a struggling teacher because of her "expert literacy knowledge" (p. 244) placed her in an evaluative position instead of a "sharer of knowledge" (p. 244) and a co-planner. Also, she believed the principal's and

the district's perception of her role conflicted. These competing views left the literacy coach "feeling as if she were disappointing everyone, including herself" (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2013, p. 244). Thus, the study exposed the literacy coach's beliefs about her role as a facilitator of instructional reform and how it conflicted with the different activity settings that varied the position or identity of her work.

Hunt and Handsfield (2013) examined literacy coaches' beliefs and practices on the issues of identity, power, and positioning in their professional development with fellow literacy coaches. Their qualitative study of three literacy coaches' stories reported the coaches felt pressure among their colleagues to prove themselves as experts in literacy theory and best practices. However, the coaches believed they needed to strike a balance between the demonstration of knowledge and expertise and the support of teachers through collaborative, trusting relationships.

Calo, Sturtevant, and Kopfman's (2015) study on how literacy coaches perceive themselves as literacy leaders connected the identity, power struggles, and positioning discussed in the two previous studies. In the study, the researchers collected data from literacy coaches about their roles and responsibilities, training of coaches as literacy leaders, and coaches' views of themselves as literacy leaders.

The overall findings of how literacy coaches perceive themselves as literacy leaders reflected that 93% considered themselves as leaders in support of teachers and their school. Though, "how coaches support their teachers varied and ranged from providing instructional support behind the scenes to direct instructional leadership" (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015, p. 4). Of the 270 surveyed, Calo, Sturtevant, and Kopfman (2015) learned 94% reported mentoring and coaching, 10% reported giving

professional development, and 9% reported committee participation and leadership. Coaches also reported being literacy leaders through the support of the school. Some help consisted of collaboration with the administration about literacy goals, the link of stakeholders between the district and the school site, and the support of schoolwide initiatives through sharing information throughout the institution.

Moreover, coaches reported their roles and responsibilities of coaching and their need for professional development as literacy leaders labeled them as coaches' character and competence. In the realm of character, "Participants reported effective literacy leaders needed dispositions that included the ability to build trust, collaborate, be flexible, and have a positive attitude" (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015, p. 8). The researchers added building relationships is at the intersection of character and competence. On this, the participants reported building relationships (is necessary) "to build trust," building relationships to find "a coalition of the willing," and building relationships "to have people to touch base with and feel part of the group" (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015, p. 9). In building trust, literacy leaders must have competence "to understand the needs, initiatives, programs, philosophies, and overall context of schools..." (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015, p. 8). To that end, in competence, 75% of the participants reported the need for ongoing professional development to build their knowledge.

Literacy Coaches Building Professional Learning Communities

Coaches and teachers' perceptions. The professional development for teachers experienced drastic changes under No Child Left Behind with the added responsibility of the Reading-First Coaches' administration of professional development

for teachers. As stated above, even though literacy coaches were experienced teachers, they had little or no experience teaching adults. Moreover, with unclear coaching roles and responsibilities, coaches were left with questions about their power and authority to lead professional learning communities. Early in the process of the legislation, Scott, Cay, and Carlisle (2011) conducted a study of this legislative initiative on the professional training and knowledge of Reading-First coaches. The researchers studied the structure and substance of coach-teacher interactions and teachers' perceptions of factors that influence the effectiveness of the coach. The structure and substance of coach-teacher interactions were through on-going grade-level meetings, book study groups, one-on-one meetings, modeling, and co-teaching in the classroom.

Thus, Scott, Cay, and Carlisle (2011) learned coaches reported they only spent 2% of their time engaged in leading professional development. Moreover, teachers who reported satisfaction with their coaches were those who scheduled grade-level meetings regularly. Because of this study, the teachers' satisfaction with working with coaches was more about the coaches' interpersonal skills and what they did than the demonstration of their knowledge. Therefore, to bridge the gap between working with individual teachers or grade-level departments to a community of teacher learners involves the construction of reliable, trusting relationships.

In another study about literacy coaches and professional learning communities, Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) learned literacy coaches who facilitated bimonthly study groups for teachers then spent four days a week in the teachers' classrooms to help them implement practices from the study groups reported positive outcomes. The results of the study reflected teachers built strong collaborative relationships with their

colleagues, and they learned new strategies in the group sessions and the classroom sessions.

In Berbestsky and Carlisle's (2010) comparative study between a group of 69 first-grade teachers, 39 with coaches and 30 without coaches, revealed a marked difference in teachers' perceptions about coaching and professional development. In this study, all teachers attended a one-year seminar during the school year to improve their knowledge of reading instruction and methods to assess effective instruction. The participants' response to the professional development showed 83% with the Professional Development coaches, and 90% with no Professional Development coaches agreed that teachers with the coaches deepened their knowledge of the subject matter. Also, asked whether it changed their teaching practice, 86% with the Professional Development coaches and 70% with the no Professional Development coach expressed changes in their teaching methods.

Finally, Skinner, Hagood, and Provost (2014) conducted a study with two middle-school literacy coaches regarding their implementations of professional learning communities. One middle school had mandatory professional development while the other school held voluntary professional development. In the former, the first-year literacy coach facilitated the sessions and guided the teachers on planning and executing lessons across subject areas. However, in the second year, the teachers left to their devices struggled to collaborate and expressed frustration about planning and implementing cross-curricular literacy lessons. When the coach stepped back in and was explicit about the definition, the plan, and the implementation of new literacies across the curriculum, "everyone positioned themselves differently" (Skinner, Hagood, &

Provost, 2014, p. 228) and collaborated, designed, and implemented cross-curricular lessons that addressed reading, writing, and social studies standards. In contrast, in the school with voluntary professional development, the literacy coach was a co-learner alongside the teachers. The teachers embraced the “collaborative ethos spirit of new literacies and viewed their professional learning community as a relevant forum for bringing forth their diversity of identities as they negotiated new literacies content with one another” (Skinner, Hagood, & Provost, 2014, p.228). During their planning sessions, they created lessons using digital technologies, popular culture, and new literacy texts and tools. Overall, the researchers concluded that whether mandatory or voluntary, literacy coaches must build relationships and work alongside their colleagues to plan and implement lessons rather than just model or deliver them.

Teachers’ beliefs and practices. In addition to coaches’ beliefs and practices, teachers’ beliefs and practices play a significant role in the success of building relationships and defining the roles and responsibilities of the coach. Though research exists on the importance of understanding the impact teachers’ beliefs and practices have on students’ success through culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, there is little research on how to rectify the growing cultural divide between teachers and students. Gay (2010) discusses where “Teacher education continues to be dominated by European American students and instructors, but the children to be taught in public schools are radically different in both aspiration and actuality” (p. 143). With this divide, Gay further states that “most culturally diverse students and their teachers live in different worlds, and they do not fully understand or appreciate one another’s

experiential realities” (p. 144). With that reality, the following four studies reviewed reflect teachers’ beliefs about varied students’ learning.

In this first study, Nganga (2015) followed 10 pre-service teachers enrolled in a 16-week early childhood course on the benefits of culturally responsive and anti-biased teaching. The focus of the study was to understand how pre-service teachers perceive anti-biased culturally responsive teaching, how the use of anti-biased culturally response materials impact the view of the pre-service teachers and their students, and how self-awareness and self-reflection support transformative learning. The data collected were reflections and discussion notes. The researcher analyzed the data for common themes. The results reflected pre-service teacher misconceptions about a culturally responsive anti-bias curriculum, the need to engage such materials and the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection in teaching to diversity. The findings of this study revealed the significance of such coursework in teacher education programs and how teachers mismatched beliefs, lack of culturally responsive practices and misperceptions impact the implementation of diverse cultural learning.

In the next study, Turner, Christensen, and Meyer (2009) examined teachers’ beliefs about student learning and motivation in a mathematics classroom. The focus of the study from a larger study was on the teachers’ beliefs and how they develop, what beliefs teachers hold about student learning and motivation, and how these beliefs and instruction can change. The researchers learned “Teachers’ beliefs appear to reflect longstanding attitudes, ‘common sense,’ and their experiences in education, rather than research-based knowledge about learning and motivation” (Turner, Christensen, & Meyer, 2009, p. 361). Specifically, the researchers learned teachers lacked insight into

the learning process, and their “beliefs about what is a positive learning environment may not necessarily involve beliefs about what is effective learning” (Turner, Christensen, & Meyer, 2009, p. 362). Teachers’ beliefs focus more on student behavior and less on student meaning-making. These same beliefs extend to teachers’ expectations in their beliefs about learning and motivation. Teachers’ beliefs about learning and motivation were based more on stereotypes or bias than achievements and test scores.

Finally, the researchers learned though teachers were willing to change their beliefs and practices, the process was not smooth. One such participant altered her views of mathematics curriculum and instruction in connection with student learning. Her teaching focused on conceptual understanding, which lent itself to students’ construction of meaning. She also carried this change in belief systems into teacher meetings by offering other teachers’ suggestions and challenging their misconceptions. Despite these changes, the researchers learned “strong emphasis on test scores in the school district and lack of support from administrators, discouraged teachers and prompted them to navigate an inconsistent course between old and new practices” (Turner, Christensen, & Meyer, 2009, p. 368).

Chandler’s 2014 study looks at teachers’ beliefs about students in poverty and how these beliefs impact the learning disability identification process. This qualitative case study involved semi-structured interviews of 11 teachers between grades K-12. Ten of the 11 participants were self-identified as middle-class, and one identified between poverty and middle-class. Six primary themes identified were: the first three related to teachers’ assumptions, the fourth addressed teachers’ background, and the

fifth and sixth pertained to pre-referral interventions and the discrepancy model (p. 4). The teachers' assumed hard work could overcome poverty, schools can take on both the students' academic and personal needs, and poverty is not as bad as it seems. Another recurring theme was "The mismatch between the social class lens of the teachers and the social class experiences of the students they were attempting to serve" (Chandler, 2014, p. 5). Teachers' middle-class beliefs impacted how teachers interpret and deal with situations. So social class experiences may lead to a misunderstanding about expectations.

The fifth common theme was though teachers desired struggling students obtain additional assistance, once in place, the teachers did not implement it. They were more focused on showing they tried, than implementation of the practices. Finally, the last theme reflected that most participants still referred to old identification processes for identifying students with disabilities. With new procedures in place, teachers either did not get adequate training to track progress towards identification of learning disabilities, or if the struggling students were already getting assistance, they disregarded the letter of the law (p. 6).

Finally, Samuels (2018) conducted a study on teachers' perspectives on fostering equitable, inclusive classrooms. The participants were 200 teachers who first attended two three-hour training sessions on the theoretical framework and pedagogical practice of cultural responsiveness. Next, after they instituted the practices in their classroom, the team of 200 met in small focus groups of four or five each and discussed their beliefs about the benefits and challenges of teaching culturally responsive pedagogy. The data collected were observations of the focus group dialogue and

related notes. The findings noted advantages and challenges. The researcher reported the benefits were in “relationship building, fostering cross-cultural understanding and inclusiveness, and influencing more diverse world views” (Samuels, 2018, p. 24). The challenges the participants voiced were trying to navigate controversial topics, limited teacher background knowledge on such issues, and teacher bias, personal and institutional. Generally, Samuels learned that without adequate deep content learning and classroom skills training in the subject, teachers will not step out of their comfort area and will only provide a cursory approach to a deep, crucial element of teaching.

Summary of Overall Findings

The research discussed in the previous section on the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches reflects a common theme about the lack of training on how to execute varied coaching roles and responsibilities with the administration, teachers, and school culture. Though the historical context of literacy coaching clearly defines the role is to establish high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction, it was unclear how to execute the initiative. The research reflected an evolution of coaching responsibilities from working with struggling students to coaching and modeling reading instruction for teachers. Though teaching teachers require knowledge of adult learning theory and subsequent expertise in other areas, coaches consistently reported no structured training in these areas. One consistent area of knowledge repeated through the studies as the first step in successful coaching is to build relationships with administrators and teachers. The lack of research on building effective relationships in coaching and unclear roles and responsibilities of the position indicated that much more work needs to be done to understand the complexities of coaching.

Moreover, in the studies conducted on coaches' roles and responsibilities, a strong emphasis was placed on the International Reading Association's and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's recommended roles for reading or literacy coaches. However, the studies reflected coaches' roles varied from state to state and within and across counties. A common theme throughout the studies was the lack of coach training in working with adult learners. One more recent study reflected the training of coaches and teachers together on the roles and responsibilities of coaching versus coaches placed in schools with no training. Coaches and teachers who worked alongside one another showed positive coaching outcomes. Coaches built relationships with fellow teachers as colleagues in co-trainings, which contributed to their ability to connect with teachers and conduct coaching activities.

A subset of the roles and responsibilities of coaching was building relationships with colleagues. With only the will to improve teacher practice and no administrative powers, coaches must build relationships with teachers to coach both amenable and resistant coaches effectively. The few studies conducted on this subject revealed building relationships is a complex process. In coaching, relationships are personal and professional and directive or responsive at times. Coaches must first understand how to build various relationships, then maneuver between their different roles or identities and ultimately, successfully effectuate change.

In addition to literacy coaches' roles and responsibilities, the beliefs and practices of and about literacy coaches are an important part of successful coaching. Few studies have been conducted on the beliefs and practices of and about literacy coaches. In one study, coaches voiced their struggles with their level of competency with unclear roles

and responsibilities, lack of knowledge in dealing with teacher resistance, and ways to juggle various identities and positions of power. Another study on literacy coaches' self and collective efficacy proved coaches must have a clear understanding of their roles and have trust and confidence with their fellow teachers. As part of coaches' beliefs and practices, they juggle various identities and positions of power. With social, cultural, and political demands, coaches need to understand how to move through each while still maintaining trusting relationships with teachers and administrators. Moreover, coaches must not misguide their positions of power as an expert, co-learner, and guiding teacher practice. Coaches walk a fine line between all these roles while maintaining trusting productive relationships and partnerships.

Next, the third set of research reviews on literacy coaches building professional learning communities demonstrated coaches must work alongside teachers and consider teachers' expertise when developing a community of learners. The studies revealed successful professional learning communities have consistent structure and substance of coaching and are on-going and relevant to the teachers' practice. The coach's role is to move from one-on-one coaching to community practices, with the recognition of teachers' views and experiences about their practice considered within the group. Most importantly, literacy coaches consistently facilitate the learning environment and support teachers as they learn to work together.

Finally, the fourth set of literature reviews on teachers' diverse beliefs and practices about their role, their students, and the institution play a significant part in teacher and student success. The studies identified teachers' misconceptions about their students and lack of knowledge about their pedagogy affected student learning.

Teachers misunderstood varied social and cultural views as a lack of student motivation to learn. Teachers' lack of knowledge outside of their class structure and district pressure impacted their ability to alter their teaching beliefs and practices to address students' needs. Given the growing cultural divide that Gay (2010) discusses and the minimal research reflected above, there is an increased need for coaches, administrators, and school districts to address the cultural diversity between teachers' beliefs and practices and their students' success.

Overall, the common theme of a coach's stance is defined by the relationships built with administrators and teachers. Without clear roles and responsibilities and various beliefs and practices, coaches and teachers must work together to change the school environment. All colleagues need to come together to empower the learning process as a community of learners to move forward as a school to improve student achievement. This study adds to and provides insight to the body of research on literacy coaching from the bottom up. I sought to discover what a new literacy coach's roles and responsibilities are and how building relationships define and fulfill the position. Also, I explored how the building of relationships is shaped through beliefs and practices by the literacy coach and teacher participants to impact teacher knowledge and change positively. Finally, I examined what actions must take place, from building one-on-one relationships with teacher colleagues to the development of professional learning communities.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I provide my research puzzle. Next, I discuss how narrative inquiry shaped and guided this study. Then, I give the justifications for the study and elaborate on the research method. I conclude with detailed information on the specific research design.

My Research Puzzle

The ensuing research puzzle reflects my wonder about (a) building relationships, modeling, and coaching, (b) establishing professional learning communities as a new literacy coach, and (c) paying attention to teachers' beliefs and practices as a new literacy coach.:

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate between my roles and responsibilities to build partnerships with two English language arts (ELA) teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?
- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative research has gained momentum in the last 20 years in educational research literature and as a “nascent” research methodology across disciplines (Webster & Merdova, 2007). Though narrative inquiry is a relatively new research method, dimensions of narrative stem from the likes of the philosopher Dewey in education and various researchers: Geertz and Bateson in anthropology, Polkinghorne in psychology, and Coles and Czarniawska in organizational theory (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Paramount to Clandinin and Connelly’s arrival to narrative inquiry is Dewey’s (1938) view of the term experience as a form of investigation in educational research. Drawing from other disciplines, Geertz (1995) and Bateson (1994) recognize narrative to document change in people and places. Polkinghorne (1988) identifies current social science research methodology as not applicable to his profession and looks to narrative as the basis of his profession and recognizes the temporal dimension in its organizational structure.

On the other hand, Coles (1989) explains how narrative revealed the stories of his patients and relationships among reader, author, text, patient, and life. Czarniawska (1997) borrows the term “narrative” to reflect on the nature and intensity of institutional transformations. These scholars’ use of narrative in their work creates new dimensions to consider in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Geertz (1995) and Bateson (1994) introduce tentativeness into the thoughts of narrative inquirers. Tentativeness is the knowledge that people and places change, and researchers and their narratives are always open to revision. The tentativeness in narrative inquiry makes this the best approach for this study. Baumeister adds, “the narrative mode involves coherent stories

about particular experiences, which are temporally structured and context-sensitive. Narrative is the mode of thought that best captures the experiential particularity of human action and intentionality..." (p. 677). This study focuses on the temporal experiences of the human action and intentionality of building relationships, modeling, coaching, and fostering professional learning communities.

Also, contributing to the development of narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) quote the following three narrative researchers who emphasize the importance of narrative in joining research and practice in education. Coles "offers us a trust in life, and he encourages us to listen to our teaching, to the stories that we, and those we teach tell" (1989, p. 17). Czarniawska and Polkinghorne offer narrative inquirers "the possibility of borrowing theories, metaphors, and terms from other disciplines as a way to bridge our research with practice" (1997, p. 17).

Taken with the recognition of these researchers' experience, and as a manner to consider in education and educational studies, it is only natural to arrive at narrative inquiry as a method of investigation. It is natural because human experiences occur narratively; Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remind narrative researchers that we view life as "filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (p. 17). These narrative unities and discontinuities are the temporal or tentative experiences that narrative inquirers seek to study and understand. Thus, "Narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and phenomena of study" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 3).

Through further development of narrative inquiry as a method and phenomena, Clandinin (2013) learned some essential terms and distinctions that guide what counts within this narrative research field. Predicated on the view of experience, narrative inquirers look beyond the term grand or staged narrative to the personal or small narrative. Grand narratives are an unquestioning way of looking at things, where educational objectives build on observable, classifiable behaviors (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Conversely, personal or small narratives are based on experiences and have three-dimensional distinctions of temporality, sociality, and place. Narrative focuses on the first-person account of experiences told in story form with a beginning, middle, and end (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Similar qualitative methods, such as phenomenology and ethnography, only identify either the universal essences of shared experiences as in phenomenology or the study of society and culture with ethnography. For this study, the personal narrative is the preferred method because it allows the researcher to seek a first-person account of rich, in-depth stories that represent profound experiences of a new literacy coach along with two colleagues in an intermediate elementary school. This study focuses on the human experience, considered individually and socially, in the realm of storied lives with the researcher as a participant living alongside the participants discovering the experience collectively (Clandinin, 2013).

Thus, Clandinin (2013) advises “There are two starting points for narrative inquiry: beginning with living stories or beginning with telling stories” (p. 34). This study commenced with living stories where I, as the literacy coach, worked alongside ELA teachers to build relationships, coach and model lessons, and develop learning

communities. As a participant researcher, I shared the experiences with two teachers as they maneuvered their way through their early experiences of teaching in an ELA classroom. Thus, to capture these understandings in various contexts, I consistently thought about experience in a three-dimensional way.

Three-dimensional inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Clandinin (2013) position narrative inquiry within a three-dimensional space with temporality along one dimension, sociality along the second dimension, and place along the third dimension. Temporality examines the experience in the past, present, and future. The temporal dimension in this inquiry recognized the relationship between the past, present, and future experiences as part of understanding my role as a literacy coach building relationships, modeling, and coaching teachers. Sociality refers to the personal conditions of feelings, hopes, and desires, and social conditions apply to the environment in which the experience is unfolding (Clandinin, 2013). The social context of my experience with building relationships with my colleagues was an integral part of being a successful literacy coach. I considered both the teachers' and students' personal and social conditions as I modeled and coached. The personal and social conditions of the experience considered were personal and professional beliefs, institutional norms, cultures, families, communities, and languages of the participants and myself.

The third dimension of place initially recognized only the physical space where the experience occurs. In a further study, Clandinin (2013) identified the interconnection between place and experience, which denotes different dimensions of place. Dewey referred to place as the environment or medium that moves beyond the physical

surroundings and identifies the continuity of surroundings. The accounts told in this study were influenced by the physical space and the experience. The setting of this study, with the recent shift from a middle-class white community school to busing from low-income black communities, and the increase in international students moving into newly built communities surrounding the school site, shaped new perceptions about the traditions of the school. The temporal, personal and social, and place dimensions were essential considerations in understanding the stories communicated in this inquiry.

Justifications

To piece together my research puzzle, I considered the rich experiences that justified this study. Clandinin (2013) recommends personal, practical, and social justifications. She argues narrative inquiry is not merely anecdotal or individual; it is an in-depth process that involves various layers between the researchers, participants, and society. Justifications of the inquiry established the fundamental research necessary to accomplish a narrative inquiry study. As I wrote the proposal, I thought and regularly reflected about why I wanted to conduct this study and what contribution it had to social science research. I repeatedly recalled the first conversation I had with one of my administrators. When I asked her expectations of me as a literacy coach, she responded, “If all you accomplish in your first-year is building relationships with the teachers that is enough for me.” This statement and the literature about effective coaching created the wonderments I stated above. The following sections indicate my justifications.

Personal justification. In my teaching experience and work with my colleagues, I learned some teachers are unaware of the influence their stories, and their students’

stories have on the social and academic success of their classrooms. In my classroom, my students' stories were paramount to their academic success. As part of our classroom setting, students consistently tied what we learned to their experiences. Moreover, I intertwined my life history into our learning, so students connected with me. This social action created a community of academic and sociocultural knowledge in our classroom.

It was significant how I viewed myself concerning the stories of the school, who I am as a teacher, and a literacy coach, while building relationships with new colleagues in a new setting. As I reflected on who I am as a teacher and inquired into my lived and told stories, I was attentive to how I wove my stories and my students' stories into my ELA curriculum. I relied on literature that contained characters my students and I identified with to bridge our knowledge and discussions. Since it was important for me to know how my students learn and interact culturally, I created a classroom environment in which they felt safe. Through Vygotsky (1978), Daiute (2014) suggested that narration as a cultural tool is a psychosocial mediator or "conductor of human influence on the object of activity" and adds storytelling is a cultural tool for managing self-society relationships. Thus, the connection between my stories and my students' stories is culturally based, which empowers my students' personal and social experiences.

Practical justification. As I embarked on this study, Clandinin (2013) reminded me, as a researcher, I needed to attend to the relevance of considering shifts and changes in practice. I understood teachers' experiences varied depending on influences outside of my control, and I was prepared to take a different direction when necessary. So, being practical to the study meant I recognized the fluidity of how things reacted and

changed as the investigation ensued. My practical justification was grounded in the necessity to genuinely understand my role as a literacy coach, as I worked alongside my colleagues to create deep, rich learning environments for the academic success of all our students.

Social justification. Clandinin (2013) thinks about social justification in two ways, namely, theoretical or policy driven. This study is theoretical as I acquired new disciplinary knowledge from which literacy coaches and other educational professionals may draw.

Personal Narratives as a Research Method

Central to this narrative inquiry about my experience as a literacy coach working alongside my teacher participants are our narratives. Nash (2004) emphasizes that personal narratives are essential to supporting educators in their professional development. Effective teaching, modeling, and leadership are about story-telling and story evoking. Mutual story-telling among colleagues and with students creates an understanding of lived lives. Our personal stories contain our past, present, and future. Accordingly, Clandinin (2013) reminds us that “as we engage in narrative inquiry with ourselves and with our participants, we need to inquire into all these kinds of stories, stories that have become intertwined, interwoven into who we are and are becoming” (p. 22). The personal narrative is captivating and scholarly (Nash, 2004), and cultural, cognitive, and linguistic processes guide personal narratives to achieve the power to structure viewpoint, to organize memory, and to segment and build the events of an experience (Bruner, 1987, 2004).

The Dynamic Approach within Narrative Inquiry

When I began the process of thinking about this study and the application of Clandinin's (2013) narrative analysis to my research, I needed a way to emphasize the importance of Vygotskian's theory of sociocultural influence. The sociocultural influence on meaning-making in language is an essential element in creating my participants' and my narratives. Daiute's (2014) dynamic approach to narrative inquiry will help organize the social and cultural nature of my data collection. As my two participants and I worked alongside one another in this experience, the dynamic approach identified the interplay among the participants as our perspectives merged and diverged in social, institutional, and political processes. Clandinin (2013) advises narrative inquirers, as we enter research relationships amid life experiences, to remind ourselves that our lives and our participants' lives become shaped through the past, present, and future experiences that unfold through social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives. The dynamic approach helped me organize my thoughts as I constructed my narrative and co-constructed my participants' narratives, and it reminded me to revisit my justifications for this research consistently.

Additionally, Daiute's dynamic approach to narrative addresses the theory of educational change. Change theory or change knowledge is a large part of successful educational reform (Fullan, 2006). Traditionally, "Researchers who have designed studies over time, diverse situations, or other differences should have analyses available to observe for patterns of change" (Daiute, 2014, p. 240). However, the study of human knowing, development, and behavior as sociocultural phenomena lends itself to identifying change across situations (Daiute). Our roles as literacy coaches and

teachers place us in different positions as we build partnerships, implement a new curriculum, and develop professional learning communities. Narrative allows for the telling and retelling of personal and professional stories during which teachers may experience shifts and changes in their beliefs and practices (Meier & Stremmel, 2010). The dynamic narrative approach identifies these changes over situations, both in the principles explained below and later in the data analysis phase of identifying the six narrative elements, patterns and significance analysis in the narratives.

Briefly stated in Chapter One and expanded on here, Daiute (2014) presents four foundational principles to guide the research and design of a dynamic narrative that is illustrated below in *Figure 3*. First, the principle of use emphasizes discourse is an activity and may occur in various places and different stances. For example, instead of meeting with my participants only in their classroom or my office, we met after school and during lunch off campus at Barnes and Noble and various lunch venues close to the school. Meeting outside of school adds different dimensions to the creation of the narratives and meanings of life. The relation principle recognizes narrators tell their stories from present and implied others, objects, and ideas in environments. This principle is an important one considered throughout the study, as I consistently reminded myself when my participants and I recounted events that we have different background experiences when telling our stories. The third principle, materiality, accounts for the fact that stories are rooted in actual life. So, the physical features of the narrative, like exclamations, repetitions, structural elements, and prosaic openings, relate to the meaning of the experience. The last principle of diversity “refers to the difference within and across individuals and groups in the narrators’ stances-purposes,

feelings and thoughts-in relation to their audience at the time of telling” (Daiute, 2014, p. 25). The last two principles became evident in the data analysis of the narrative for significance and are explained further in Chapters Four and Five. Also, detailed below are four principles of use, relation, materiality, and diversity of a dynamic narrative inquiry.

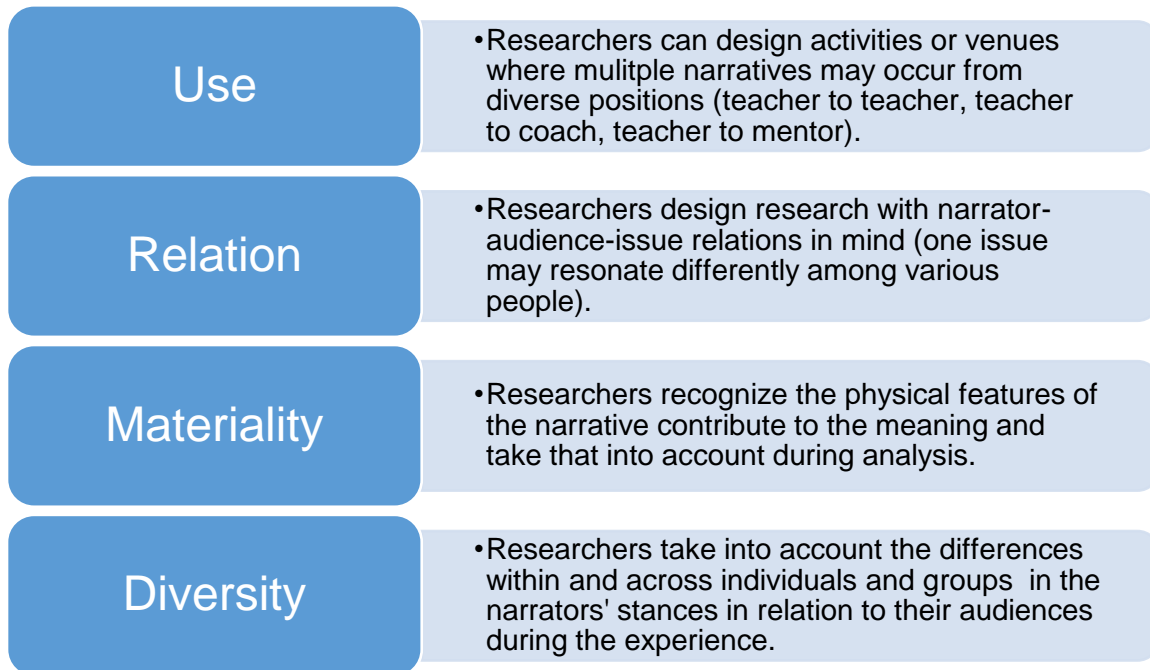


Figure 3. The four principles of a dynamic narrative inquiry according to Daiute (2014).

Narrative inquiry with a focus on social and cultural aspects sets the scene for a dynamic account. Though this process is relatively new, it provided a sense of factors to consider as I designed my narrative project. Moreover, Daiute’s method is considered part of the five approaches to narrative inquiry. Creswell and Poth (2017) stated she provides essential scaffolding with examples, activities, and tips and builds on practices of daily life connected to narrative research. Daiute’s form of detail to support a dynamic narrative guided me in how to include the necessary detail to provide a whole picture of my experience.

Narrative Analysis within Narrative Inquiry

In the proposal of this study, I thought Dauite's dynamic approach to narrative and Clandinin's (2013) method of narrative analysis was all I needed to produce the full-bodied personal stories from our rich experiences. When I started collecting data, I learned I needed a structure or way of building the narratives like a plot line in a story. After additional reading on narrative analysis, Bamburg (2012) through Labov's (1972) view of narrative cohesion building provided the structure I needed to organize my field notes. Labov (1972) identified elements or units that created cohesion building that result in a structural whole. The elements are:

an optional abstract (contextual overview), orientation (the setting or exposition), complication (the conflict or problem), resolution (also called the evaluation, which gives the reader ways to reach closure), closure or coda (the end or the here and now of the telling situation). (Bamburg, 2012, p. 82)

Together, narrative inquiry, the four dynamic principles, and Labov's narrative elements provided a way to analyze the narratives of working together as teachers and coaches in an ELA classroom. The narrative provided the story and experience. The four dynamic principles rounded out the narratives by adding the consideration of diversity to Clandinin's three-dimensional inquiry space. Labov's narrative elements organized the stories into a beginning, middle, and end through the cohesive aspects discussed above.

Research Design

This narrative inquiry of personal experience allowed me to engage in my story alongside my participants and their stories. We must inquire into the living stories we

planted “knowingly or unknowingly” (Okri, 1997, p. 46), which are intertwined and interwoven in who we are and who we are becoming, personally and professionally (Clandinin, 2013; Nash, 2004). As we develop our stories into narratives, we must be mindful of the elements of narrative. Leggo (2008) reminds us, with so many factors to consider, we must tell a dynamic narrative. My participants and I sought to communicate a dynamic description from the four principles outlined above that reflected the varying and overlapping stories of our discoveries as we embarked on building professional and personal relationships through modeling, coaching, and professional learning communities.

This section describes the process I went through to conduct this study. I begin with a description of the site selection for the study. Then, I share how I recruited my participants. Next, I discuss what roles in the coaching cycle my participants, and I negotiated as the study commenced. From there, we agreed on a research schedule for the study reflected below in Table 1. Last, I delineate the types of field notes I collected, and the tools used to analyze the data. *Figure 4* shows the timeline of the research planning and design of this study. Below is the explanation of each stage.

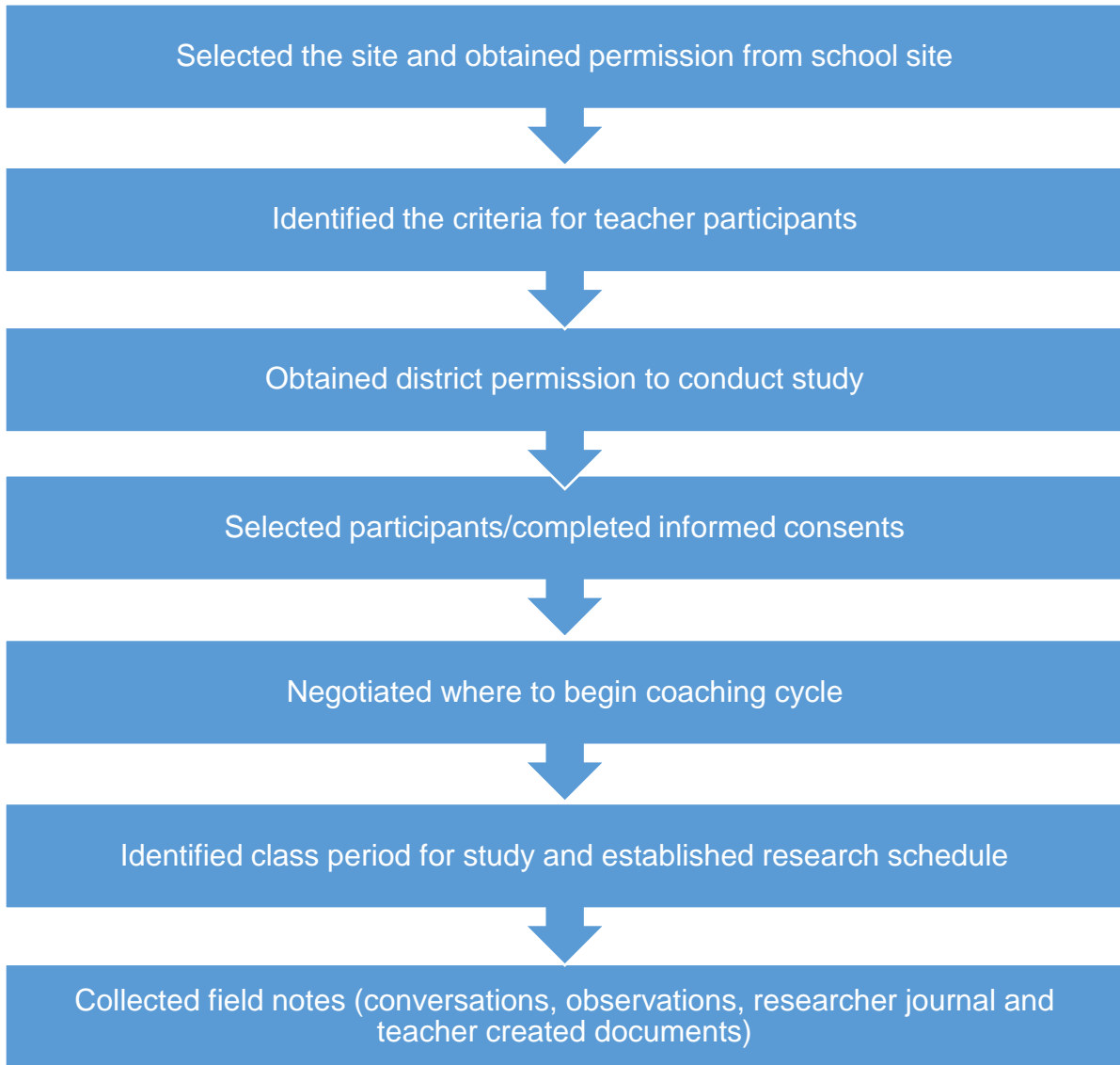


Figure 4. Timeline of the research planning and design.

School site. The district for this study is a medium-sized, semi-urban school district in the Southeastern United States. The school site is an intermediate elementary school, grades three through six. Students come from lower to middle socioeconomic families, approximately 70% are White, and 30% are of the minority (African-American, South- or Central-American, Caribbean, Middle-Eastern, Indian and Asian). At the time

of the study, there was a large student body of approximately 1,100 students and 74 teachers and staff.

To obtain permission for this inquiry, I met with the school principal and provided a brief written overview of the study. After my dissertation proposal defense, I obtained district approval and written consent by the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board. Appendix A includes a copy of the written consent.

Teacher participants. As I designed this narrative inquiry, I considered potential participants (Clandinin, 2013). I sought two teachers willing to co-construct their personal narrative with me as we worked together. This small sample size was appropriate because I looked for rich, in-depth stories that represented my experience as a new literacy coach and two ELA teachers' deep experiences in early-career teaching. Rich personal narratives help understand one's history and destinies (Nash, 2004) and provide a window into the profession rarely documented. The criteria for participant selection were as follows:

1. Participants taught ELA in the intermediate elementary school in which I worked at the time of this study, with 74 faculty members and 1,100 students, enrolled third grade through sixth grade. The other elementary schools in the district enrolled kindergarten through sixth grade. Middle schools enrolled seventh and eighth grade only. I sought two ELA sixth-grade teachers.
2. Participants were early-career teachers with between one- and five-years' experience. I chose two early-career teachers because, in my

experience at this school, they were more open and willing to work with me.

3. Participants voluntarily worked with me.
4. Participants willingly shared their experiences with me and actively took part in the study.

Finding appropriate participants proved much easier than I anticipated. I worked in the school in which the study took place, and four sixth-grade ELA teachers were on staff. Two of the four were new teachers to the school. Initially, I asked these two teachers whom I call, Mary and Tanya, to keep their identities confidential. Both agreed with no hesitation. However, when my study was approved, Tanya had left teaching. Luckily, the teacher who replaced Tanya, Betty (also a pseudonym), was a second-year teacher, but first-year ELA teacher. As a new teacher to the subject area, she was amenable to participate in the study.

I chose my participants through purposeful sampling. I determined the study participants based on the criteria stated above. Purposeful criterion sampling involves searching for participants who meet specific criteria or have particular life experiences (Palys, 2008). Betty and Mary fit the criterion I delineated above.

Betty. A second-year teacher recently graduated from college with a bachelor's in English literature. At the time of this study, she had a temporary teaching certificate and no plans to take the required education courses for permanent certification. She planned to leave the State and pursue a master's degree. She took this position because of her love of literature. Betty agreed to participate in this study because she wanted to enhance her teaching style. More detail about Betty is in Chapter Four.

Mary. A fourth-year teacher graduated from a teacher's college in Alabama. She has certification in elementary education. Before teaching at this school, she taught science for two years in her home state. At the time of this study, it was her second-year teaching ELA. She believed teaching is in her blood and planned to continue in the career at this school site. She agreed to participate in this study because she attributed her success as an ELA teacher to our time together last school year planning and discussing lessons. More detail about Mary is in the next chapter of this study.

Data Collection

Roles. In our initial conversation, my participants and I discussed my researcher role in their classroom (Clandinin, 2013). Also, we reviewed the coaching cycle reflected in *Figure 5* below. The coaching cycle is on a continuum where coach and teacher may enter at any point in the sequence. Knight et al. (2015) provide some background for each part of the cycle. At the identification stage, the coach and teacher select a teaching strategy upon which to improve. The learn stage is where the coach models a teacher strategy. The improve stage is when the teacher implements the strategy, and the coach monitors the progress. Betty and Mary agreed to start in the identification stage. In the nine weeks we worked together, we completed one coaching cycle as detailed in our narratives in the next chapter.

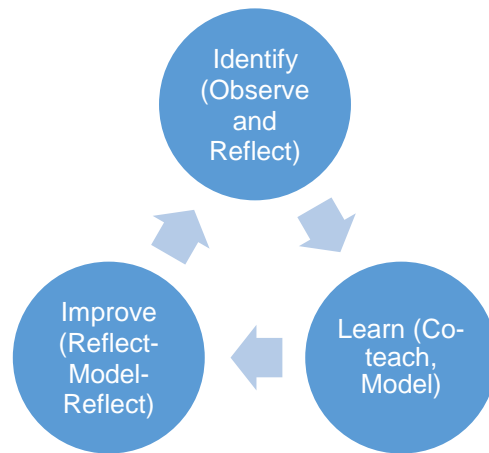


Figure 5. The coaching cycle.

Research schedule. The day before the end of winter break, Betty, Mary and I met to work out a research schedule for this study. Though my job lends itself to work with all teachers, I do not have a set schedule, so I worked with my participants on what worked best with their schedules. Betty agreed that weekly classroom observations, modeling, and coaching were best on Mondays in her first period. Mary went to the computer lab on Mondays, so her first period on Tuesdays was best for her. Betty agreed to conduct reflections and planning on Fridays to prepare for the next week. Mary wanted more immediate feedback on the classroom visits, but with school and district training on Wednesdays, we agreed on Thursdays for reflection and planning. Table 1 below details the schedule and amount of time spent in the classrooms and on reflection and planning.

Table 1

Weekly Classroom Visits and Time Spent with Participants

Teacher	Weekly Classroom Visits	After-School Reflections/Planning	In-Class Total Hours	Reflect/Plan Total Hours
Betty	Mondays	Fridays	9	9
Mary	Tuesdays	Thursdays	9	9

Throughout the study, I diligently attended each participant’s first-period class once a week for the class period (60 minutes). Our schedule remained relatively intact, but when there was a conflict, I attended a later class period on the scheduled day or rescheduled for another day in the week because of holidays and school events. Overall, we maintained our schedule, which attributed to the continuity of the study. All classroom observations took place between January 8, 2018, and March 30, 2018, the third quarter of the school year. There were two reasons for this timeframe. First, it aligned with one full nine-week quarter, giving a beginning and end time frame. Second, at the beginning of the second semester of the school year, routines are in place, and teachers have a better grasp of their and their students’ knowledge and needs.

Field texts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to raw data as field texts “because they are created, neither found nor discovered” (p. 92). In this inquiry, field texts consisted of a total of two one-hour initial conversations (2 hours), 18 classroom observation visits at one-hour each (18 hours), 18 reflective meetings at one-half hour each (9 hours), 18 planning meetings each week for one-half hour (9 hours), my personal researcher journal including reflections, planning, and teacher related assignments and notes (20 hours). Table 2 below provides a synopsis of the field texts.

My participants and I recorded our lived experiences within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. We carried the temporal dimension of past, present, and future experiences that contributed to the field texts in this study. Besides, as I collected the data, I was reminded of the personal and social dimensions of building relationships with teachers and staff as I mentored, coached, and developed a professional learning community with my participants. Also, at the outset of the study, my participants and I established non-evaluative relationships among one another and with the faculty and staff. As I created my field texts and guided my participants, we consistently reflected on these three dimensions to create authentic texts.

Classroom observation visits. Each week for nine weeks, I attended a one-hour class period taught by my participants. During the first three class periods, I observed and took notes in a Microsoft word document saved on my laptop titled for each participant. I recorded the teaching objective and strategies, the teaching style, and student engagement. I paid particular attention to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional inquiry space discussed above, and I took note of what was missing when an absence was notable (Patton, 2002). During weeks four through nine, I participated in the classroom in various capacities as discussed in the narratives in Chapter Four. After each classroom visit, I returned to my office and reflected, in the designated Microsoft word document, on my experiences as co-teacher, modeling, and coaching in the classroom. Appendix B and C provide excerpts of the notes from Betty and Mary's classroom visits.

Conversations and reflective journals. Conversations are compelling as they are a way to compose a field text in face-to-face encounters between pairs or

among a group of individuals (Clandinin, 2013). I met twice weekly with my participants to reflect on our experiences together building relationships, modeling and coaching (30 minutes), and planning for the following week's lessons (30 minutes). My participants and I documented our reflections and planning together each week in the designated Microsoft word document I kept titled *Participants' Reflections and Planning*. Appendix D and E document excerpts of our conversations and lesson planning.

Researcher journal. Journals have become a method of creating field texts. Clandinin (2013) refers to Davies who started this practice initially as just reflection but later utilized it as a large part of her teacher-research life. Thus, journals are recognized as “a powerful way for individuals to give accounts to their experience” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 102). As a participant of the study, I kept an electronic and leather-bound 5 ½ inch by 8 ½ inch researcher's journal of my personal feelings, emotions, beliefs, and practices about my position and reflected daily on my experiences with teachers, staff, administrators, and the district. Since I did not always have my computer with me, I found it necessary to have a journal in which I could jot quick feelings and emotions or notes. Though I logged a total of 20 hours in my researcher's journal, I did not journal the same amount of time every day. I set aside 20 minutes at the end of each day to record my thoughts in my researcher's journal, but sometimes, I spent less or more time depending on the experiences each day. An example of my electronic researcher's journal is in Appendix F.

Email correspondence. This type of written communication is with the expectation of a response. Drawing from Clandinin's (2013) letters (comparable to emails) as field texts, we try to give an account for ourselves and make meaning of our

experiences to maintain relationships with one another, our experiences, and among ourselves. My participants and I used email correspondence as a form of interaction about conversations, modeling, coaching, and creating professional learning communities. I collected a total of 48 email correspondence during the time of this study. An example of our email conversations is in Appendix G. Note: Any identifying information on the email is redacted.

Interim field texts. In the fifth week of this study, I started the process of creating interim texts. Clandinin (2013) defined interim texts as text that begins the data analysis process. I needed a way to start thinking about what I was going to do with all the “notes,” as I called them, and conduct data analysis. The interim text is a rough draft revised and revisited as the study continues. So, in the fifth week of the study, after my participants and I transitioned from observation to co-teaching, we met together, and from questions I generated, we discussed and reviewed where we were in the process of building relationships, teachers’ beliefs, practices and styles, and professional learning communities. This discussion led to the construction of the interim texts. I created a Microsoft word document titled *Finding My Way as a Literacy Coach*. The interim text was a process of storying and re-storying to keep the experiences alive and current (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This exercise allowed the commencement of data analysis and continued the process throughout the remaining time of and after the study. The interim texts became the three narratives of Betty, Mary, and I produced for this study.

Total field texts collected. In this study, I composed a total of 107 pages of text while engaged with my participants in their classroom, reflections, planning, and

email correspondence for a total of 56 hours. These totals do not include the handwritten reflections in my leather-bound researcher’s journal. Some pages are incomplete with a one-liner, a paragraph, lists, and bullets. When I was unable to reflect in my electronic researcher’s journal, the handwritten journal became useful, but it also allowed me to reflect on what I wrote, as I consistently went back to reread what I jotted down to ensure it made sense later to include in my narrative. Table 2 below details the field text types, time, and amount of texts written during this narrative inquiry.

Table 2

Field Texts

Field text type	Time	Amount Produced
Classroom Observation Visits	18 hours	19 pages of text 2 photographs
Conversations, Reflections & Planning	18 hours	11 pages of text
Email Correspondence		48 email correspondence
Researcher’s Journal	20 hours	27 typed pages of text

Data Analysis

In the fifth week of this study, Betty, Mary, and I met and reflected on our time together. I created questions to keep the conversations on a path. Then, I went back and read my reflections in my researcher’s journal. This information was the beginning of my first interim text that I titled *Finding My Way as a Literacy Coach*. As the weeks continued, we developed Betty’s and Mary’s interim texts. I read and reread the data collected from the classroom observation visits, conversations, reflections, planning, email correspondence, and created the first set of interim texts. Next, I engaged in member checking, where my participants read the interim texts for validity and reliability.

Then, I revised and finished their two interim texts and completed my interim text. Once complete, my participants conducted one more round of member checking.

In the third stage, I reread all the data for “meaning making in use, in relationships, and in settings, of practice” (Daiute, 2014, p. 229). As I read the data, I identified meaning, relationships, settings, and practices, but I did not know how to organize it. After attending a week-long seminar in Brno, in the Czech Republic on conducting qualitative research, I found a way to organize my work. One workshop was about grounded theory. Without any specific directions from the presenters, the audience was asked to identify relationships between a video biography and a song by the same artist. Immediately, it hit me that both pieces had a commonality though they were different. So, as I watched and listened, I jotted down words I thought reflected commonalities between the two pieces and connections or patterns. This activity was the lightbulb I needed for my data analysis for this study. Labov’s (1972) six narrative elements discussed in Chapter One provided the narrative structure I needed and the patterns across the narratives.

Finally, given that narrative is a personal expression and experience, I reread the narratives one more time for individual significance. In this sense, significance “is the implicit-evaluative-phase of meaning in discourses” (Daiute, 2014, p. 153). Since this study weighs heavily on Betty’s, Mary’s, and my beliefs, practices, and style, this phase is vital to the narrative discourse because of its rich illustrative detail (Daiute, 2014). The evaluative devices identified in and common across the narratives were psychological state expressions (verbs, nouns, and adjectives that evaluate ways that are cognitive), intensifiers (emphasize with devices such as amplifiers (very), repetitions (really, really

sad), and causal connectors (build on assumptions about cause and effect, logical sequences, and other culturally determined factors [Daiute]).

The three devices common among these narratives offer insight into the diversity of meaning within and across our stories as reflected in Chapter Four of the study. Following the identification of the evaluative devices, I identify their functions to understand the meaning across our accounts. The final chapter of the study identifies the functions that helped make sense within and across the stories as well as summarizes my findings, answers my research puzzle, and develops new wonderments for further research.

Though my data analysis seemed tedious and overwhelming at times, I found the organization in how my relationships with my participants developed, which became reflective in my narrative elements, patterns across the narratives, and significance outlined below. *Figure 6* reflects the stages of data analysis as I wrote my interim texts.

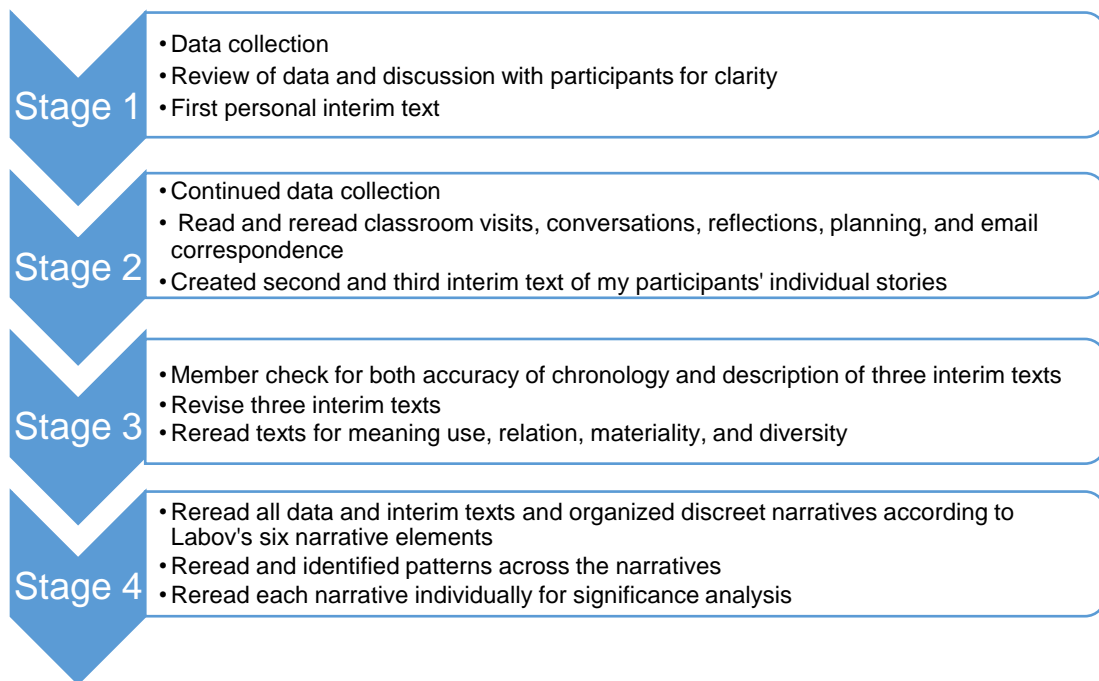


Figure 6. Stages of data analysis in the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I restated my research puzzle. I provided background on the significance of narrative inquiry to research and why it is the most appropriate approach for my study. I presented my justifications and defined the tools used to guide this study. Next, I stated my research design, data collection process, and analysis. To conclude, I included a diagram of the stages of data analysis of the study.

Chapter Four

Presentation of Narratives

Overview of the Chapter

“I am not sure I am cut out for this. Who says I even know what I am doing?”

These teachers don't need me; they are young, confident, and know their craft. Why am I even here? I feel so much more comfortable in my own classroom.” These reflections are in my researcher's journal (2018) as I begin my new journey as a literacy coach. My reflections illuminate my anxious feelings and emotions as a new literacy coach. Left in the field alone in isolation, literacy coaches must wade through uncharted waters of varied personalities, emotions, roles, responsibilities, and identities before they make it to the other side of successfully creating a community of adult learners. As I began my journey with my two participants, it reminded me of the quote, “Her drama was a drama not of heaviness but of lightness. What fell to her lot was not the burden but the unbearable lightness of being” (Kundera, 1993, p.19). This personal drama I carried within me as a new literacy coach is reflected through my stories as I steadily built trust and relationships with my participants. As a literacy coach, gone is the comfort of structure offered to a teacher with timed classes, daily lesson plans, grading papers, and rules and regulations. The burden of lightness is a new role with little structure. I must have a constant image of confidence, let emotions and human conflicts roll off my back, and carry the positive image of modeling and coaching.

In this chapter, I focus on the stories that tell my journey of building trusting relationships with my two participants as a literacy coach and teacher as well as my account as a new literacy coach. *Figure 7* outlined below reflects the sharing and examination of these stories.

I begin this chapter with a restatement of the research puzzle. Then, I provide an overview of instructional plans, a sequence of instruction of each participant in *Figures 8* and *9*, and a duplicate diagram of the coaching cycle initially in Chapter Three, *Figure 5*, and again in *Figure 10*. Next, I describe each participant's contextual background within the three-dimensional inquiry space. Then, each narrative is organized chronologically through Labov's (1972) narrative elements. Following this paradigm, I offer an exploration of common patterns across the stories with a revisit to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. Finally, *Figure 15* provides the significance analysis of each narrative. Significance analysis identifies the vivid differences across the patterns of the stories, as Daiute (2015) underscores, to humanize the characters in the narrative. The evaluative devices highlight the descriptive differences of the psychological state expressions, intensifiers, and causal connectors. Last, *Figure 16* reflects the flow of the narrative elements, common patterns, and evaluative devices. This visual understanding diagrams how the analysis, though separate, work together to represent the research. These findings lead us to the final chapter where the narratives, common patterns, and evaluative devices identified and analyzed here will address the three parts of the research puzzle discussed below.



Figure 7. Sequence of chapter four.

Restatement of the Research Puzzle

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate between my roles and responsibilities to build partnerships with two English language arts (ELA) teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?
- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

Overview of Instructional Plans

Our first official day back after winter break was a plan anywhere day. Before we left for break, ingest, I offered to assist one of the sixth-grade ELA teachers with grading district quarterly assessments. Little did I know she was serious until I received a text the eve before our “plan anywhere day.”

“Hey there!! I hope you had an amazing break. Would you be available tomorrow morning to help me grade those QLA exams? I was thinking of going up to school around 8:30 or so and just knocking them out” (Succar reflective journal, 2018, text message).

As I pulled into the parking lot at 8:20 a.m. the next morning, I brushed the vacation haze away. Mary and I met in her classroom and spent the morning grading the tests. Despite my initial foggy descent back into reality, we accomplished a lot that morning. Also, since the sixth-grade ELA team was at school, we all met at 1:30 p.m. to discuss the lessons and pacing timeline for the third quarter curriculum. Though on our last “unofficial vacation day” I dreamed of laying around the house and contemplated getting ready for the new quarter and my data collection for this study, our impromptu meeting was productive and arranged the groundwork for further relationship building and coaching. Thankfully, we have met as a team since the end of the last school year.

Below are diagrams reflecting Betty’s and Mary’s instructional sequences and the coaching cycle we followed during the time of our data collection. *Figure 8* and *Figure 9* indicate Betty’s and Mary’s instructional coaching sequence, respectively.

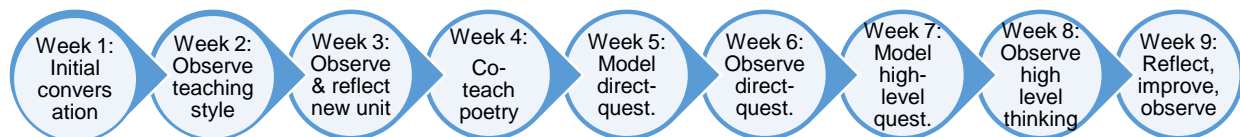


Figure 8. Betty’s instructional coaching sequence.

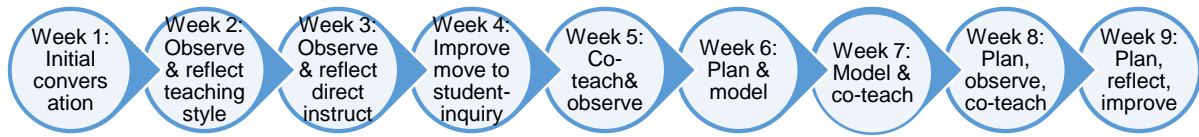


Figure 9. Mary's instructional coaching sequence.

Figure 10 revisits the coaching cycle from Chapter Three. It is a diagram of the coaching cycle between coach and teacher. This cycle is continuous and may start and end at any point in the sequence.

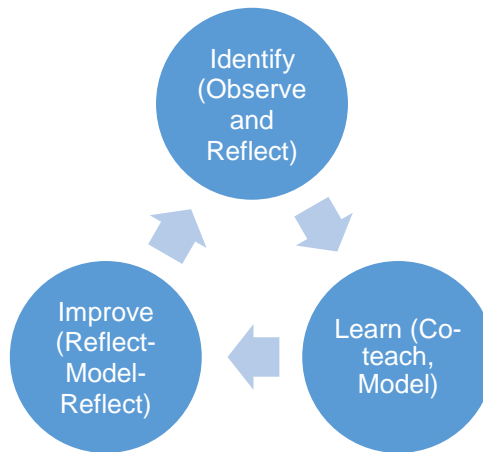


Figure 10. The coaching cycle.

Betty's Narrative

She's standing over the doc cam with a big smile, yellow highlighter in hand, staring around the classroom at her students. Betty says, "As part of our claim we want to state the reasons that support it. This helps organize your body paragraphs as we restate our reasons in each body paragraph. Ok, so what should I highlight in this essay?" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). One hand raises, and Betty peers around the room tick, tock, tick, tock; 20 seconds pass, and she says, "Let's wait for a few more light bulbs to come on" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). Five more

hands shoot up, tick, tock, tick tock; 10 more seconds pass, then five more hands are raised, tick, tock; five seconds pass, then all the students are looking forward, and most students in the class have their hands raised. She scans the room and calls on one of the students.

Betty uses the wait time strategy to gain more student engagement. She enjoys engaging all the students, and this strategy works well with these students. Moreover, her use of descriptive language and flowery creative explanations are the backdrops that define her teaching style and the bonding of our relationship between coach and teacher throughout the narrative in this chapter.

Contextual background. As I walk through Betty's classroom door, my first impressions of her as an ELA teacher are warm, inviting pastel blue and cream-colored walls decorated with inspirational quotes and pictures (as reflected in Figure 11) of famous individuals and periods, such as the Civil Rights Movement. Upon a closer look, the setting of Betty's classroom focuses on writing. A wall displays our adopted TEA writing process (topic, evidence, analysis) and the student desks are in a "u" shape with the opening toward the front. Betty is in her mid-20s, average height, beautiful long flowing reddish-brown hair, and a welcoming smile. She is passionate about literature and wants her students to feel the same.



Figure 11. Inspirational quote and picture on Betty's classroom wall.

Betty grew up in the area and attended elementary school in what is now the K-2 primary school next door. Our school was built 10 years ago to house grades three through six. Both schools have more than 1,000 students. When Betty attended school in the original building, there were approximately 1,000 students from the surrounding predominately middle-class white neighborhood. Presently, with 2,000 students in both schools, the student demographics have changed. In addition to students from the surrounding communities, there are international students from families working in the aeronautical and aerospace industry and students bussed from low-income neighborhoods.

In 2016, after Betty graduated from college, she accepted a full-time, one-year art teacher position at our school. Given she grew up here, attended school here, and her mother works here, it seemed only natural that she gravitated to this school. However, Betty's long-term goal is to get a master's degree and teach at the secondary or post-secondary level. From our initial conversations, it was clear that Betty has high

expectations for her students and structures her teaching in a manner that evokes deep thought and reflection. When asked about how her core beliefs and practices influence her teaching methods and approach with students, Betty replied:

I have natural integrity [which] keeps me honest and thorough. Even though some students don't have external resources, they can still succeed in the classroom. I recognize not all students are dealt the same hand. So, my integrity assures I will provide what they need if they don't have it. However, it is a fine line between kids getting old, so they also need to have accountability. Someone is not always going to be there to help them. If they need something and they can support it, I will bend, but I am stern in what work they should keep and be responsible for. (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018)

Abstract and Orientation. It is Betty's second year teaching, but her first year teaching ELA. I met Betty for the first time in her position as the art teacher the previous year. I asked her to present some student art for our annual Barnes and Noble literacy night. She accepted the task and put together a gallery walk, which contributed to a successful evening. In that initial meeting, Betty was energetic and more than willing to help. She was very bubbly, confident, and proud of what her students had accomplished. In our first official conversation for this study, she invited me into her classroom with a welcoming smile and was excited and energetic about the prospects of working together. In our discussion, I learned very quickly that Betty was brilliant and well versed in literature. With an undergraduate degree in English literature, she has a keen knowledge of the conveyance of writing. She delivered lessons at a very high analytical level and required students to rise to that level.

When asked if she was overwhelmed with all the responsibilities that accompany being a content teacher, Betty said, “I feel very comfortable with sixth grade. Public speaking comes naturally to me because teaching is in my family” (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018). Betty explained, “I hung around my mom in her classroom. In high school, I came in once a week and did small group reading, which was a big insight” (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018). However, this confidence and training in the analysis of literature, seemingly strengths, became barriers when bridging the gap between high-level inquiry based learning and scaffolding for struggling readers.

Complicating action. In our second week together, I observed Betty’s teaching style. She focused on the student-inquiry approach. She built the background knowledge of what she taught with the class, and through questioning, held the students accountable. In our initial conversation, she was aware of the lofty goals and admitted, “In a perfect world, I would have students take charge of what they are learning and allow them to collaborate or discover quality information independently. The Socratic seminar is a good example. These lessons widen your gaze away from the specific focus; it is something that gives them a warm feeling and broadens the picture” (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018). At first glance, the techniques Betty used to engage students seemed useful in determining their understanding, but as I spent more time in her class, the gap between students who were right there and students unable to grasp the concepts in an inquiry style learning environment became evident. Bridging this gap between style and student understanding became the primary focus of our time together, first as equal colleagues and later, as teacher and coach.

Evaluation. In my first observation of Betty, she spent much of the time lecturing and giving directives to the class. Though she gave clear directions, her general nature of language and interactions were through much description and flowery creative explanations. As she reviewed the essay rubric by modeling the scoring of an essay, she said, “Just for giggles, I am going to go back and check to make sure [the writer] is still on the topic” (Classroom observation notes, 2018). In the review of their overall scoring, she said, “Ok, overall you were in the same ballpark as me in scoring these” (Classroom observation notes, 2018). Later, in the introduction of a topic, she added, “we are going to dip our toes in the water of what we will get into next week” (Classroom observation notes, 2018). When asked if the students understood, she responded that sometimes she explains, but if they do not understand, they ask. She was unaware of her colloquialisms and viewed it as how she speaks, and if the students don’t get it, they chime in.

In the third week, Betty introduced the Harlem Renaissance unit we created in conjunction with the district’s adapted text unit. The adapted text unit is a close-reading assignment of the short story *Thank You, Ma’am*, by Langston Hughes (1958). As a sixth-grade team, we created the historical background and supplemental texts around this short story to provide the students’ exposure to the historical context and multiple genres. Betty assigned the initial reading of the short story for homework. When asked if the students needed more support and if they completed their homework, she replied, “All of the students pretty much do their homework if assigned. I did a comprehension check with them yesterday before going home. They read the first paragraph and talked

about the language, specifically the slang. Even the struggling readers get it” (Participants’ reflections and planning, 2018).

In class, Betty introduced the Harlem Renaissance unit in one of the five small group rotations. Since she teaches ELA and social studies, she thought it was a good idea to cover both subjects with five different lessons in 15-minute small group rotations. The teacher table groups consisted of the second reading of *Thank You, Ma’am* and a review of the comprehension questions assigned for homework. I worked at the teacher table. The first group completed the reading for homework, but not the comprehension questions. As we went through the questions, the students had a clear understanding of the text and knew how to discuss the answer to the questions. However, they needed assistance in formulating written responses.

In our after-school reflection, Betty and I expressed similar experiences with the students’ struggles on the questions. Betty said it was a last-minute decision to move from whole-class instruction to small-group learning to get some of the social studies content completed. I concurred that I had similar experiences in my first few years of teaching. Sometimes, last-minute changes are successful, and sometimes, they bomb. Betty had a strong sense of what she wanted to teach, but often, improvised. So, I took a moment to gently remind her, part of my role was to guide her and provide her with the scaffolding necessary to meet the students’ needs.

In the next week’s lesson, we introduced the poetry from the Harlem Renaissance unit. In this lesson, we co-taught a model of how we read poetry, identified themes, and completed a graphic organizer. After we modeled for the students, they finished the second poem on their own. Though there were still some student questions,

the modeling created clear student expectations. Later, upon reflection with Betty, she agreed the modeling was “very effective in conveying our expectations to the students” (Participants’ reflections and planning, 2018).

In the fifth week, Betty transitioned into the Civil Rights Movement unit with the text *Freedom Walkers* by Russell Freedman (2006). Our focus was on voices and actions that initiated the Civil Rights Movement. We co-taught the lesson. Betty commenced with a whole-class read of the introduction, and I modeled directed questions for discussion. I modeled how to build scaffolding into directed questions through the restatement of questions in various formats and probed struggling students. Upon reflection with Betty, this modeling worked very well with her teaching style of student-inquiry learning. Betty’s procedural rules were in place; she just needed the language to formulate questions at the student’s level of understanding and learn how to use probing questions so that students could engage in productive struggles.

In week six, as Betty delved further into the text, her shift in questioning became evident. She assessed the students’ understanding of the main idea through a statement stem “This chapter discusses...” The students were directed to complete the sentence with the three main points of the story. This shift in language from the traditional question “What is the main idea in the text?” to “This chapter discusses” created a broader spectrum of answers, thus allowing the struggling students to at least complete the statement and, with further support if necessary, guide them toward the main idea.

Next, Betty dug deeper into student understanding with higher order thinking (HOT) question stems. *Figure 12* below reflects the handout provided to the students.

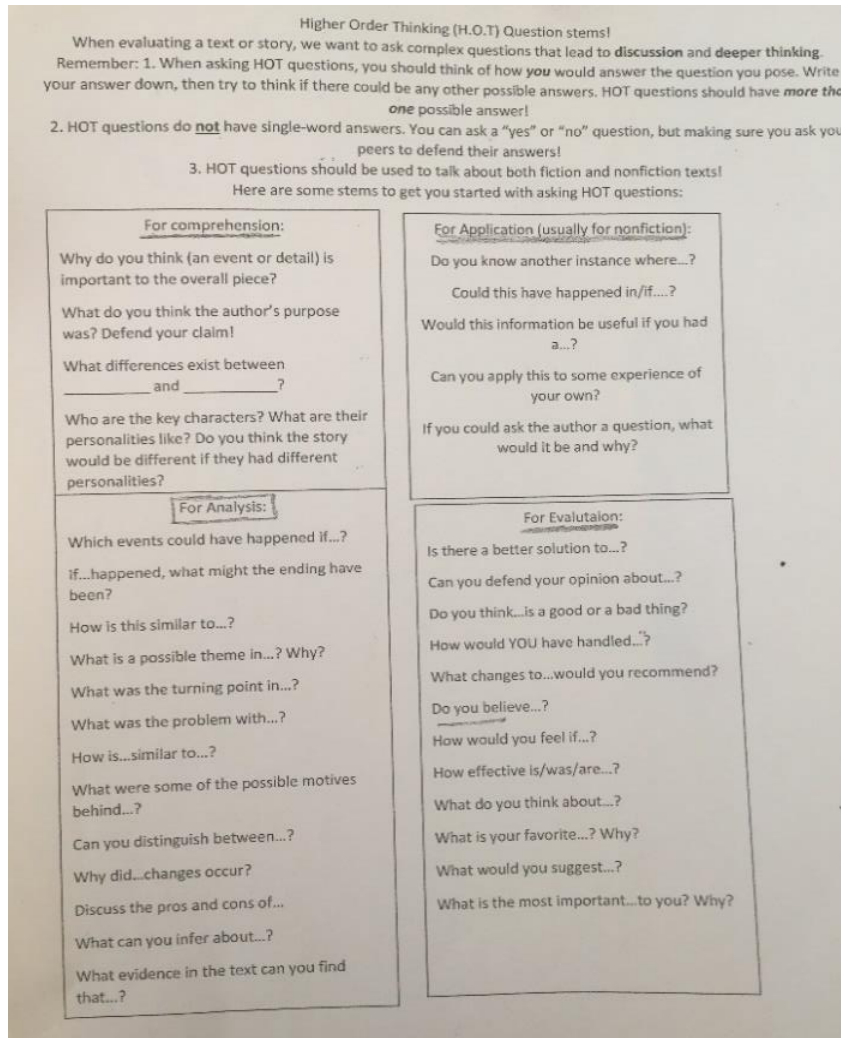


Figure 12. Picture of higher order thinking (HOT) question stems.

She used these question stems, so students had a baseline with which to create and answer questions. According to Betty, some students felt struggled coming up with questions and answers. So, we agreed to start with the lower-level inquiry question stems in the top two boxes in Figure 12. Students independently read chapters two through four of the *Freedom Walkers* text, and then, drafted two HOT questions and answers. Next, in groups of four, they chose the best question and answer from their group. One student from each group rotated through the rest of the groups, posed their questions, and conducted a discussion on the answers. Betty and I checked the

questions and answers and sat in on the group discussions as student experts moved around the room.

In week seven, our roles started to shift from co-teaching to coaching. As we built a comfortable relationship in and out of the classroom, Betty asked for assistance with a flow between planning to the full extent of the standards while addressing students' diverse needs. So, to address this need, we drafted lower and higher level comprehension questions for the next chapter in the lesson. After the students read the section, we conducted a whole-class discussion with the lower level questions. I asked the lower level questions, then for more in-depth inquiry, probed with higher level "how" and "why" questions. Next, I introduced the higher-order thinking questions through peer discussion. I circled the room listening for comprehension. Then, after the debate, the students answered the questions independently. This strategy allowed us to clarify misconceptions about the chapter. In our reflection, Betty believed the questioning techniques worked well, both with her style and the need for deep student reflection. This deep student reflection is the wide student gaze she referred to in our initial conversation and is what she strives to acquire in her teaching.

Result or resolution. Betty and I first developed our relationship as co-teachers. However, as we spent more time together, and built a level of trust, our roles evolved into coach and teacher. We began with observation and feedback, then worked slowly to planning together and finally modeling and coaching lessons. Betty explained that our work together has helped her build confidence to execute deeply thought out lesson plans. As reflected in her narrative, "Our work together has enriched my lessons and reaffirmed my lessons" (Betty's narrative, 2018).

This epiphany became evident in our last two weeks together. As we planned the end of the unit, Betty developed an idea to capture the multiple standards she taught and assessed during the non-fiction part of the unit. She chose four quotes from the *Freedom Walkers* text that reflected the overall theme of the book and the historical significance of the Civil Rights Movement. The students were divided into four groups and assigned a quote. Each group member assumed the role of either biographer, interpreter, analyst, or connector of the quote. Once they completed their assigned task, they presented to the rest of the class. The class demonstrated their understanding by summarizing the overall meaning of the quote and how it impacted the Civil Rights Movement.

The students worked in academically homogenous groups. Some of the groups were teacher-directed for additional support. In their groups, first, students defined their role and applied their part to a real-life situation. Next, they explained the word meanings in the quote. Then, the students took the pieces of information they gathered and applied them to their purpose. Once they finished, they practiced presenting their findings with a teacher.

Upon reflection of the lesson, Betty recognized that without the exceptional education teacher and me to support her, this lesson was difficult for students; specifically, those students who needed to build background knowledge. As Betty and I continue to develop our relationship as a teacher and coach, she feels confident to lean on me for advice and coaching.

Closure. Our bond as teacher and coach became apparent a few weeks after this study ended. For the last quarter of the year, the sixth-grade team created a

Holocaust unit around the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne (2006).

An experienced sixth-grade teacher in another subject area raised concerns about whether this book was appropriate for these students. Immediately and without question, Betty stood up and said:

Our literacy coach is knowledgeable about what is suitable for our sixth-grade students. As a sixth-grade ELA team, we agreed this text was not only ideal for our students but came at a time where many students may benefit from reading this text. Not only is Holocaust literature a part of our curriculum, but our literacy coach also has knowledge in this area and would not steer us in the wrong direction. (Succar reflective journal, 2018)

This experience confirmed our trust and bond and my work as a coach. I was taken aback by her calm composure and certainty. The veteran teacher was adamant about her concerns and did not back down on her position. However, Betty continued to reiterate her position. The other three sixth-grade ELA teachers stood with Betty. This experience reflected our bond and the power of a professional learning community.

Mary's Narrative

Standing on top of the teacher desk in the front of the classroom, she says to the students, "Ok, as we discussed earlier in the week, we will be writing an argumentative essay. May I have a drum roll, please? Our topic for this essay is going to be: Should there be a four-day school week?" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). Immediately, the room becomes abuzz with student discussion. As Mary gets down from the top of the table, she directs the students. "Give me five please!" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). The students raise their hands, quiet down, and look to her for direction.

“Ok, I want you to discuss with your classmates how you feel about this topic. Then, in just a minute, I am going to direct you into groups to discuss the topic further”

(Classroom observation notes, 2018).

Mary is a chronological and concrete thinker, which is reflected not only in her teaching style but also in her preparation for lessons. She displays her agenda digitally in steps: first, introduce the argumentative topic, then, group discussion, next, watch videos, and last, read articles on the argumentative topic; she does this for the students and to keep herself organized and on track. After the students are directed into their groups and given three to five minutes for further discussion on the topic, Mary brings the class back together and calls on each student for his/her opinion. She wants all the students' voices heard while thoroughly engaged in the topic. She listens intently to each student's response and engages them by clarifying their views or asking additional questions. Mary's direct instruction with heavy scaffolding defines her teaching style and has been the crux of our bond between teacher and coach throughout the narrative in this chapter.

Contextual background. My first impression of Mary in her classroom is her big, welcoming smile as she looks up from her desk when I knock on the door. Her classroom is warm and inviting with her teacher desk and teacher table dressed in a pattern of soft brown, pastel blue, and green paper. Additionally, she has the same model draped around the class to create a homey environment for the students. The student desks are arranged in three rows across, with eight desks in each row. Mary rearranges the desks to meet the need of the lesson she is teaching. Mary teaches

three blocks of sixth-grade ELA. The focus of her room is reading, as reflected in the picture taken below of her bulletin board in *Figure 13*.



Figure 13. Mary's classroom bulletin board.

In her mid-20s, Mary is of average height with curly brown hair and always displays a welcoming smile. She is spunky, energetic, well-organized, and plans everything. First, Mary comes up with a plan and verbalizes it to clarify her thoughts. Then, she goes full force and gathers all the materials into a unit with lessons to cover some weeks. Mary's first teaching job immediately out of college was teaching fifth and sixth-grade science and social studies for two years in a Title 1 school in Alabama. She was born, raised, attended college, met her husband, and married in Alabama. Then they moved south after her husband accepted an aerospace engineering job and she took the ELA teaching job. They have since bought a house and plan to raise a family here.

As she describes it, Mary's first teaching experience was in a Title 1 school in a very rough part of town. My students were primarily African-American, and many experienced the same struggles as one another. At first, I found this to be a

challenge, but then I looked at this as an opportunity to encourage these students despite what was taking place when they went home. (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018)

This experience was very different from the school she teaches in now. Mary explains, “many of the students have a good support system with everything they need. Though, I have several students who do not have a positive home life. Teaching a diverse student body can have challenges at times, but my main goal is for my classroom to be a safe and inviting place for all learners” (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018).

Mary’s teaching is very structured, and she holds high standards in her classroom. She provides scaffolding, so students have a clear path and understanding of where they start and where they are supposed to go. Also, Mary believes that to be successful with students, they must know their teacher understands them and cares about them. She learned this approach from one of her professors in college and adopted this professor’s mantra as her own: “Your students will not care about anything you teach them if they feel like you don’t truly care about them” (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018). These values are also evident in Mary’s core beliefs about teaching.

Teaching is the most rewarding profession out there. Teachers wear multiple hats each day. While I always wear my teacher hat, I may also have to wear a parent hat, for those that do not have a support system outside of school, or a friend hat, for any student that feels left out or alone. I am reminded daily of how important it is to wear all these hats to better meet the academic and personal

needs of each of my students. (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018)

This view of a teacher's role is reflective in Mary's caring nature, the environment of her classroom, and the execution of her plans.

Abstract and Orientation. Though it is Mary's third year teaching, it is her first year at this school and as an ELA teacher. Mary smiles when she speaks and is very animated when getting her point across. She is high energy and wants to get things done right.

Mary and I connected immediately at the beginning of the last school year. Mary and I met in preplanning the previous year. For the past year and a half, we have worked together as a teacher and coach. During that time, we have come to know one another on a personal and professional basis. During preplanning last year, I popped in Mary's room and asked if she needed any help planning the start of the school year. I suggested she start the year with a novel so that she could get an idea about the students' reading and writing abilities. Mary was extremely receptive. She dropped everything right there, and we immediately marched down to the media center to choose a novel. As we looked through the literature sets, I suggested *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson (1987). She agreed with my choice, and our relationship blossomed from there.

In our first year together, Mary and I spoke a few times each week with questions about materials and procedures. She explained, "If I need something, I call Succar. If I don't have materials, if something doesn't sound right, if I am unsure about a lesson, I call Succar; (this familiarity reflects our comfort level together; Succar reflective journal, 2018). In our first official conversation for this study, Mary and I met in her classroom as

we have for the past school year. In our discussion, I learned several things: Mary is very practical in her beliefs and practices, and she pays attention to what people say and respects an individual's knowledge. This attentiveness and respect are evident when asked how comfortable she felt in her current position. She replied:

I have become a lot more comfortable with my role as a reading and language arts teacher. My first year in this subject was overwhelming in many ways I spent countless hours trying to gather relevant resources that met all the standards. In many ways, I felt like a circus performer trying to juggle everything all at once. However, I was very fortunate that you provided helpful feedback as well as a plethora of topics, resources, activities, books, etc. You were very instrumental in making the first year of teaching reading and language arts a successful year for my students and me. (Initial conversation: Classroom observation notes, 2018)

Mary's candidness about my role in her journey as a new ELA teacher brought about our focus on enhancing her style of student engagement and scaffolding student learning.

Complicating action. In week two, I observed Mary's teaching style. She focuses on explicit, direct instruction, high student engagement, and scaffolding student learning. She engages all students in class discussions and step-by-step scaffolding to enhance students' understanding. In planning with Mary, all the techniques seemed highly effective, but after observing her teaching style, I noticed gaps in high student engagement and her practicality of scaffolding. In whole class discussions, students became disengaged after they gave their opinion. With lesson scaffolding, students depended on supplemental worksheets as a crutch instead of building independent

student knowledge. So, in the coming weeks, a significant amount of our time together as a teacher and coach focused on tweaking some of these techniques to close the gaps.

Evaluation. In my first observation of Mary, she introduced the argumentative essay topic the students would write in the two-week writer's workshop. She announced the issue and divided the class into four groups to discuss their opinions. After approximately seven minutes, she called attention and began with group one, where she called on each student for their advice. This process took 20 to 25 minutes. At first glance, all the students were engaged and listened to their classmates' opinions, but as the minutes dragged on, students conducted sidebar conversations, squirmed in place, and stared at the ceiling.

After she finished with the first group, she moved to group three and said, "Ok group three, what do you think? Oh, Lou, we don't have sidebar conversations. Ok, group three continue" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). She listened intently to each student without interruption and probed them for more information. When she saw the students get antsy, Mary attempted to redirect them: "Ok, guys pause for a second. Ok, guys thinking about this four-day school week, does not mean we have less school, it just means we have an extra hour each day. Now in very clear language, express your thoughts. Do you think it would cut back on absences?" (Classroom observation notes, 2018). The room became abuzz again with chatter. She called the class back together and continued calling on each student. Despite Mary adding onto the discussion with probing questions, the students disengaged once they gave their opinion. After another ten minutes, the students returned to their seats.

In our reflection together after school, Mary recognized the student disengagement but said she struggles with making sure all students voice an opinion while keeping the others engaged. So, as we moved into the coming weeks, we agreed to work on this goal.

In week three, our focus was student engagement. As the students continued with the argumentative writer's workshop, they completed a T-chart of the pros and cons from a short video and a few quick online articles. Mary worried the students did not understand the topic, so she added comprehension questions for each piece. Also, she provided accommodated questions for students who needed additional support. Through direct instruction, Mary reviewed the items one by one with the class. After ten minutes, she noticed she was losing some students' attention. Mary pulled them back by prompting other questions and continued to review the assignment. Though Mary refocused everyone by her style, our emphasis was for less direct-instruction and more student-inquiry.

In our reflection, we discussed how the initial T-chart assignment was enough to demonstrate student comprehension, and the additional questions created more work for the teacher and busy work for the students. However, Mary struggles with this group of students and their abilities. Throughout the workshop, she expressed how last year's materials were not enough and she needed to add more supplemental materials. So, as we moved forward, we agreed to shift our focus away from worksheet to teacher modeling examples and expectations.

In week four, the student focus was to add supporting evidence to their rough drafts. Mary used this moment to switch instructional styles from direct instruction to

modeling. Though Mary modified this lesson to move away from direct instruction, her desk arrangement is in traditional seating, with three rows deep and nine desks across. Last school year, students worked in small groups during the writer's workshop, but this year, she arranged the students in traditional seating because of the need for scaffolding through direct instruction.

Mary is great at modeling, but she expressed "it has been difficult with this group of six graders" (Participants' reflections and planning, 2018). She wanted to transition to more modeling and inquiry based learning. Also, she agreed to "working smarter not harder." In this lesson, Mary modeled how writers use evidence and explain evidence to support their position. She called this "beefing up your paragraph." Both the modeling and the "beefing up your paragraph" cut down on unnecessary work for the teacher and students. As students worked on their rough drafts, Mary and I conferenced with the students who needed additional assistance.

In week five, while Mary and I worked individually with students on their rough drafts, the class started the interactive WebQuest for the introduction to the Harlem Renaissance unit. As we worked with the students, our focus was the writer's elaboration on evidence. Mary created a check-off for the students called "Labeling your argumentative rough-draft" derived from our school adopted TEA (topic, evidence, and analysis) writing process. The verification was a quick way for the students to determine if their draft was complete.

The students I assisted worked on sentence flow, transitioning from one paragraph to another, adding evidence, and explaining the evidence. Mary's scaffolding allowed for easy identification of the gaps in the students' writing. Though we worked on

ways to slowly withdraw support as we moved towards more student-inquiry, the scaffolding provided the students with a clear picture of the expectations.

In preparation for the upcoming weeks together, Mary and I took a moment to reflect on our co-teaching. Mary found our co-teaching extremely useful in confirming her teaching methods work for the students. Our common language of teaching the writing process and our individualized work with the students reassured Mary that her student expectations were on point. In the next two weeks, Mary taught a lesson focused through student-inquiry while I modeled a poetry lesson.

In week six, our relationship became grounded, and we shifted from co-teaching to modeling. We planned the next two lessons with a focus on student-inquiry. That week, we created a picture walk from the anchor text *Freedom Walkers* by Russell Freedman (2006) on the Civil Rights Movement. With the pictures posted on the walls around the room, the students walked through the picture walk and wrote a thought, comment, or reaction below each image. Next, students were grouped and assigned one of the pictures. Each group learned more about the picture from the anchor text and wrote a three-word gist of their classmates' comments below their assigned picture. Each group reported to the rest of the class. This lesson provided the beginnings of student-inquiry while including scaffolding from the text.

In week seven, I modeled reading and analyzing poetry. We chose this lesson to model because Mary advised, "I am personally uncomfortable with poetry. So, having you model helps me grow as a teacher" (Mary's Narrative, 2018). I modeled a think aloud. As a class, we read through the poem once and discussed the overall meaning and message. The second time, we circled words that were significant to the meaning

and message. The third time, we underlined words that reflected the speaker and tone. Then, student partners discussed the speaker and tone. As we came back together as a class, based on the discussions and keywords and phrases from the poem, we surmised the speaker, theme, and tone. Mary followed, in the same manner, I modeled with the second poem. We went through this exercise with the next two classes; by the end of the day, we both felt comfortable discussing with each other and the students. We agreed that the day was a success. Upon reflection, Mary said, "Knowing that you were there and seeing it taught made me feel confident...Everyone has something they feel uncomfortable with teaching and, that is my weakness" (Participants reflections and planning, 2018).

Result or resolution. As Mary and I have developed our relationship, we have moved away from teacher and coach planning to co-teaching and modeling. Mary feels confident in her role as an ELA teacher but is ready to dig deeper into moving from the comfort of direct-instruction to inquiry based learning. In week eight, well into the Civil Rights Movement text, students conducted a reader's theatre on the Rosa Park's bus boycott. Mary took a hands-off approach and gave them two class periods to come up with props, choose roles, and practice their parts. She recognized it was difficult to pull-back, but believed the students needed time to think, reflect, and process. Despite an unexpected event on the day of the presentations, the students adapted and performed well.

In the end, Mary realized students would rise to the occasion when necessary, and some of the scaffolding fulfills her insecurities about the subject she teaches. She feels confident teaching ELA in her second year, but she is always looking to grow.

Finally, in week nine, I was pulled to administer Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) writing make up tests, so though Mary and I planned the next unit, I was unable to work with her. We met as a sixth-grade team after school to wrap up the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights Movement units and project what we would teach in the last week of the quarter. My coaches' cadre developed a sixth-grade lesson with the texts *Two Brothers* by Leo Tolstoy (1886) and *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost (1916), where students identify common themes across literary genres and analyze those themes through a Socratic seminar. This approach was the perfect lesson for Mary to enhance her style of student-inquiry and move the students to independent thought.

Closure. As the collection of data for this study came to an end, Mary and I continued to build a stronger bond as a teacher and coach. She is my go-to person to get a pulse on what the sixth-grade team's interests are in curriculum and materials. Mary has taken another new teacher under her tutelage and supplies her with materials we developed for the novel *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (1987), the argumentative writer's workshop and many more. As we work together to strengthen her curriculum, Mary is building a professional learning community among her grade-level colleagues.

My Literacy Coach Narrative

As I stare at the wall in my office, I wonder how I have made it this far. This time last year, I scrambled to get teachers to notice and recognize me as a resource for their planning, teaching, and reflecting on their practice. As I am about to embark on this study, I have built relationships with teachers who look to me for advice, to plan lessons and literary units, and as a knowledge resource and a confidant. Though I still have a

long way to go with the faculty, I have come a long way. This story reveals the raw emotions of fear, loneliness, frustration, and compassion I felt as a new literacy coach in a school where teachers were comfortable in their positions and did not easily invite outsiders into their circles.

My role as a literacy coach mirrors my role as a teacher. I have learned that just like a teacher, I must nurture, facilitate, and teach my colleagues as a coach. However, cultivating takes time and does not happen overnight. I learned this reality quickly when I tried a tactic to build relationships with teachers during faculty meetings and at lunch. During faculty gatherings, I attempted to sit in different locations with various grade levels. I used this strategy as a teacher in a new school, and it was instrumental in building relationships. However, teachers were not as receptive to me as a coach. When I attempted to sit at different tables, teachers said, “oh, no I am saving that seat, or so and so is sitting here” (Succar reflective journal, 2018).

Weekly, I met with my principal and reported my accomplishments or lack thereof; she reminded me to be patient and reiterated what she said at the beginning of the school year, “If you do nothing else this school year but build relationships, that is fine with me” (Succar reflective journal, 2018). So, I took to the streets, if you will, and focused on building relationships. “Those first few months, I wandered the hallways during and after school, like a street peddler checking in with teachers, asking if they needed materials, ELA lessons, or even photocopies” (Succar narrative, 2018). The approach of a teacher’s assistant instead of an expert from the district to change things became the focus of how I started to build relationships with the faculty as well as the mantra I carried throughout the ups and downs reflected in the narrative in this chapter.

Contextual background. My first impressions of my role as a literacy coach in an intermediate elementary school generated excitement and fear. I was excited about the prospects of writing curriculum, modeling, co-teaching, and coaching, yet fearful of working with teachers. As an Rtl coach for the prior two years, I learned through my failures that the key to successfully working with teachers was first to build relationships. In the new position as a literacy coach, my office was in the cumulative folder room. Much to my surprise, all 74 teachers were required to check their students' cumulative folders in preplanning for the school year. With that in mind, I thought I at least had a chance to meet everyone on neutral turf and start building relationships.

I rapidly learned building relationships was not as easy as I first thought. Teachers came into my office in pairs and chatted among the file cabinets that divided my work area from the cumulative folder area. In the first few days of school, as the hours and days ticked on, I decided to revert to my comfort area. The school consisted of grades three through six. I had never taught grades three through five, but I had taught sixth-grade. So, I decided to wander the sixth-grade hallway. Immediately, I recognized Mary, whom I met in our first summer as new staff. Most teachers at the school had been working there since its inception and sent their children there. So, the bonds between those teachers were close. As new teachers to the school, Mary and I did not have those relationships, and her first few years of teaching in a Title 1 school were extremely different from this community school.

With my extensive experience in ELA and Title 1 schools, Mary and I hit it off immediately. She was amenable to my suggestions for starting the year with a novel to gain an understanding of her students' reading and writing abilities. I was so excited that

I went home that weekend and developed a curriculum map with a pacing guide, vocabulary, chapter comprehension questions, and a culminating project. My bubble popped as reflected in my journal, “First thing Monday morning, I showed up in her classroom with the materials. She was happy and extremely thankful. I offered to model teaching the novel or materials, but she said she felt confident moving forward on her own” (Succar Reflective Journal, 2018). I walked away crushed inside, but as I returned to my office and reflected on this experience, I recognized I had at least broken ground in the right direction. We made a connection, and I created a lesson for her, but we needed to build a stronger bond for an invitation into her classroom.

Abstract and Orientation. In my second year as a literacy coach, I continued to gravitate toward the sixth-grade ELA teachers. At the end of the previous school year, we met to plan a curriculum map for the four nine-week quarters of the 2017-2018 school year. This move was significant towards building a professional learning community. As we commenced the new school year, over the previous summer, the district created standards-focus documents for each quarter with suggested texts along with mandatory adaptive text units (ATUs). The ATUs are closely read lessons using an anchor text and ancillary texts to answer an overarching guiding question in a research essay format. The anchor text for the third quarter adaptive text unit was Langston Hughes’ *Thank You, Ma’am*. In our planning of the third quarter for the school year, which coincided with this study, we planned an argumentative writer’s workshop and a Civil Rights Movement unit. With these new materials, we agreed, as a grade level, to incorporate the ATU into a Harlem Renaissance unit with poetry and non-fiction text that bridged the Civil Rights Movement unit.

When my two participants and I met to discuss the order and pacing of their lessons for the next quarter, it was evident Betty, and Mary's teaching styles were very different. Betty looks at the big picture and picks and chooses what she teaches. Betty has been covering writing all year. She wants to focus the next two weeks on reviewing argumentative writing and the FSA writing rubric whereas Mary is a concrete thinker and defines her planning through a beginning, middle, and end approach. She wants to develop a two-week plan for teaching argumentative writing. Both agreed to spend four to six weeks teaching the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement through literature, poetry, and non-fiction text.

Upon reflection of these teaching styles, I also recognized both participants have strong beliefs and practices about what and how they teach, which caused reflection on my core beliefs and practices. I asked myself how Betty and Mary influenced my co-teaching, modeling, and coaching. I recalled in my reflective journal, "my personal beliefs are always embedded in my coaching practices. They are influenced by how I approach my colleagues, what curriculum I teach, how I approach situations with colleagues, and how I plan my days" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). Hence, in our initial conversation for the study, I was surprised by my sense of nervousness as we sat down to meet.

Despite knowing both participants before to this study, given their strong teaching beliefs and practices, I wrote, "Prior to our meeting, I reflected on the importance of my understanding of the teachers' perceptions of their roles with their students" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). As I pondered my role as a coach, I recognized that I must first build trusting relationships to move effectively through the stages of literacy coaching

with my colleagues. Therefore, building relationships with my participants became the foundation of successfully moving through the steps of the coaching cycle.

Complicating action. In week two of this study, I observed the participants' teaching styles. Knowing a fine line exists between coaching and administrative roles, I reassured my participants that I was solely observing to gain a sense of their teaching style. Neither one seemed concerned, but to build a trusting relationship, I felt it necessary to reiterate my role as a guide, not an administrator. Both participants welcomed me into their classrooms and were eager for my feedback. Observation is an integral part of the coaching cycle because it prepares the coach for modeling and coaching. Though I wrote in my reflective journal, "I grapple with how hands-on I should be. Despite the coaching cycle model, I have learned like students, teachers also have varying levels of knowledge and experience, and beliefs and needs that don't always fit the model" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). As a result, building trust and bonds to move beyond colleagues to coaching to improvement became my primary focus of our time together.

Evaluation. In our reflection after the second week, I struggled with how to approach both participants about my observations. I did not want to seem judgmental, but at the same time, I knew we needed to work together to improve their practice in some areas. With the notion that both participants have strong personalities and have an investment in their teaching, I used the inquiry based approach to allow them to draw conclusions about the areas they needed develop.

In the case of Betty's feedback, I began my approach by comparing my early teaching style to her style as a novice teacher. I recalled how in my first few years of

teaching, I planned many of my lessons in the car on my way to school. I was more concerned with engaging the students and filling the time. This approach worked well because she admitted a lot of her planning and execution are “off the cuff,” but she recognized some students needed additional support to her student-inquiry learning approach.

I gave Mary direct feedback. I asked if she recognized student disengagement during the class discussion of the new essay topic. She said she thought the students were excited about the issue and only had to pull the class back together one time. She reiterated her struggle with the desire to have all the students participate while managing student disengagement and time management.

In week three, both participants introduced the unit we created in grade-level planning. In our January meeting, the grade level decided the students needed background knowledge to the content, so we designed the unit introduction as a class discussion. However, because of time constraints, both participants changed the format, which became a teachable moment between teacher and coach. Betty and I met the day before the lesson. She was behind in social studies, so to catch up, she created rotation stations that covered ELA and social studies assignments. The stations that introduced the Harlem Renaissance through a power point and video lacked background knowledge. Students were to jot down the main point and three components to support it. In our discussion after school, Betty said “the lesson there fell flat. They did not understand where the time fit into what we will read and discuss” (Betty’s transcript, 2018, p. 6). Betty recognized the reason it was necessary to introduce the topic to the class and understood why I initially suggested it. With this

revelation, our relationship started to shift toward coach and teacher, lending itself to part of the process of building trusting relationships.

On the other hand, my experience with Mary was her teachable moment. After three weeks of writer's workshop, Mary believed her students needed some independent learning time. So, she changed the format from reading articles together to working independently through a WebQuest, which became an exercise for the following week's introduction of the unit we planned in January. Mary's students needed a break from whole group instruction to work independently. As reflected in my narrative "The WebQuest was new to me," Mary explained the approach while I drafted the assignment (Succar narrative, 2018). Mary prepped the students on what they were reading and viewing, and they worked at their own pace. As I co-taught with Mary in class that day, I witnessed the students highly engaged while Mary and I worked individually with students on their final essays. This experience allowed me to recognize Mary's awareness of her students' needs and limits as well as the introduction of an engaging unit of study in a new format.

In week four, though Betty and I made progress in building our relationship between teacher and coach, we had not reached the modeling stage. During week four, we conducted a model/co-teach on the active reading of poetry. In our reflection of the co-teaching, Betty thought it was useful for the students to observe two teachers "coming at it (the lesson) from the same angle, but with different knowledge and experience" (Betty's narrative, 2018, p. 7). Also, I reflected in my journal, "spending the first three weeks as more of a bystander was effective in learning about Betty's beliefs and practices as a teacher. Also, as we build our relationship as ELA colleagues, she

has a stronger sense of my role and is beginning to ask my opinion about lessons and execution” (Succar reflective journal, 2018). These responses evidence, the building of trust between the coach and the team.

In week four, Mary expressed concern over some of her students’ rough drafts from the writer’s workshop. She asked if we could continue to work individually with some students while the rest of the class completed the WebQuest. After the co-teach, we met for feedback. As reflected in Mary’s narrative, she found the co-teach to be effective. She stated, “having another person with a fresh perspective and feedback is very helpful. It was helpful both to the students and me. You, being here certified what I was asking of them was correct” (Mary’s narrative, 2018, p. 7).

In week five, Betty and I introduced the Civil Rights Movement text *Freedom Walkers* as a modeled think-aloud of the introduction. This lesson was instrumental in modeling and determining student understanding. When asked how my modeling impacted her, Betty said it helps “build confidence to be able to thoroughly execute my lesson and gives me insight on how to enrich the lesson. I would not have come up with it on my own” (Betty’s narrative, 2018, p. 15). As Betty and I continued to build our relationship, she became more honest about her confidence and lesson planning.

Conversely, where Mary was confident in her execution at this stage, she struggled with wanting to reach all the students. As she wrapped up her writer’s workshop, she created one last piece of scaffolding for the students to demonstrate their understanding of the writing process. Though I planned to model teaching poetry, this change in plans turned out beneficial. I gained insight working with the students on “labeling their argument” in their essays and witnessing Mary’s notion of setting clear

expectations. As reflected in my journal, “both experiences (working with the students and teacher) were excellent ways for me to begin my journey deeper into her teaching style and planning” (Succar reflective journal, 2018).

As we entered week six, I wrote in my reflective journal, “Betty and I bounce ideas off of one another to improve our co-teach methodology and increase student understanding” (Succar reflective journal, 2018). In week six, the class read a chapter from *Freedom Walkers* about a famous African-American female during the Civil Rights Movement and composed a summary of the main idea using question stems assisting them in their answers. As I struggled with remaining stagnant with co-teaching and not moving forward with modeling, I had a breakthrough that week.

In planning this lesson, I assumed Betty, and I would lead the reading of the chapter. However, when the teaching took place, Betty read a few lines then used popcorn reading to finish the section, which was my breakthrough moment. Popcorn reading is a form of group reading that places struggling readers in an uncomfortable position and disengages readers once they have been called on to read. As I wrote in my reflective journal,

Though Betty and I are now moving towards solid ground with a little more preparation and recognition of student needs, I am anxious about addressing this issue. Even though our styles are similar, my experience has begun to take hold in digging deeper to determine how to increase students understanding and performance. (Succar reflective journal, 2018)

Unsure how to address this issue without seeming authoritative and judgmental, I decided to discuss it in our planning for week seven.

In week six, the students in Mary's class finished their essays and the WebQuest introduction to the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights unit. For this lesson, Mary and I planned a picture walk of essential individuals of the period and discussed how to implement the lesson for all students to participate, which was a breakthrough in our relationship. When we planned this week, we hashed out the lesson but did not discuss how to implement it. As we moved into this new phase of our relationship, I wrote in my reflective journal, "I have a better understanding of where she is coming from and what her expectations are for herself as the teacher and those of the students" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). With this knowledge, my preparation for modeling in week seven became clear.

In week seven with Betty, I first addressed other approaches to student reading. To not appear judgmental or authoritative, I suggested varied approaches to whole class reading. As reflected in my narrative, "I suggested partner reading and short independent reading with comprehension checks" (Succar's narrative, 2018). At this suggestion, Betty divulged she felt rushed to get through the content and thought whole group reading provided a quick assessment of student understanding and allowed her to get through the material faster (Betty's narrative, 2018, p. 17). This statement was a revelation for me as a coach. I recognized Betty trusted me and was open to alternative ways to approach her teaching methods. We discussed other forms of pacing and ways to check for student understanding. As a result, with her knowledge of technology and my experience, week seven's lesson was a breakthrough on multiple fronts. Betty's knowledge of a digital website and the higher order thinking question stems utilized earlier in the quarter helped with pacing and high student engagement and thinking.

Moreover, I pinpointed a few other areas where Betty and I could improve her teaching style to address pacing and multiple student needs. As reflected in my journal, This week's lesson was eye-opening on two accounts. First, I learned about a new website with comparable passages and higher order thinking questions tied both to the ELA standards and our state assessment format. Additionally, I have a clearer picture of where to work with Betty as a new teacher. Up to this point, our interactions have been more of co-teaching as Betty is very confident and enjoys taking the lead. (Succar reflective journal, 2018).

In our reflection, Betty and I discussed student engagement and diversifying the lesson outcomes. As Betty reviewed each answer with the whole class, students became disinterested. I suggested she hold the students accountable. Instead of conducting a review of the questions, I recommended that the students re-answer the question on a separate piece of paper, then lead peer discussions to support their answer choice, then the teacher briefly review each answer with the class. As noted in my journal, "The level of engagement with the whole class review is shallow. By holding the students accountable, active class engagement increases" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). Betty was extremely receptive to the feedback and planned to implement the suggestions in the next lesson.

In week seven of Mary's class, I modeled the lesson on poetry. This lesson went well with the students and the teacher. The students were engaged and understood the task, and Mary felt confident to teach the second poem. As reflected in Mary's narrative (2018), "Knowing that you were there and seeing it taught, made me feel confident" (p. 8). She was also open to feedback and wanted to make sure she covered the lesson

correctly. This experience was a teachable moment as a coach. We created a lesson, I modeled it, Mary observed, Mary taught it, I observed, and I gave feedback.

In week eight, Betty observed her colleague Mary's classroom lesson, which evidenced Betty's inquisitiveness and the development of a learning community. Betty took what she saw Mary doing and modified it to fit her practices. Betty's lesson took five essential quotes from the text *Freedom Walkers* and assigned each group a quote and a role like literature circles. The students were assigned the task of biographer, interpreter, analyst, or connector of the quote. Everyone in the group had to complete their role and present as a group to the class.

When I visited the classroom, each group was working on their assignment. The students struggled with the meaning of the language of the quotes and understanding their four roles. As I reflected in my journal, "I felt like a failure as a coach, because I did not recognize Betty needed more assistance with this lesson. I assumed that Betty did not need scaffolding to teach this lesson" (Succar reflective journal, 2018). My coaching fell flat, but this disappointment was a learning curve for me. After that experience, I gained a solid understanding of how to move forward in my coaching with Betty.

In week eight with Mary, she gave the students a break from reading and writing and assigned Reader's theatre on Rosa Park's bus boycott. The students were given two class periods to develop props, assign roles, and practice their parts. This approach allowed Mary to step back and the students to take control of their learning. At the end of the week, when I came into the classroom to watch the students perform, Mary absorbed half of another class because of an absent teacher. Despite the change, the students adjusted well and conducted their reader's theatre. In our reflection, Mary was

relieved it went well and thought maybe it proved the students did not need as much scaffolding as she believed.

In week nine, Betty and I muddled through the mini-quote project. In our planning for the week, we discussed the struggles from the previous week. In my narrative, I wrote, “we agreed a strong weakness is a lack of teaching the use of language to the students” (Succar narrative, 2018). Given the time frame of FSA writing, spring break, and preparing for the FSA reading test, we agreed to address this deficit next year and finished up the project with the students. All the groups presented and though Betty said, ‘it did not go as well as expected,’ Betty’s demeanor of going with the flow and embracing what she is teaching smoothed over the rough patch (Participants’ reflections and planning, 2018). Also, Betty noted some students came up to her afterward and said they enjoyed the activity.

In week nine with Mary, I was drafted to administer make-up FSA writing exams. In this last week, we met after school as a sixth-grade team to plan the next few weeks before delving into the final unit of the year. My coach’s cadre developed a module that required students to compare two texts, find common themes, and conduct a Socratic seminar about the themes. At this stage of coaching, the lesson was perfect for Mary because it did not involve much scaffolding and gave her a chance to practice student-inquiry learning. At the end of the week, when I met with Mary, she was excited about how well the lesson went and looked forward to more student hands-on lessons.

Result or Resolution. As our weekly time together for this study ended, I was excited about how my relationships developed with my participants. After spring break, in the first week of the last nine weeks, we met as a sixth-grade team to discuss the

upcoming Holocaust unit. The ELA teachers were not only excited about developing this lesson together, but they also came to the meeting with ideas and materials, shared, and came up with a plan to support one another and work together. This collaboration reflected the next stage of a professional learning community, where I, as the coach, no longer took the lead. I was there to support the teachers as they developed their shared plan. As the weeks went on after this study, the teachers continued to build the unit through weekly emails with materials, pacing, and questions. Then, when we met at the end of the school year, they discussed what did and did not work to adjust the plan for next year. This community of teachers continues to work and support one another, as I continue to coach and provide feedback and as we learn along the way together.

Closure. The examination of the three narratives in this chapter illustrates four main points worth discussion. First, the role Betty and Mary's beliefs and practices about teaching played in their teaching styles is cited in the literature in Chapter Two (Turner, Christensen & Meyer, 2009; Gay, 2010; Nganga, 2015; Samuels, 2018). The studies emphasized that teachers' beliefs and practices reflected their backgrounds; therefore, they did not always address students' diverse needs in the classroom. In Betty's case, she was candid about her lack of experience in understanding the diverse needs of her students. In our initial conversation, she believed the best way to approach students' needs was through her moral compass or integrity as discussed earlier in this chapter. Though Betty recognized it might be unrealistic since her integrity may differ from her students, she had no other experiences or training upon which to rely. As we worked together, her style of student-inquiry was, at times, above the students' comprehension, but our work in scaffolding lessons opened discussions beyond the

curriculum and gave the students a chance to express their social and cultural views. Betty's literature degree, her interest in the multicultural curriculum, and her teaching style showed an openness to expand her beliefs and practices to benefit the students' academic and sociocultural needs.

At the outset of Mary's teaching career, she worked with students whose socioeconomic and sociocultural backgrounds differed from her own. As she revealed in our initial conversation, she holds strong beliefs that students are successful when their teacher shows they care. She believes care will cross the boundaries between her middle-class white upbringing and the upbringing of her minority students from low-income backgrounds. Though the student population in this study varies from her first teaching experience, Mary exhibits her beliefs about care in her teaching style and how she plans her lessons. Also, Mary's desire to prepare lessons with relevance to students' lives is the beginnings of crossing those boundaries and what Gay (2010) refers to as the cultural divide.

Next, Betty's experience of building trusting relationships with a literacy coach is reflective of the research cited in this study (Hakeem & Woodcock, 2015; Lowenhaupt, McKinney & Reeves, 2014; & Smith, 2012). Researchers emphasize coaches must give building relationships time because trust comes before any academic coaching. Coaches must regularly meet with teachers as active observers and listeners. In Betty's story, it is evident from our coaching experience she needed time to trust me before divulging her insecurities about her teaching practice. Also, researchers emphasize building positive, and trusting relationships is fundamental to successful coaching with teachers; and, on a larger scale, complex school structures.

In our seventh week together, the trust between Betty and I became evident when our roles shifted from co-teaching to coaching. Betty asked for assistance with curriculum planning. She struggled with building lessons that addressed students' diverse needs to the full extent of the curriculum standards. This request was a significant step because, in our initial conversation, Betty felt comfortable in her role as a sixth-grade teacher and did not need assistance. At the end of our time together, Betty said her candidness was the result of us getting to know one another. She explained, "It would be difficult, I would have a hard time working with you if you just barked orders. Learning about you as a person was imperative for me" (Betty's narrative, 2018).

On a larger scale, our relationship extended into dealing with what researchers call complex school structures. The school structure contains multiple interested parties, including district and school administration, lead and novice teachers, community partners and volunteers, and parents and students. With various parties and interests, it can become difficult to balance these relationships simultaneously. Though it is impossible to quickly build trust with everyone at these varied levels, if one can develop confidence within each party, one's faith extends to the rest of the parties. With that said, the extent of our trusting relationship became evident a few weeks after this study.

As the sixth-grade ELA team made final plans to teach the Holocaust unit, a veteran teacher questioned me about the appropriateness of the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne. Without hesitation, Betty spoke up immediately in my defense and said she trusted my opinion in the appropriateness of this novel for our sixth graders. When asked why she was supportive, Betty replied she knew, based on

our relationship, I knew what was best for our students. Despite the experienced teacher's persistence, Betty stood her ground and looked to the other three six-grade ELA teachers for support. This exchange was a powerful demonstration of the importance of understanding how building relationships impact the success of literacy coaching and building professional learning communities.

In addition to building trusting relationships between coach and colleague, Mary's story revealed the building of relationships beyond coach and teacher. Our experience extended to the relationships among colleagues known as professional learning communities cited in the literature (Scott, Cay, & Carlisle, 2011; Skinner, Hagood & Provost, 2014; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). Researchers stressed coaches with strong interpersonal skills, construction of reliable and trusting relationships, and consistent coach-teacher interaction in and out of the classroom obtained positive outcomes with building professional learning communities. In our first year of working together, I mainly supplied Mary with materials and conducted some lesson planning. In our second year together and during this study, Mary and I developed structure and substance in our coach-teacher interactions. We worked together in her classroom, met weekly, and conducted on-going grade-level meetings. By the conclusion of this study, she became the go-to person on her team for advice and materials. Though I still initiate formal grade-level meetings, these sixth-grade teachers meet informally to discuss the pacing of their lessons, share materials, and adjust planned units.

As our trusted relationships expanded into a community of learners between coach and teacher, my evolving roles and responsibilities as a literacy coach were reflected in the literature (Bean, 2004; Matsumura, Garnier, & Resnick, 2010; McKenna

& Stahl, 2009; Walpole & Blamey, 2009). Scholars emphasized the roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach include supporting teachers through modeling, co-teaching, and mentoring as well as implementing literacy practices that reflect a standard of diversity and non-evaluative professional learning and leadership. Since I had existing relationships with my participants before this study, I was surprised at how many weeks into the research it took to reach the coaching phase. In the first few weeks, I learned it was necessary to build a different relationship of personal trust with my participants. Trusting me to talk about materials and planning lessons is very different from discussing teaching beliefs, practices, and styles. Once our confidence took shape, the coaching cycle quickly fell into place. As the study ended, the sixth-grade ELA team planned together regularly focused on diverse curriculum, and continuously look to me for coaching and mentoring to improve their teaching practice.

Exploration of Patterns across Narratives

After a five-day intensive workshop on the review of qualitative research, I reflected on my analysis for this study. I took a brief hiatus to attend the *Wanderlust* painting exhibition at the National Art Gallery in Berlin (2018). Meandering through the paintings, I was awestruck by the pattern of travelers' stances depicted throughout the works. As I came full circle in the exhibition, I revisited the first painting, *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* by Casper David Friedrich (1817). A picture of the painting is available online at <http://wanderlustinberlin.de/en/>. Revisiting this painting, I realized the works were not about the places traveled, but the travelers. When I returned to my hotel, I reflected on my experience of the past five days. As the patterns of the travelers' stances in the paintings, there are patterns in my participants' experiences as teachers.

How do the teacher stories of Betty and Mary mirror one another? What patterns are evident as we experienced our journey together?

Like some travelers' experiences in the paintings, some teachers' experiences in their classrooms are diverse. In Friedrich's painting *The Wander above the Sea of Fog*, the traveler stands alone over a vast universe unattached to anyone or anything else. In other paintings, travelers stand side by side and take in the immense views together with a pattern of likeness. In this study, similar patterns of experience occurred between my participants. Some patterns overlapped while some remained distinct, but similar patterns became evident as I analyzed the narratives.

I commenced with reading and rereading the narratives created from the data collected over our nine-week period together. I also read and reread my data collection of field notes and reflective journals. As I read and reflected, reread and reflected, I noted all the commonalities in content across the narratives. I tracked these commonalities in a list I generated from each narrative. Through constant reconsidering of the data, I identified six threads (*Figure 14*) across Betty's, Mary's and my stories of experience. I share these patterns below.



Figure 14. Exploration of patterns across narratives.

Teachers' beliefs and practices. Embedded in who we are as teachers, our beliefs and practices drive what we teach, how we interpret it, and how others perceive us. This pattern emerged in our initial conversations when the study commenced and remained a backdrop throughout our time together. Our beliefs and practices were evident as we learned about one another and how we conducted ourselves with each other. Betty has what she terms a “natural integrity” that keeps her in check with herself and her students. It is evident in the way she interacts with her students and the curriculum she teaches. Betty uses subtle tactics to pull more students into discussions, with statements like, “let’s wait for a few more light bulbs to come on” and shows her interest in the curriculum when teaching, “Now we are going to discuss a topic I am passionate about.”

Mary’s belief and practices stem from a simple statement her professor told her in college: “Your students will not care about anything you teach them if they feel like you don’t truly care about them.” Therefore, Mary nurtures and builds meaningful relationships with her students through listening and hearing them, which is evident in how she develops and delivers her lessons. Like my beliefs and practices about building relationships as a literacy coach, I must nurture the teachers and develop meaningful relationships with them. Teachers, like students, will not care about my expertise or willingness to help them if they do not believe I genuinely care about them and their students.

Teaching styles. Teachers’ beliefs and practices evolve their teaching style. As teachers learn and grow, they build on their teaching styles. Though both my participants are novice teachers, they have distinct patterns in their teaching styles.

Betty attributes her teaching style to the extent of the time she spent in her mother's classroom. She says teaching "comes naturally to me, because I like public speaking and teaching is in my family." Betty's style of student-inquiry learning stems from her comfort in public speaking. She enjoys student discussions as well as oral and visual demonstrations of knowledge.

Mary's teaching style is concrete. She develops an idea, discusses it, plans out a unit, and embeds scaffolding through instructional handouts and graphic organizers. She states in her narrative, "I believe students learn a lot more when they are active learners in the classroom." She strives to keep everyone engaged in discussions and their work. Therefore, Mary's lessons are delivered clearly with supporting materials for every step of the experience. Betty's and Mary's teaching styles were woven throughout their narratives and became the plot of their stories in this study.

As a coach, my teaching style stems from my beliefs and practices of nurturing my students. As reflected in my notes, my first year, "I spent a lot of time observing and talking to teachers about their curriculum and less-time modeling and co-teaching." This approach is evident in my narrative for the study and my participants' instructional coaching sequence reflected at the beginning of this chapter. As a teacher, I spent every day with my students and provided outlets that gave me advantages to get to know them and build relationships with them. As a coach, I may spend blocks of time with individual teachers, but not work with them again until later in the year or the following year. Also, working with adult learners is different than working with children. I must accept that teachers have individual thoughts and recognize there are different types of teachers. Teachers are complex individuals, and we do not see every situation

similarly because we come to this profession with different views and experiences. This distinction became apparent during the nine weeks spent with the study participants.

Trust and building relationships. These patterns were the basis of this study and continued to develop throughout our time together. I placed these themes together because trust is necessary to build relationships. Though these themes wove through the narratives as a basis for the study, it only became apparent as we approached the middle of the description. In the first three weeks, I observed and gave input to my participants, but in the fourth week, we co-taught lessons. Betty and I modeled active learning for the students. We choral read a poem and conducted a collaborative discussion about the theme, tone, and speaker. After our lesson, she commented that we approached this lesson “from the same angle, but with different knowledge and experience” and “essentially, the discussions we have are higher level.” After that lesson, Betty recognized my experience and conferred with me on her lessons and execution.

Similarly, my relationship with Mary evolved after we co-taught “beefing up” students’ rough drafts for their argumentative essays. She revealed her insecurities as an ELA teacher and explained our co-teaching was “helpful for both the students and me. You certified what I was asking of them was correct.” Then, in our planning for the following week, we discussed teaching poetry from the Harlem Renaissance unit. Mary said, “I am personally very uncomfortable with poetry. Writing I love but having you in here [to model poetry] helps me grow as a teacher.” This level of honesty revealed Mary’s high level of trust and confidence in me as her coach.

These two revelations moved us from colleagues in the classroom to teacher and coach, which led to the next theme of shifting roles.

Roles shift. The work with my participants evolved in similar ways during our time together in the study, leading to another pattern of role shifts. As I spent many weeks observing their styles, giving input into their methods, Mary and Betty slowly opened about their needs. This process caused the shift in roles from observer and co-teacher to model and coach. In our initial conversation for this study, Betty expressed that “she [felt] comfortable in her role and did not need support in that area.” However, in week seven, as our relationship transpired, and she trusted my judgement Betty requested assistance in creating a flow between materials and standards. Specifically, she stated in her narrative, “an area I need help in or maybe it is a weakness is drafting higher order thinking questions to tie to the standards.” This shift in Betty’s language to reflect her needs caused our roles to evolve from co-teaching to teacher and coach.

Similarly, Mary and I spent many weeks together where I observed her style and gave input on planning and methods. Though Mary is comfortable expressing her confusion and questioning, after we co-taught our first lesson, she admitted her apprehension about poetry. She requested I model the first lesson on poetry. In our reflection, Mary said, “Knowing that you were there and seeing it taught made me feel confident.” The candidness is what allowed the shift from colleagues to teacher and coach.

Re-emergence of teaching style. As our relationships developed into teacher and coach, a reemergence of teaching styles occurred. Betty’s style of student-inquiry reflected the shift away from solace and group inquiry to scaffolding and building

background information to rise to student-inquiry. Mary's form of scaffolding shifted towards student-inquiry and lightening of the scaffolding support. As we continue to work together, both participants keep strengthening their styles. Moreover, my participants have begun sharing materials and lessons to meet their needs and enhance their methods.

Building a professional learning community. In the last week of my first school year as a coach (2016-17), the sixth-grade team convened and created a curriculum map for the 2017-2018 school year. We met as a sixth-grade team each quarter of the 2017-2018 school year to review the chart and adjust pacing and materials. At the beginning of the third quarter, which coincided with this study, the team met to review and plan for the quarter. Though I guided the planning, the teachers were beginning to discuss ideas among themselves and share materials. As the study progressed, my participants, who are next door to one another, discussed their pacing and shared documents throughout the process. As reflected in Betty's narrative, she "stole" some of Mary's ideas of implementing lessons for this study. As the quarter closed, the sixth-grade team shared materials and experiences and began relying on one another for advice and feedback. As a result, a year after this study, Mary is mentoring one of the sixth-grade teachers and providing her with materials and guidance for the present school year (2018-2019).

Patterns Relevant to the Theory

As I reflect on the patterns identified and discussed above, I ask, how do these patterns relate to the significance of my study? In Chapter Two, I consider the four theoretical underpinnings of this study. These four theoretical frameworks are social

constructivism, sociocultural theory, constructivism, and change theory. The emergence of the patterns of teacher's beliefs and practices and teaching styles across the narratives reflect the social constructivist approach of our ability to co-construct knowledge in the social and cultural sense. Beck and Kosnik (2006) propose that social constructivism bridges the social and cultural challenges and tensions we face in teacher education and the profession. This bridging effect is evident in the three concepts of integration, inquiry, and community. The idea of integration is the recognition of the link between knowledge and experience and theory and practice. This link was evident early in this study when, in our initial conversation, the teachers expressed their strong beliefs and practices and definitive teaching styles. Their keen sense about themselves and their style sparked the second concept of spirited inquiry. Both participants recognized the benefits of expanding and improving their practice through active learning. As the literacy coach and participants maintained an open dialogue, the learning process between coach and teacher emerged into the third concept, a sense of community. Thus, our coaching cycle followed the tenets of social-constructivism, where participants are co-constructing knowledge.

Next, framed within sociocultural theory are the patterns across the narratives of trust and building relationships. The sociocultural approach of teaching and learning is the idea that the learning environment between teacher and coach is a shared problem space, where both parties participate in the process of negotiation and co-construction of knowledge (Kozulin et al., 2005, p. 246). The participants and I built our trust and relationships around a shared space in and out of the classroom. Moreover, my approach of non-threatening observations of their teaching style, respect of their prior

knowledge, and beliefs and practices paved the way of trust while building knowledge from past and present experiences, which is the basis of sociocultural theory.

As we built our relationships with one another and the co-construction of knowledge took shape, the next pattern of a reemergence of teaching style took place. The trend is evident from the theoretical framework of constructivism. Richardson (1997) reminds us that constructivism moves beyond the co-construction of knowledge to where the individual creates his/her understanding of personal experience. As the participants and I developed trust and planned and co-taught lessons, they internalized new knowledge and adapted their teaching practices.

As we continued to build our trusting relationships, the patterns of a role shift and the professional learning communities formed. As the participants evolved through our time together, the evidence of a transformation in our relationships and their relationships took shape. This alteration from co-teaching to teacher and coach acknowledges the nature of change in teacher education as defined through change theory. Accordingly, Fullan (2001, 2006) identifies three changes in teacher practice. The three variations are the use of new or revised materials, new teaching approaches, and alteration of beliefs or pedagogical assumptions. As our roles shifted and the coaching cycle took shape, both participants used revised materials to improve their practice. Betty revised her higher order thinking questions, and Mary created more independent student-inquiry based assignments. Additionally, they embraced new teaching approaches for deepening classroom discussions and student engagement. With this shift, their beliefs about their practice or pedagogical assumptions evolved as

they continued to build on the theories behind their student-inquiry approach to teaching.

Significance Analysis of the Narratives

Along with common patterns among the narratives, significance analysis identifies trends of language within and across the narratives. Significance adds a thicker layer of understanding about the two participants' journeys as teachers, working alongside a literacy coach, and building relationships. The evaluative devices utilized below attempt to reflect individual aspects of the participants that are not readily evident in the narrative elements and patterns described above. The evaluative device of psychological state expressions reflects the individualism of the teacher participants, the intensifiers reflect the emphasis in various parts of the narrative story as the teachers grow in their practice alongside the literacy coach, and connectors indicate links in the plot of the narrative and provide outcomes (Daiute, 2014). *Figure 15* below shows the significance analysis.

Evaluative devices	Betty	Mary	Literacy Coach	
			(Betty)	(Mary)
Psychological state expressions	let's wait for a few more light bulbs to come on, give me something, somebody awake today, just for giggles, you were in the same ballpark, dip our toes into the water	fresh eye, on the same page, I felt like a circus performer trying to juggle everything	butterflies in my stomach, heart jumping out of my chest	ease of conversation
Intensifiers (numbers indicate the number of times word repeated throughout the narrative)	gracious, very (9), well-versed, keen knowledge, always, impassioned, comes natural (3), big insight, focus (2), common ground, integrity (3), I know this, I am intuitive, asked, wants, needs	very (7), inviting, likes (2), becomes a lot, overwhelming, meaningful, most, more (7), much (2), reiterates (2), great, keenly	nervous(ness) (3), perplexed, uncomfortable (3), pondered (2), anxiety, worry, reiterate, insight, remind, disappointed, excited, confided, recognize, not sure, better sense, elated,	excited (3), happy, offered, impressed, grapple, advised, disappointed, see (2), accomplished
Causal Connectors (number indicates the number of times word repeated throughout the narrative)	also, agreed (3), relate, trust, realized, feels (2)	agreed, ok (13), so (2), grow, feel (2)	agreed (2)	modeled (3), understand, felt, provided, discussed (3), learned (2)

Figure 15. Individual patterns in the narratives through significance analysis.

Outcomes

On a lesser scale, significance offers insight about the individual participants through relationships of thoughts (psychological state expressions) and feelings (intensifiers) and other meanings (connectors).

The psychological state expressions reflected mostly at the beginning of the narratives humanize the character of the participants. Betty's psychological state expressions indicate how she approaches her students in an encouraging, familiar way to create a comfortable learning environment in her classroom. Mary's psychological state expressions indicate her struggles, frustrations, and desire to succeed in her position. The literacy coach's psychological state expressions reflect my initial lack of confidence with Betty and my feeling of ease with Mary whom I worked with the previous year.

The intensifiers throughout the narrative, string the stories together of the participants' journey of learning during the study. Betty's intensifiers provide a view into her personality and the confidence she portrays throughout most of the narrative until she opens about her wants and needs to improve her practice. Betty's intensifiers reflect how she grapples with providing meaningful, supportive materials throughout the narrative. My intensifiers as the literary coach reflect the raw emotion I felt throughout both stories. The roller coaster of emotions I felt as I built relationships identified areas of need and work with my participants to improve their craft.

The causal connectors revealed mostly at the end of the narratives reflected a coming together of the minds. The building of trust led to the revealing of weaknesses and the willingness to work on those areas. The confidence in me as their coach and

the movement forward as a team, in turn, built my confidence in myself as their literacy coach.

Aligning Narratives, Patterns and Significance Analysis

The three narrative structures of the participants, the narrative patterns, and language identified in significance analysis (*Figure 15*) are aligned together in *Figure 16* below to reflect how teachers and coaches grow and work together.

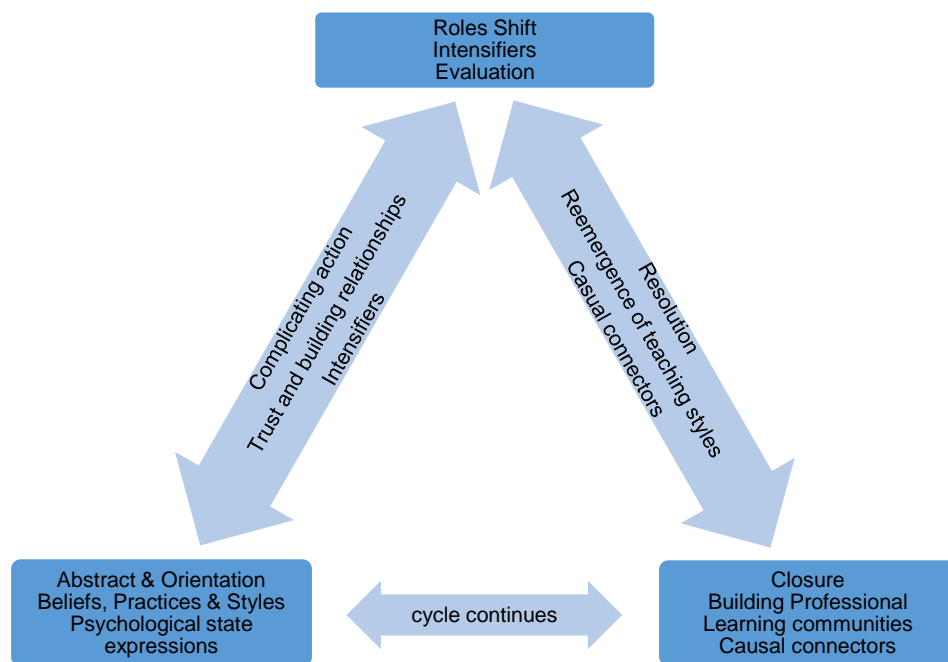


Figure 16. Narrative structure, patterns, evaluative devices flow together.

Teachers come with their beliefs, practices, and teaching styles revealed in the psychological state expressions. As they begin to build trusting relationships with the literacy coach, their language transgresses to intensifiers that lead to the role shift of teacher and colleague to teacher and coach. As the teachers' styles reemerges from their experiences working with the literacy coach, their language shifts to causal connectors, which leads them to build professional learning communities.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I shared and analyzed the data collected during this study. First, I provided an overview of the chapter and instructional sequences. Then, I explained how I organized the section according to Labov's (1972) six narrative elements and narrated and examined the stories of experience from Betty, Mary and me as a literacy coach. I provided an examination of patterns across the narratives and concluded the chapter with the significance analysis of the individual trends of each story. In the next section, I revisit the research puzzle and theoretical frameworks, reassessing and extending the patterns across and within the narratives shared here.

Chapter Five

Reexaminations and Expansion of the Patterns

Overview of the Chapter

As I write this chapter and reflect on our experiences learning alongside one another as coach and teacher, my thoughts drift to my four grandchildren born in the last two years during this study. Like building intermittent bonds with my grandchildren who do not reside in the same city, my participants and I did not see one another daily, but as we created relationships over time, they trusted and relied on me. As I have cared for my grandchildren by changing their diapers, feeding them, and witnessing their milestones, we have developed a trust and bond over time. Similar to the confidence my grandchildren have in me to guide and teach them, my participants/colleagues have faith in me and look to me for guidance and teaching.

This reflection of building trust and relationships reminded me how our experiences are a story in time, which took me to my first readings of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) seminal text on narrative inquiry. When I considered the qualitative methodology to use for this study, these researchers struck me with their description of 'capturing' narrative: "Narrative inquirers always enter into research relationships in the midst" (p. 43). When I visit my grandchildren and work with my colleagues, I enter amid their lives. Within that midst, Clandinin and Connelly emphasize that narratives occur in a three-dimensional space that includes one's past, present, and future, unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives (p. 43). So, when I think

about concluding the narrative inquiries, I recognize the telling of our stories is a pause in our overall experiences that encompass all our lives. As the researcher, I am capturing a brief period in my participants' lives that include the complex nature of their pasts, present, and future.

So, as I draw this study to a close, this reflection sparked my reexamination of the narratives, patterns, and significance analysis shared in Chapter Four. I looked to conclude, outstanding thoughts that inform the practice and future research, to justify the study and answer the demands for the study I defined in Chapter One. This reexamination brought some closure, but no conclusions, only expansions of the narrative patterns and new wonderings about the significance analysis devices. I found closure in answering my research questions, which are reflected below, but with those closures came further questions and new avenues of experience to explore.

In Chapter Two, I discussed four theoretical frameworks: social constructivism (Beck & Kosnik, 2006), sociocultural theory (Bruner, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), constructivism (Dewey, 1916, 1933; Piaget, 1954; Richardson, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978), and change theory (Fullan, 2001, 2006). I discussed how together, these theories provided a way for me to co-construct knowledge within a social context alongside the teachers, negotiate and co-construct knowledge as a learning community, construct relationships in a natural sense, and reflect on what impact our co-construction of knowledge had on teacher beliefs and practices. In Chapter Four, I briefly touched on these theories and the existing literature in the analysis of the narratives, the patterns identified across this study, and the significance analysis. In this chapter, I reexamine the narratives, patterns, and evaluative devices with the theoretical framework and

existing literature in mind to answer the research questions, expand the patterns and evaluative devices for suggestions for future research, and conclude the chapter with my final reflections.

Research Puzzle

The research puzzle restated at the beginning of each chapter grounded my thought processes from planning, data collection to the analysis of this study. As the study took shape, the questions provided a solid direction and refocused my scholarship when I felt lost and overwhelmed. The research puzzle is stated again below:

- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, navigate between my roles and responsibilities to build partnerships with two English language arts teachers?
- In what ways do I, as a literacy coach, establish collaboration among these two teachers to build a professional learning community?
- In what ways do these two teachers' beliefs influence my coaching, modeling, and relationship building?

As I reflect on each piece of the puzzle above, I wonder whether my outcomes in Chapter Four answered my questions. I wonder if they were the answers I expected. Where will these answers take me? Where do I go from here?

Reexamining the Patterns and Expanding the Patterns

As I thought about our narratives from our time together as coach and teachers, the patterns that seemed to emerge across the stories naturally and again individually in the significance analysis, I was reminded of the *Wanderlust* painting exhibition I mentioned in Chapter Four. The travelers in these paintings traveled both together and alone. Traditionally, teachers have been left alone to hone their crafts, but recent shifts

in education practice focus on building relationships and professional learning communities. So, my first thought was the patterns, and the significance analysis from the narratives answered the calls for the study I outlined in Chapter One. This idea seemed final where the patterns seemed fluid. As I reexamined the patterns, I saw extensions that informed the practice and led to questions for further research. Though I have found closure, I do not have firm final conclusions, and new wonderings emerged from the patterns and devices as I reexamined and rethought the patterns and devices reflected in *Figure 17* below and *Figure 18* later in this chapter.

Narrative Patterns	Reexamining the Patterns	Rethinking the Patterns
Teachers' beliefs and practices are an essential consideration when working with them as learners.	Teachers' beliefs and practices and styles must be of consideration when making decisions about coaching and curriculum and instruction.	Are all educators open and willing to work as adult learners to bridge the social and cultural challenges and tensions we face to build on our practice?
Teaching styles are respected and enhanced as they learn.		
Trust and building relationships between the coach and teacher pave the way for effective coaching and learning.	Trust is a tenuous and continuous process that occurs along with building relationships and requires patience and time.	How can coaches build trusting relationships while instituting effective practices?
Roles shift as the coach models and implements effective teaching practices.	Effective coaching leads to enhanced teacher practice, the reemergence of teaching styles, and the confidence to make professional learning communities.	How can the school and district support the continuity of effective methods and continued professional learning communities?
Trust and coaching create a reemergence of teaching styles.		
As teachers build confidence, their practices extend into building professional learning communities.		

Figure 17. Reexamining and rethinking the patterns.

Teachers' beliefs, practices, and styles are an important part of their learning process. I combined these two patterns of teachers' beliefs and practices and styles from Chapter Four. In my initial conversations with Betty and Mary, their beliefs and practices seemed separate from their teaching styles. Though, as I observed their teaching style over the first few weeks, I recognized the interconnection between their

beliefs, practices, and styles in their persona and what they wanted to accomplish. What I initially believed was a small part of getting to know Betty and Mary became a pivotal part in understanding my coaching roles and responsibilities. My role was to support them in their beliefs, practices, and styles. My responsibilities were to respond to their needs and direct and mentor them. I found this task to be consistent in the literature on literacy coach's roles and responsibilities. Coaches are considered a resource and provide support in a nonjudgmental way (Wren & Reed, 2005) and are responsive and directive at times in their role as director or mentor (Walpole & Blamey, 2009; Ippolito, 2010).

As I reexamined these patterns, I thought, it is imperative to consider the teachers' beliefs, practices, and styles when making decisions about coaching and curriculum and instruction. With this understanding, I looked to the role of social constructivism, one of the theoretical underpinnings of this study discussed in Chapter Two (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). As we work together, we are socially constructing knowledge and bridging the social and cultural challenges we face in teacher education. Then, I wondered whether all educators are open and willing to work as adult learners to bridge the social and cultural challenges and tensions we face to build on our practice.

Betty and Mary have strong personalities and are secure in their beliefs, practices, and styles of teaching. As their coach and a participant in this study, I was actively reflective about how my roles and responsibilities aligned with building lasting partnerships with them. Therefore, I first set out to define our roles as coach and teacher. As I embarked on this study in my second year as a literacy coach, I had

similar feelings, emotions, and experiences as the research by Cantrell et al. (2015) described, who learned the second year coaches felt more confident from growth and recognition of the expertise and abilities. Accordingly, like Rainville and Jones (2008) and Gee (1991) discovered in their research, I juggled various identities and positions of power. With these thoughts and my roles and responsibilities, I became an observer at first. I did not want my participants to view me as an expert or with powerful identities. I wanted to see them in their natural environment and work from there. This approach led me away from the pressures discussed in the research of how to position myself into the social, cultural, and political perspectives (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2013) and be the expert (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013). Instead, I positioned myself as Calo, Sturtevant, and Kopfman (2015) emphasize, in the role as a literacy leader in support of the teachers.

As a literacy leader, my participants' beliefs, practices, and styles were respected and built upon to improve their practice. Both the teachers and I co-constructed knowledge to enhance their practice. In our first weeks together in our reflective discussions, Betty and Mary recognized that their firmly held beliefs and practices were not delivered clearly through their teaching style. With their realization, we set a goal to work on enhancing their style to meet their beliefs and practice about their role.

Betty's style of student-inquiry and belief that all students can rise to this level of inquiry was challenged in our third week together. Students struggled with the comprehension questions from an at home reading assignment. As we talked through the issue, Betty recognized students needed scaffolding to transfer knowledge from what they read to answering questions about their reading. We worked through this challenge together. We co-taught the next lesson, and I modeled directed questions to

build student background knowledge and reach Betty's goal of higher level questioning. Upon reflection, we agreed this modeling was effective in enhancing Betty's style.

Like Betty, Mary's beliefs and practices embed her teaching style. Mary believes students must know their teacher cares for them to be successful. She accomplishes the expression of caring through whole class discussion and direct instruction. However, this practice lacks student engagement and enhances student dependence. Once Mary expressed the desire to transition to student-inquiry, she built one on one student relationships and provided them with the support they individually needed. We worked on modeling and gradual release to transition to inquiry based learning. Together, Mary and I modeled our expectations of the lesson, completed the lesson with the students, and then they finished it on their own. Meanwhile, we worked with students who needed individual assistance. Upon reflection, Mary realized the students would rise to the occasion when necessary, and not all students need scaffolding every time.

These two patterns enhanced my understanding of the importance of preserving and building on teachers' beliefs, practices, and styles to effectively bridge the social and cultural challenges we face in our teacher practice (Wren & Reed, 2005; McKenna & Stahl, 2009; IRA 2004, ILA 2010). Furthermore, the recognition of the importance of teacher's beliefs, practices, and styles as part of the literacy coach's roles and responsibilities may open educators to the willingness to work as adult learners to bridge the social and cultural challenges and tensions we face as we build our teaching practice.

Trust and building relationships. This pattern stood alone and became clear toward the end of our nine weeks together. As discussed in our narratives, my

participants were cautious about fully embracing my role as a literacy coach. We discussed observations, created lessons, and co-taught. They were careful about my modeling lessons and discussing areas of support. It was not until the end of our time together, when our relationship seemed fully developed, where our roles shifted to coach and teacher. Though the literature mentions the importance of building relationships with teachers to be effective literacy coaches (Bean, 2004; International Reading Association, 2006; & Smith, 2012, Shaw, 2006), there is minimal literature on how to build those trusting relationships. We consciously and unconsciously needed time to interact with one another and on our own to process the meanings of our relationships. Once trust and our relationship solidified, the theoretical underpinning of sociocultural theory (Bruner, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978) emerged discussed in Chapter Two. Once my participants and I took on our roles as colleagues and teachers and coach, our environment became a shared learning space.

Then, I realized trust and building relationships is a tenuous, continuous process and requires patience and time. This realization did not come quickly. I thought because I knew my participants and worked with them in the past, we had relationships, so it would be simple to move into the heart of coaching. What I did not realize is multiple levels of trust and relationships are in a literacy coach position. Trusting a literacy coach to provide materials and informal advice is very different from delivering productive feedback, changing practices, and adhering to the grander academic plans for the school. With this realization, I wondered how coaches could build trusting relationships while instituting effective practices.

For example, in our initial conversations for this study, Betty, Mary, and I planned our time together. The six-grade team met before the quarter commenced and determined the materials and lesson plans throughout the quarter. My initial time with both participants was as a tacit observer. For the first three weeks, I observed them, made copies for them, ran errands for them, and met weekly to debrief. This work is consistent with the literature on the initial steps in building relationships with teachers, first the non-judgmental empathy defined by listening, probing, and regular meetings (Hakeem & Woodcock, 2015) and symbolic gestures of “a willingness to do just about anything” (Lowenhaupt, McKinney & Reeves, 2014, p. 752). As we moved deeper into the quarter, they asked my advice on their lessons and their execution. When we were three weeks from the end of our time together, they both confided in me about some of their fears and uncertainties. Betty struggled with developing and teaching higher-order thinking questions, and Mary was not comfortable teaching poetry. We approached their needs through brainstorming ways to adapt the curriculum to their needs. My approach was to enhance their teaching style, not change it; building on what they felt comfortable doing with the content they were teaching created a continuum in their teaching and our relationship around the content. Similarly, the literature builds on the idea that as teachers trust their coach, they confide in them (Hakeem & Woodcock, 2015); addressing their fears and insecurities around the curriculum extends that confidentiality (Lowenhaupt, McKinney & Reeves, 2014). The role of the coach in this manner is what builds lasting partnerships.

This pattern extended my understanding of trust and building relationships between coach and teachers. There must be non-judgmental understanding, a level of

trust, and a give and take in the building of relationships (Walpole & Blamey, 2009; Ippolito, 2010; Hakeem & Woodcock, 2015). With these elements in place, coaches build trusting relationships that lead to instituting effective practices (Smith, 2012; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). So, this form of trust is the next step in building relationships and moving forward in the coaching cycle.

Coaching creates a reemergence of styles and builds communities. The three patterns of roles shift, a reemergence of teaching style, and developing professional learning communities are combined from Chapter Four. These three patterns are the heart of the coaching cycle and the makings of the next stages of building relationships as a literacy coach. Once the teachers felt confident enough to divulge their insecurities about their teaching, our roles shifted from colleagues to coach and teacher. This shift caused a reemergence of style and added confidence. The added confidence moved collaboration with their colleagues from brainstorming about materials to sharing their lessons and giving pedagogical advice.

The sixth-grade level English Language Arts (ELA) teachers met at the end of the previous school year to create a curriculum map. Our first meeting was to discuss themes and materials for every nine weeks. Since the beginning of the school year, we have met ahead of each quarter and set pacing and lessons around those themes and materials. In the third quarter, the two participants taught the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights units ahead of the other two ELA teachers. Once they completed the unit, the two participants met with the other two ELA teachers to provide advice and plan for the next quarter. This progression is consistent with the literature on building professional learning communities.

As I reexamined these patterns, I thought effective coaching leads to enhanced teacher practice, a reemergence of teaching styles, and confidence to build professional learning communities. This result is consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of change theory discussed in Chapter Two of this study (Fullan, 2001, 2006). As my coaching took shape and our roles shifted toward coach and teacher, we revised and added materials. With a change in materials came a reemergence of teaching styles and beliefs. The participants enhanced their styles and beliefs to address diverse student needs. Then, they influenced their colleagues to reevaluate their styles and beliefs through the sharing of materials and effective practices, the making of a professional learning community. So, I wonder how the school and district can support the continuity of effective methods and continued professional learning communities.

Betty and Mary's openness about their teacher practice evolved out of the trust we built. As discussed above, trust is a significant factor in building relationships and successful coaching. Building relationships in my first year as a coach with the sixth-grade teachers led to our successful planning meetings the following year. Three of the four teachers who met together were new to the school that year. Before our first meeting, they all worked independently. This meeting was the beginning of regular collaborative sessions throughout the following year. As the study took shape and I conducted individual meetings, modeled, and co-taught in my participants' classrooms, the other two sixth-grade teachers who were not part of the study requested coaching.

Moreover, our principal agreed to commence with grade-level meetings once a quarter to start building the common use of materials and pacing across all grade levels. These experiences are consistent with the literature discussed in Chapter Two on

developing professional learning communities. Scott, Cay, and Carlisle (2011) learned effective coaching aligns with on-going grade-level meetings, one-on-one meetings, modeling and co-teaching in the classroom. These three actions of effective coaching were the beginning of establishing collaboration among the teachers to build professional learning communities.

As I continued to work with my participants, the sixth-grade level team met informally, discussed ideas and the effectiveness of their lessons. The impact of teachers' collaboration became evident at the end of the study. As discussed in Chapter Four, a seasoned teacher from another subject area challenged the ELA teachers over their teaching of the novel *Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne. Because of the bonds they built through collaboration, the teachers felt confident enough to stand by their beliefs and stand down the persistence of the seasoned teacher. Similarly, Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) learned teachers who worked with literacy coaches and in professional learning communities built strong collaborative relationships with each other and implemented practices and new strategies they learned from each other.

The patterns supplemented my knowledge about the importance of literacy coaches and their role in building and maintaining professional learning communities. Accordingly, the research in Chapter Two confirmed that coaches play an important role in creating a platform for collaboration and teacher development. Berebitsky and Carlisle (2010) learned teachers who worked with coaches and were exposed to professional development deepened their knowledge of their subject matter and modified their teaching practices. Skinner, Hagood, and Provost (2014) added coaches and building professional learning communities fomented collaboration, but when left to

their devices, teachers struggled to collaborate. So, it is clear from this study and the above research that schools' and districts' implementation of literacy coaches played a vital role in the continuity of effective practices and continued professional learning communities.

Extending the Significance Analysis and New Wonderings

The evaluative devices identified through significance analysis provide an individual snapshot of the emotions and relationships of the patterns discussed throughout Chapters Four and Five. As I reflected on how these devices became evident in each narrative, I started to reexamine the mechanisms and formulated new wonderings for further research. *Figure 18* below reflects my thoughts and new wonderings over the evaluative devices reflected in the narratives.

Evaluative Devices	Rethinking the Devices	New Wonderings
Psychological state expressions, intensifiers, and causal connectors	The individualized expressions humanize the characters, intensifiers provide a window into our journey, and causal connectors reflect the building of multiple relationships.	How might schools and districts support teachers' and coaches' evolution of their beliefs, practices, and styles to enhance students' diverse learning needs?

Figure 18. Rethinking the evaluative devices and new wonderings.

Psychological state expressions, intensifiers, and causal connectors.

Though the words identified in the evaluative devices are individually distinctive, they are also linked to the journey of my participants and me as we learned about one another, built trust and multi-level relationships, and created a community of learners.

As reflected in Chapter Four and *Figure 18* above, like a plot in a story, we came to this

study with distinctive characters from our beliefs, practices, and styles. The plot unfolded as we got to know one another. The rising action was the sharing of our thoughts, feelings, and learning from one another. The high-point or conflict was our bond. The falling action and resolution were the continuum between the community of learners within and around us.

As we developed our relationships, we learned how our beliefs and practices impacted our learning alongside one another. First, our psychological state expressions reflected our individuality or the humanization of our characters. When we got to know one another, the intensifiers showed our conflicts within ourselves and our practice. Along the way, we grappled with individual thoughts and actions. In the end, the causal connectors evidence the establishment of trust and bonds among us. Since we forged a path together, we are ready to take the next steps in leadership and learning to enhance, not only our professional practices but that of our colleagues among us. This trust and building bonds are synonymous with the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter Two concerning the teachers' beliefs and practices and coaches' beliefs and practices about teaching and learning.

For example, when I reexamined the evaluative devices across the narratives, I thought the participants' expressions reflect the construction of their knowledge and how they see the world around them. These individual expressions aligned with the theoretical framework of constructivism discussed in Chapter One of this study (Dewey, 1916, 1933; Piaget, 1954; Richardson, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). Betty's, Mary's, and my psychological state expressions reflect our personalities and character. Our intensifiers reveal how we interact with our practice and convey our style of teaching. Last, our

causal connectors show how we process our knowledge after we have co-constructed knowledge as a teacher and coach. With a window into the thoughts and minds of the participants, I wondered what our next step was and how we can use this knowledge to continue to build on our practice. So, I ask, how might schools and districts support teachers' and coaches' evolution of their beliefs, practices, and styles to enhance students' diverse learning needs.

Betty and Mary's psychological state expressions show an intuitive nature about who they are as individuals and teachers. They both have a strong sense of being in their conduct as teachers and professionals. The intensifiers are significant to their passion and desire to grow and learn. The causal connectors show the process of learning and building on their practice alongside the literacy coach. The psychological state expressions of the literacy coach display the beginnings of building relationships and the desire to succeed. The intensifiers reflect the emotional ups and downs of building relationships with the participants. With the development of the relationships, the teachers and coaches grow and learn with one another. With this growth, not only does the coach's beliefs and practices impact learning, but also the teachers' beliefs play a part in the success of building relationships, modeling, and coaching. This change aligns with the literature in Chapter Two concerning the teachers' beliefs and practices and coaches' beliefs and practices about teaching and learning.

First, Chandler's work exemplifies the psychological expressions of Betty's initial mismatched beliefs and Mary's uncertainties about her practice. Betty's initial misconceptions as reflected in her expressions coincide with the mismatched beliefs that students will rise to the occasion without instructional or emotional scaffolding.

Mary's feelings of uncertainty show her desire to "fix" students emotionally and academically. Next, as the teachers grew in their practice, Nganga's (2015) work on teachers' self-awareness and self-reflection became evident. Betty's transition from "keenly aware" of her students' needs to "asking" and "wanting" assistance to scaffolding her practice reflects a shift in her beliefs and practices. Mary's transition from being "overwhelmed" to "keenly" aware emphasizes her self-awareness and reflection.

As both participants' narratives ended, their causal connectors demonstrated a learning process about their beliefs and practices. Betty's trust in our relationship allowed the work toward higher level class discussions and multicultural lessons. This "widening of student gaze" she discussed in our initial conversation came to fruition in the end. This experience commences with Samuel's (2018) research in Chapter Two on fostering equitable, inclusive classrooms through culturally responsive teaching.

Likewise, Mary's causal connectors of feeling "ok" with her growth in practice are consistent with Turner, Christensen and Meyers' (2009) study on instructional change, moving from positive to conceptual learning. Mary's initial fears about her students' engagement, scaffolding, and lesson flow reflected what the researchers' term positive learning, but not necessarily effective learning. By the end of Mary's narrative, she showed instructional changes consistent with active learning strategies focused on conceptual understanding of the materials.

With the role of literacy coach and participant researcher, my evaluative devices reveal my beliefs and practices and the impact of the teachers' beliefs and practices as we built relationships and moved through the coaching cycle of observing, modeling,

and coaching. At the beginning of my narrative, the psychological state expressions reflect my comfort level with my participants. Though I knew both participants before this study, I felt nervous coaching them. With Betty, I felt nervous about her first impressions of me as a coach. With Mary, I was nervous about effectively modeling lessons. When the study got underway, a roller coaster of emotions emerged of anticipation, excitement, disappointment, confidence, and accomplishment. Initially, our roles together were as co-teachers. Once they trusted me, the participants' beliefs about my role evolved to mentor, then coach, and finally confidant. With that shift, my part solidified, and I witnessed the change and growth in their practice. Their belief in me became evident at the end, with their accomplished practices in the areas in which we worked, and their willingness to continue to grow as learners and leaders.

Also, the research in Chapter Two of this study on literacy coaches' beliefs and practices is in line with the experience discussed above. First, Rainville and Jones (2008) argue that coaching takes on a new, different relational dynamic in various contexts. Initially, as colleagues of both my participants, it was difficult to move into a coaching position with them. These researchers identify multiple hats coaches must wear as they grow into the coaching cycle. Mangin and Dunsmore (2010) discovered how literacy coaches juggle social, cultural, and political perspectives in their work. These various roles cause one to question their beliefs and practices about what is considered legitimate coaching practices. At first glance, I believed my participants did not need me and wondered what I was doing in this position. Once I learned our beliefs and practices were similar, I was empowered and confident about my role. As a result, it was their belief in me that empowered my literacy coach role. Calo, Sturtevant, and

Kopfman's (2015) study supports the notion that once literacy coaches perceive themselves as literacy leaders, it brings together the questions of identity, power struggles, and positioning. Once my participants believed in me, my nervousness, anticipation, questioning, and disappointment disappeared, and I felt empowered and knowledgeable in my position.

In particular, teachers' beliefs and practices play a noteworthy role in successful coaching. In this study, I learned part and parcel to building relationships is the recognition and respect of teachers' beliefs and practices. The honor and respect of how teachers perceive themselves and their practice lead to change in practice and the willingness to embrace new and challenging ideas.

Significance

Overall, the rethinking, reexamining, and new wonderings of the patterns and evaluative devices above and this study overall respond to the calls for research on how to juggle various roles and responsibilities (Rainville & Jones, 2008; Ippolito, 2010) for effective literacy coaching. Specifically, this inquiry examined a new literacy coach alongside two teachers building relationships and defining roles and responsibilities. This study adds to the qualitative research on literacy coaches working with teachers (ILA, 2017) and building professional learning communities. Most previous research in this area focuses on reading coaches working with students (NCLB, 2001) and is defined by prescriptive roles and responsibilities (Casey, 2006; Deussen et al., 2007; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Killion, 2008; Puig & Froelich, 2007; Toll 2005, 2007, 2014), not descriptive roles.

This study is unique because it examines the building of relationships between coach and teacher from a rich description using Labov's (1972) narrative elements and Daiute's (2014) dynamic approach through significance analysis. Breaking down the narratives into the six elements, Chapter Four provides three clear plot lines of a literacy coach learning alongside two teachers. The narratives offer snapshots of experiences of building relationships between teacher and coach, defining coaching roles and responsibilities, and the impact of teachers and coaches working together. Moreover, Daiute's dynamic approach to narrative provides a snapshot of the participants' beliefs, practices, feelings, and emotions about teaching and their work individually and together as they go through the study. These descriptive methods reveal coaches have various roles and responsibilities and must juggle various identities to effectuate growth with teachers and in schools. The structure of this inquiry adds to the literature by responding to Rainville and Jones' (2008), and Ippolito's (2010) calls for the recognition of various identities and coaching stances to effectuate change and recognize the appropriate role of coaching in building professional learning communities in schools.

Limitations

As this study ends, I remind the reader that it is not without limitations. In Chapter One, I advised that I am both a participant and the researcher of this study. My personal and professional viewpoints may have impacted the data collection. In recognition of this possibility, I looked for the truth (O'Dea, 1994) in both my interactions with my participants and in data collection and analysis to authenticate this study. Next, the verisimilitude (Schwandt, 2007) or plausibility of the study was critical as I collected data throughout the course of the study. I strove to make these experiences relatable to draw

the reader into the experiences of the participants. Finally, through reflexivity (Johnson, 1997) there was constant self-reflection and reflection with my participants, I collected the data, read and reread the data, and analyzed the data.

As I write these last words for the close of the study, I think and reflect on my relationships with my participants and my growth as a literacy coach because of this study. Currently, in the middle of my third year of literacy coaching, I find our narratives driving my decisions in how I approach new teachers and existing teachers with whom I am still building bonds. I wonder what my evolving relationships with my participants will look like at the end of this school year. I recognize this experience, and the rich description of these stories are building blocks in the narrative I have yet to tell. I look forward to moving to the next stages of literacy coaching of continuously bridging teacher relationships, building teacher knowledge, and expanding these models into other schools and the district.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMPLIANCE
11000 Bruce B. Baker Building, TAMPA, FL 33620
813-974-2000 • Fax: 813-974-2001
www.usf.edu/irb

February 2, 2018

Christiana Succar
Teaching and Learning
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**

IRB#: Pro00030820

Title: A New Literacy Coach and Two English Language Arts Teachers Learn Together: A Narrative Inquiry

Study Approval Period: 2/2/2018 to 2/2/2019

Dear Ms. Succar:

On 2/2/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):

Protocol Document(s):

[Protocol Version #1 01302018](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:

[SB Minimal Risk Consent form Version #1 013118.docx.pdf](#)

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved.

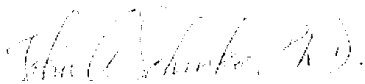
It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Schinka, Ph.D.", written in a cursive style.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

Study ID: Pro00030820 Date Approved: 2/2/2018



Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

Pro # 00330820

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called: A New Literacy Coach and Two English Language Arts Teachers Learn Together: A Narrative Inquiry

The person who is in charge of this research study is Christiana Succar. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Janet Richards.

The research will be conducted at Meadowlane Intermediate elementary school site.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to document the lived experiences of building relationships both personally and professional as a new literacy coach in a public elementary school from planning, modeling, coaching and co-teaching alongside two 6th grade English language arts teachers.

Why are you being asked to take part?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you work directly with the literacy coach and this study is focused on the advancement of literacy coaching through the impact of building personal and professional knowledge about literacy coaching, teacher growth and building professional learning communities.

Study Procedures:

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to: see tentative schedule below

Tentative schedule: (this will be the schedule with both participants)

Initial meeting:

Meet each participant in the for guided conversation on how they perceive themselves as a teacher, and their beliefs and perceptions about teaching (approximately 30 minutes) Plan and discuss nine-week curriculum cycle.

Researcher will reflect daily in addition to the weekly reflections with participants.

Week 1-

Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for following week.

Meet Friday after school for reflection on week. (individually with each teacher)- Reflection will be guiding questions provided by literacy coach

Week 2-

During the week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block Meet

Thursday during planning to discuss plans for following week.

Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.

Meet collectively after school for open ended discussion.

Week 3-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block

Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for following week.

Meet individually with guided reflection questions about the week.

Week 4-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block

Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for the following week.

Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.

Meet collectively after school for open ended discussion and reflection

Week 5-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block

Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for following week.

Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.

Week 6-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block
Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for the following week
Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.
Meet collectively for open ended discussion reflection.

Week 7-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block
Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for the following week.
Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.

Week 8-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block
Meet Thursday during planning to discuss plans for the following week.
Meet one on one with guided reflection questions about the week.
Meet collectively for open ended discussion reflection.

Week 9-

During this week co-teach, model or observe for feedback in one 45 minute ELA block
Meet one on one with guided reflection questions.

Week 10 -11 Draft narrative stories from data collected.

Week 12- Researcher and participants read narratives for member checking

April – Researcher begin data analysis process.

May- June- Researcher writes up findings of study.

Total Number of Participants

About 2 individuals will take part in this study at USF.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities.

Benefits

You will receive no benefit(s) by participating in this research study.

Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs

It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, research nurses, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Christiana Succar at 321-506-4445.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

Date

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Appendix C: Excerpts of the notes from Mary's Classroom Visits

Spring 2018- Week 2

Observing Mary's teaching style:

Mary's teaching practice is very concrete. She gives clear directions and provides scaffolding through instructional handouts and graphic organizers. In this first observation, Mary is conducting a lesson on argumentative essay writing. Last school year, Mary and I put together a two-week writer's workshop on argumentative writing where the students are given a topic with four to five articles and videos about the topic and through the steps of writing complete an argumentative essay on the topic. In our planning of this year's writing clinic, we tweaked some of the things we did last year. In this lesson, Mary and I met in early January and came up with the topic and found videos and articles to support both positions. Mary creates specific hand-outs to go with every step of the reading and writing process and provides the students with clear expectations of what their papers should look like.

In today lesson, the setting of the classroom consists of the students' desks in three long rows all facing the front of the room. She begins the lesson with introducing the topic and giving the students some time in groups to discuss their views and share out with the rest of the class.

Mary. Ok, get your writers' notebooks out and have a seat. May I have a drum roll please.... Ok, as we discussed earlier in the week, we will be writing an argumentative essay. Our topic for this essay is going to be should there be a four-day school week? I know you have a lot to say about this but let me just

inform you that...pause...Ok, I want you to discuss with your classmates how you feel about this topic. I am going to direct you into the groups in a minute. Let me remind you during our classroom discussions are you yelling out. No. If you do that will be a circle on the clip board. If you are one through six you are on the back corner if, if you are seven through twelve up front. Ok, now you are having those discussions...pause...One more minute.

The agenda is digitally displayed: Introduce argumentative topic, group discussion, watch videos and read article on argumentative essay topic. Once Mary introduced the topic, she used the Kagan strategy four corners and students dispersed into one of the corners to discuss the topic based on their assigned number.

Mary. Ok, give me five. We are going to talk about it. My group one you all may have different opinions what are some of your opinions.

Students provide good examples for one position or the other. Mary listened did not interrupt. Each student from group one gives their opinion. Then she jumps to group 3.

Mary. Ok, group 3 what do you think? Oh, Lou we don't have side bar conversations. Ok, group 3 continue.

Mary allows the students to express their full thoughts and probes them and compliments them with: “ok, good points.”

Mary. Ok, guys pause for a second. Ok, guys thinking about this four-day school week does not mean we have less school it just means we have an extra hour each day. Now in very clear language express your thoughts. Do you think it would cut back on absences?..... Now, we have some articles and videos to look at. Guys go back to your seats and open up your writer’s notebook. Writers notebook is open in table of contents. You are adding pros and cons from video and pros and cons from article. Remember as soon as you enter the info in your table of contents you go to those pages and list the topic.

She circles the room.

Mary. In each of the pages draw a T-chart and label a pro and a con side”. I am about to show a video I want at least 5 pros and 5 cons. Before we watch the video, what are pros versus cons? Shawn, pros are for and cons are the opposite, good. Ok, this one is on the con side. Then, I show you another.

After the videos,

Mary. Ok, I want you to turn and talk to your partners. If your partner has something you don’t you can add it. Again, you need to have at least three to five reasons on each side.

To an individual student,

Mary. Ok, good # to 5 on each side. Ok, what did she say in the video about budget cuts, was there an increase in savings?

To the whole class,

Mary. Do you need to see that video one last time? Ok, I am going to show you just the beginning. Now I am going to pass out the article you are going to read it and do the same things as the video and list three to five pros and cons.

Week 4

Today students are finalizing their graphic organizer with evidence on their position about the topic from the 6 articles.

Agenda for today: Argumentative essay rubric, finish WebQuest, review 3-5 pros and cons for the other 4 articles, choose side, beef up your paragraphs and begin rough draft.

Mary begins the lesson with reviewing the rubric with the students. She provides the students with a detailed rubric that requires the students to mark on their rough draft each piece she wants included.

Mary is great at modeling as if she is writing the paper. She fills out the graphic organizers for each class and keeps a writer's notebook for each class. We both agreed in our planning of this unit, this year we have a lot of needy students. She has students in three rows with 9 students across. Traditional seating because these students need the direct instruction more than last year.

Mary. Let's go over the rubric. How many want to type their papers, they must have a rough draft attached to it. If you type it, it should be Time New Roman 12-point font. Student asks: what if we are really slow typers, can we have someone type it for us?

Mary. Yes, mainly I just want to make sure you are writing your paper. If you show up with a nice clean typed essay and never worked on it in class, then I know you did not write it.

Mary finished going through the rubric, she released the students to work on the WebQuest assignment.

Week 5

In this co-teach we pulled individual students to work with them on beefing up their rough draft. When we met yesterday one of the biggest issues Mary is having is “students explaining the purpose of their quote to the rest of their subtopic or assertion”. As a result, we agreed to work on this with the students. We discussed common language to use with the students.

Mary. Why do you believe this quote supports your topic sentence?

Class. To be more specific in relating your quote back to your topic and using clear transitions. The students I worked with had good structure in their papers, well organized, they just need assistance with the flow of their sentences from transitioning from one paragraph to another moving from asserting their subtopic to adding their evidence and explaining in precise language the point of the quote. It is clear the students understand the task and know where they need to be. Mary is very good at providing scaffolding to all students, so they understand the goal. There are no hidden agendas or mystery grading she allows the students to have a clear picture of the expectations.

Appendix D: Excerpts from Betty's Classroom Visits.

Week 3

In class, I worked at the teacher table on the second read of Thank You Ma'am. The first group had completed the reading for homework, but not the comprehension questions: What is this story about? What does Roger learn from talking with Mrs. Jones? Are the interactions between Roger and Mrs. Jones mostly positive or mostly negative? The students had a clear understanding of the text and they knew how to answer the questions, they just needed assistance formulating the answer. Meanwhile, Betty circled the room stopping at each station for clarification and assistance.

Betty has a knack with the students that creates a comfortable learning environment. At the vocabulary station, she was assisting a student whom I worked with last year in 5th grade. The student has a severe stutter. Last year, he struggled with articulating himself in class. He was very unorganized and awkward with his peers. This year, he is blossoming. He volunteers to read orally; he answers questions and today when Betty asked him how he was doing he said "the ideas are flowing" referring to the vocabulary station where the students were writing a shared story using the vocabulary. Betty's response "There is some fire coming from that pencil there Jason...steam".

Week 6

In this co-teach Betty used the popcorn method of reading. The struggling readers had a difficult time reading out loud, but given the paragraphs were short they got through it. As we read, we discussed the main points of the chapter and then the students partnered up to complete the main idea assignment. The students had to agree with how they finished the sentence and what three details would support it.

Betty explained the directions: “When summarizing the paragraph think of a big picture in order to broadly explain what the chapter was about....”

After the students agreed on their lead sentence, they checked with one of us before adding the three details to support their statement. As we circled the room, it was evident the students understood the chapter. After each set of partners finished the sentence stem, they quickly added the details to support it. Next, to dig deeper, we instructed the students they were going to draft HOT questions from the question stems in their notebooks.

She reiterates “hot questions do not have one simple answer; the questions should inspire us to discuss a topic more deeply and look at sentence starters provided for guidance”.

Students had to draft two hot questions and answer them with evidence from the text as myself and the teacher went around and checked students' questions. The questions asked were very thought provoking and complex enough to evoke discussion, but some students were struggling with how to answer them using evidence from the text. With prompting they were able to do it.

Next, we used a modified version of the Kagan strategy two stray one stay. In this scenario students are put into groups of four. Each student writes their best question down on a poster board, the four students decide which question the stray of the group will take with them and provide new facts and information to a new group. Students were very receptive and followed the procedures. When students were engaged in the group discussions and they even referred back in the text for further discussion. Betty advised this strategy too....

Week 8

In class, I worked with students in each group who were assigned the connector role. Their role was to make real world connections to the quote. The students understood the meaning of the quotes but were unable to make real world connections to the quotes.

Week 9

In this final week, we finished working with the students on the mini-quote project form last week.

In class, the students presented the information from their assigned roles about the quotes. Betty stated: "it did not go as well as expected. Students struggled with the meaning and some of the language in the quotes". Though she spent a lot of time discussing these quotes as they were encountered in the reading, she advised "she was not sure if they totally grasped the magnitude of meaning".

Betty is an off the cuff kind of teacher who goes with the flow and really embraces what she is teaching. This topic is of high interest to her and it is expressed in her planning and execution of the lessons. She spends a lot of time reiterating important points of the content and really having the students get a sense of what is important and where the author and individuals being written about are coming from what they are thinking, feeling and expressing.

Appendix E: Excerpts of Reflections and Lesson Planning with Mary

Week 2 Reflection

Mary's style is very direct, she reiterates what students say to clarify their points and adds other points to broaden student understanding. She is very clear in her expectations and directions and in discussions with students. She uses very plain language to assure students understand the task at hand and goals. She repeats directions consistently; she works with students individually as she walks around the room checking for understanding.

Week 4 Reflection

In our reflection that afternoon, one modification from last year's writers' workshop is the "beefing up your paragraph" handout. I wanted to look at beef up body paragraph hand-out before the students started writing.

Mary explains: So, when students write their essay, they must explain how they feel about the quote they chose. That will help beef up their writing in the sense from the first essay we wrote. In our last writer's workshop on informative essays, the students provided three pieces of evidence, but did not elaborate much. So, in this case it makes it much easier to have them give their opinion.

Also, I asked if all students had to conduct the WebQuest, she said "if students prefer a hard copy of the articles versus WebQuest I provide it for them". Since a WebQuest was a new idea she implemented this year, I asked how she thought the students received it and whether the added hand-out helped set up their papers. She said: "The students had a much clearer understanding of what they were supposed to

grasp from reading the articles and in turn it helped them set up an outline for their papers.”

Planning for Week 5

Planning the next unit. The district provided an adaptive text unit where the main text is Langston Hughes’ Thank you Ma’am. The adaptive text unit requires three close-reads of the same text, supplemental texts that support the theme of the main text and then a culminating writing assignment. In this meeting, we talked through our approach with the materials provided to us by the district. The end goal is an informative explanatory essay on:

However, Mary just completed the argumentative essay unit and we agreed that it is too much to give the students another 5-paragraph essay assignment. So, we are to modify the unit to include poetry from the Harlem Renaissance and incorporate some higher order thinking questions synthesizing the themes in the two genres. Two of the other 6h grade ELA teachers are almost complete with their unit, so we are going to grab materials and feedback from both of them.

After reaching out to the two other 6th grade teachers, we met again after school to continue planning co-teach on new unit. We are going to introduce the main text to the students by providing a background building activity to understand the historical context and to introduce some of Hugh’s poetry. The end goal of this assignment is for students to understand multiple texts and genres and to compare common themes among those genres. In our planning we talked through her expectations and I modeled how I would teach the materials. She wanted to know how I introduce a topic without getting too much into the history of it given the students may not have the background.

One point she made was she did not want the students to say this not a history class, Mrs.....

We also discussed winding down the writer's workshop and the hand-out "Labeling your argumentative rough draft". Mary created this document from both the in-service at the beginning of the year on TEA writing and her learning curve from last year's writer's workshop experiences. Tomorrow, the students will check if their rough drafts are complete using the hand-out Mary created and we are co-teaching working with the student's one-on-one who still need extra assistance in finishing their rough drafts.

Those students who are done will begin working on the WebQuest for the new unit. Mary is keenly aware of how much her students can handle in building their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. She tries to vary her lessons to reflect that. She has spent almost 3 ½ weeks building their writing skills and recognizes the struggle and how tired her students are and how she needs to back off on whole group instruction and provide some one on one. Additionally, she realizes the use of technology and discovery for the students with the WebQuest provides them with some independent thought and enhancing their understanding of how technology supplements other materials we use in the classroom.

Reflection from Week 5

After our co-teach I asked her some questions about how she felt it went:
How effective was our co-teach n relaying our expectations to the students?
"We were on the same page as we had the rubric but having another person with a fresh perspective and support feedback is very helpful. Also, gives me fresh eye. I may

miss something after looking at 75 papers. There is only so many ways I can look at something over and over in different ways”.

Do you believe the lesson was enhanced because of the brain storming session the day before?

“We met several weeks in advance to map out what we were going to do overall in argumentative writing. When we met before this last instruction it was just to reiterate our last final step that we had agreed on in our initial meetings”.

Did us working together impact your teachings style? How and Why or why not?

“We were both at two different stations, so yes because I was able to help with my struggling students that I had already worked with for weeks and gave them another perspective. You helped the kids who needed to beef up and I was able to look over students who just needed fine tuning. Elaboration was the hardest thing for this group of students, but last year’s students loved to explain their quotes.

How do you think we could have improved the lesson?

“Last year I did more peer review. So, this year, I wish I could have done more of that. If you were not in the room, I would have been forced to do that. They used TEA to do an individual review which really helped, but next year I would have peer review. Also, today’s WebQuest lesson was good, but I would provide the students more time to talk and divide them up into groups and have them discuss what they were reading and learning about”.

Appendix F: Reflections and Planning with Betty

Planning for Week 3 with Betty

Betty and I met after school to discuss our co-teach of this unit. Since my last meeting with Betty, the students have moved on from King's speech, to Thank You Ma'am by Langston Hughes. She assigned the first reading of the prose piece for homework. Before the students left for the day, Betty read the first paragraph with the whole class and reviewed some of the varied language. I inquired whether students do their homework and if she thought sending it home was a good idea?

Betty. All the students pretty much do their homework if assigned. I did a comprehension check with them yesterday before going home. They read the first paragraph and talked about the language specifically the slang. Even the struggling students get it. Also, knowing I would do a second read with them made me comfortable sending it home. I decided to conduct a cold read to see what they can articulate on their own. Usually at this point, I do whole group, but since I decided to do stations and usually do them on Thursday, I kept it that way.

Originally, the 6th grade team planned to introduce the Harlem Renaissance unit as whole class instruction but given time constraints, Betty used the video introduction of Harlem Renaissance in one of the stations. Students rotate through five stations in 15-minute increments. The other four stations consisted of a vocabulary station where students were working on creating a story together using vocabulary from their last two lists, the next station was based on the social studies curriculum she is required to teach: write 3 details TEA paragraph style to answer the following essential question. How did social class affect the daily life of people in ancient Egypt? The book club

station where students have reader's choice and the teacher table station where student and teacher clarify student's understanding of the main text: Thank You Ma'am by, Langston Hughes.

Betty. As the students cycle through small groups with me at the teacher table, I would have a discussion with them on a smaller level. With the stations, I can divvy up a large assignment into smaller pieces and get in social studies like we will today.

With Betty's plan she was able to cover a lot more material in a shorter period. So, in this lesson I will work at the teacher table conducting the second read of the anchor text and Betty will circulate around the stations to check for understanding.

Reflection for Week 3 with Betty

When we met after school to debrief on our experience together, I mentioned this student to Betty and asked her what influence did she think she has had on this student's progress and his comfort level?

Betty. I conferenced with mom a lot. A lot comes with his confidence. A lot comes from how I approach him. I encourage the creativity and I am not so rigid. If I want him to do something specific in order to keep his confidence up, I positively reinforce what he does. He is still unprepared, but I still hold him to a standard. He did not have his pencil today, so he did get a circle. I keep the standards high but at the same time I take the time to laugh at his jokes. Yesterday, he did a presentation on scribes from ancient Egypt. He chose to play a role where he had to be the teacher where the other students were in a silent role. Knowing that people look beyond your stutter is a huge confidence builder".

At the beginning of today's lesson, students added the different stations assignment to their reader's notebook table of contents. As a first-year teacher, how did you know how to put this together?

Betty. Sort of figured it out and based on what you showed me in the beginning of the year. However, I tweaked it to fit my needs. For example, I had initially divided the notebook by the stations, but that did not work. Now, I have them list what we are doing in the table of contents each time we meet. That allows me to use it and not just for stations.

At the beginning of the school year, I met with Betty about how to set up her ELA block, what materials I used, and how I conducted centers. Betty listened intently to my suggestions and then tweaked things to fit her style of teaching. She has her own sense of how she wants to do things but likes to talk through ideas to formulate a plan. However, she does a lot of what I did when I was an early-career teacher "flying by the seat of your pants"! She has a sense of what she wants to teach but wings it as she goes a long.

Planning for Week 6

In our brief planning of this lesson, we decided to conduct a whole class read of Chapter one of the text Freedom Walkers. Students than will demonstrate their understanding by writing the main idea and three details that support it. Betty provides the students with a question stem, This Chapter discusses... and they must provide three main points. I thought that was a brilliant idea. Traditionally, we have taught students to write the main idea is..... However, if a student does not understand "main idea" they will not be able to complete the sentence. The language shift in Betty's

question allows the student to reflect on what they read and then find three main points to support what they believe the chapter is about. After this first exercise, students will move into groups of four and delve deeper by drafting higher order thinking (HOT) questions for a Socratic seminar. In their writer's notebook students have notes on what is and is not a HOT question.

Reflections on Week 6

Upon reflection, Betty and I agreed some of the students struggled to come up with their own questions and were not sure how to draft overarching questions focused on the chapter. As a result, I recommended next time, students work in groups drafting questions and then in a later lesson they do it alone. Additionally, divide up the chapter into sections and assign each group a section where they will draft their question from to avoid overlap of questions.

Planning for Week 8

As Betty and I have developed our relationship as co-teachers, she now feels comfortable running ideas by me to add to her thought process as she comes to formulate her lessons. Our roles have evolved in these last weeks from first my observation and feedback, to co-teaching, to modeling to more of discussions as colleagues on topics and materials of interest. Betty and my other participant have compared notes on what they are teaching. As Betty states "I stalk her by watching what she is doing through the window of the door that divides us and then tweak to fit some of the things I like to do" For example, in an effort to save time and get through the Freedom Walkers, Mary assigned groups of students a chapter in the book where they had to read it, jot down the important points and then share out on butcher block

paper displayed in the classroom. This was a quick way to get through the book and provide broader knowledge about various civil rights activists.

Betty took this idea and developed a similar to Mary's, but she pulled important quotes from Freedom Walkers, wrote them out on butcher block paper and added literature roles to each student in the four groups.

Reflection for Week 8:

Upon reflection, Betty realized without scaffolding the meaning of language in the quotes and explaining the four roles (biographer, interpreter, analyst and connector) in more detail, the lesson was too difficult for the students. We both agreed that next time the students need to build some background knowledge on use of language before assigning this task.

Reflection for Week 9:

In our final reflection together, I asked Betty the following questions:

Do you think to be successful in working together we must build a relationship first?

Yes, can't say "take my orders" everyone has their own idiosyncrasies. if you don't get to know them first, it is difficult to trust them and know where everyone fits.

We were able to tag team a little more making it more effective with the kiddos.

What impact does building a relationship have on our success together?

It will strengthen relations between teachers as well as lesson planning.

Communication is more open if we are not restraining ourselves. Talk and personalize plans only make things better.

How does building a relationship with the literacy coach effect coaching and teacher outcomes?

Without evening having the pretense. Thin slicing within the first 5 or 10 minutes. How you carry yourself has a lot to do with how we approach it. Your persona down to earth and open and able to relate to us is teachers is extremely important. Censure myself a lot more and less in cline to tell you how I feel about things.

Do you feel our building of a relationship effects our success in working with one another?

Yes, for example, your persona is down to earth and open, and you can relate to us as teachers. That is extremely in important. I would censure myself a lot more and be less in cline to tell you how I feel about things. Thus, making it a superficial relationship which would not help me grow.

Appendix G: Excerpts from Researcher's Journal

Planning with Betty Week Four

As we plan for the next week, I have a better sense of Betty's teaching style, where she wants to go with this unit and my role as her coach. Spending the 1st three weeks as more of a bystander was effective in learning about Betty's beliefs and practices as a teacher. Also, as we build our relationship as ELA colleagues, she has a stronger sense of my role and is beginning to ask my opinion about lessons and execution. The fact she revealed she was overwhelmed this week reflects a building of trust. This week we will integrate poetry from the Harlem Renaissance to provide students exposure to multiple genres. We will co-teach a poem by actively reading and analyzing the poem in front of the class.

Week Four Co-Teaching

As we begin this week, I am elated to model and co-teach in my participants' classrooms. Betty and I are going to conduct an active reading and open analysis of the poem I, too by, Langston Hughes. We practiced the poem last week and feel great about this activity.

As I walked into Betty's class, I felt like my heart was jumping out of my chest. After 20 years of teaching, I still get nervous in front of students. I am especially nervous when I must perform. However, Betty makes everyone feel comfortable, so once we started, I felt at ease and really enjoyed our banter. We read the poem out loud and modeled a think aloud with discussion of key words, shifts in meaning and tone and speaker. Meanwhile, the students took notes about any questions or comments. After our presentation, we conducted a class discussion about the experience and ended with

identifying the message of the poem. This was a great activity as the students were able to see active thinking and discussion.

Reflection: This week I finally feel we are co-teaching and I am modeling some teaching techniques that Betty may find useful. In our debriefing we discussed the student impact and how the students learned from our high-level discussions about the text and how my knowledge and experience impact her teaching.

As we embark on week 8, Betty was very open to my suggestions. I believe she recognizes my knowledge base. She advised she struggle with drafting higher order thinking questions. She asked me to continue modeling this in the upcoming chapter the students are reading. I don't know if there is a shift in Betty's view of me where she feels more comfortable asking for direct help or is it that I am more comfortable in my role as a coach.

Planning for week 8

For this week, in Betty's inquisitiveness, she created an activity born out of spying on her colleague my other participant Mary's classroom. In Mary's classroom, the students were assigned different individuals from the Black History Unit where they completed became experts and reported out to the rest of their class. Mary placed five butcher block pieces of paper up around the room and each group filled information about their individual. Then the other groups went around and commented or added more information about the individual. Finally, each group presented their own information and a gist of the new information to the rest of the class. Betty took that activity and modified it by taking five important quotes from the Freedom Walkers text and assigning each group a role like literature circles.

Week 8

When I came into the classroom, students were working in their assigned groups with each student assigned the biographer, interpreter, analyst or connector. The students first struggled with the meaning of the language in the quotes and explaining their four roles. Without scaffolding the lesson was too difficult for the students. This was a teachable moment for me as a coach. I recalled many a time as a new teacher creating a lesson, I was so excited about, but when executed fell flat for many reasons. As a result, upon working with the students I realized I should have recognized in planning with Betty we should have discussed what were the goals our outcomes we wanted to the students to learn from this activity. It seems obvious on the face of it with their assigned roles, but we needed to dig deeper to determine how the students comprehend their roles, the language and carry this knowledge on.

Reflection: This past week, I felt like a failure in that I did not recognize Betty needed more assistance with this lesson. Just like being a new teacher, as a new literacy coach, my coaching fell flat. I assumed that Betty did not need scaffolding to teach this lesson. However, when I entered the classroom and saw the students struggling, I immediately knew the problem was not scaffolding the use of language and how it impacts meanings and outcomes. As a result, I have a solid understanding of how to move forward in my coaching with Betty, she has the basics down. She knows what she wants to teach, she understands what information she wants to convey to the students, she just needs the building blocks for herself as a novice teacher to provide the students with the scaffolding they need. This is a huge aha for me as a coach, because now I have a clear path of where I can help her grow!

Planning for week Six:

Now that Mary feels comfortable with the argumentative essay out of the way, we are going to move forward with the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights Movement Unit. Students have a good grasp of the content from the WebQuest. Mary is going to discuss the historical background with them prior to my coming in this week. In the WebQuest, students watched a video on What is the Harlem Renaissance and who were some of the artists of the time. They read and analyzed both prose and poetry of the period. Additionally, they watched an interactive power point on What is the Civil Right Movement and who were the key players of the time. Mary will introduce the Freed Walker's text. "We brainstormed about how to introduce the book and came up with a picture walk so students can get up out of their seats and express some of their emotions and thoughts to the rest of the class" (Mary's data, February 7, 2018).

Week 6

When I arrived at Mary's class, the students were excited about the picture walk. Mary had reviewed some of the information on the WebQuest with the students and was transitioning them into the picture walk activity. She explained the directions. The students were supposed to work independently as they walked around the room looking at the pictures. Under each picture they were to write a thought, comment or reaction. Each student had a different colored marker. Once the students were done, they were going to be assigned in groups to a picture. They had to find out more about the picture from the text and be prepared to explain what the picture represented. Additionally, they had to wrap up the comments into a simple phrase or three words to explain to the rest of the class. With that the students were released to walk the room. Students were very

respectful and quiet as they moved through the room looking at and commenting on the pictures.

Reflection

We met together after school to reflect. We discussed how both participant teachers' styles are different. Betty is much more off the cuff, whereas Mary is a planner and creates very clear expectations spelled out in hand-outs and the rubric tied to the TEA. Betty explains her expectations verbally very clearly and elicits responses from the students. She believes that she speaks very clearly and explains and questions and this is an effective method. Both methods work for the teachers and the students and are reflected in student outcomes.

What I really like about Mary's teaching style is she looks for ideas hashes them out with me. Then, she gets on a role and breaks things down, so the students have a true understanding of her expectations. In today's reviewing of the students' writing, she reiterated the TEA paragraph form we adopted across all grade levels this school year. I spent many an hour going into classrooms in the fall modeling the use of the TEA paragraph to help students understand the importance of topic, evidence and elaboration reflecting a complete thought.

Moreover, I am beginning to see their different styles emerge and as we move towards professional learning communities these different styles will enhance their planning processes, digging into the standards and teaching the skills in the well-rounded way necessary. I see as we begin to move toward sharing resources, discussing different approaches and this past week with the emails back and forth with discussion,

resources and the desire to bounce ideas off one another. We are moving into the phase two of professional learning communities. Last year, we create created a skeleton curriculum map, this year we are implementing the same materials, resources are being shared and next year we will stream line those resources and begin to teach with similar pacing for constant comparative feedback.

Whereas, Mary and I have worked together since last school year, as we plan together, I have a better understanding of where she is coming from and what her expectations are for herself as the teacher and those of the students.

Planning for Week Seven

Finally, this coming week, Mary and I will delve into poetry. The students were exposed to the poems in the WebQuest but were not asked to identify meanings within the poems. As a result, I will model how I teach poetry when identifying speaker, tone and message. Mary will then follow my lead and conduct the same lesson with two other pieces of poetry. As I prepared my poetry lesson, I read through the poetry and annotated key vocabulary words that identified the speaker and message. I provided a copy of the poem to Mary and she planned to do the same with the poem she was teaching.

Week 7

On the day of the lesson, I walked into the classroom with the students ready to learn. Mary advised the students that I was going to teach the first poem, because she needed someone to model how to teach poetry. Mary reminds of my role, to guide and help her plan and execute lessons. She reminds them I am English teacher just like her, but with a lot of experience and great ideas. Most of the students know me from last

year, because I spent a lot of time in fifth grade towards the end of the year modeling and co-teaching. With the whole class, I began the lesson reading through the poem orally one time. Then, I paused for a few moments and asked the students to reflect on what we just read. Following that, I asked them to turn to their partners to the right and reread the poem out loud. Then discuss with their table mate what are some words that may have jumped out at them when they read. Following that I brought the class back together and we went through the poem line by line underlining words we did not know, or thought were important and circling words that may reveal who the speaker is in the poem. As we went through the poem, students explained why they were underlining and circling certain words. When we were done, we discussed how the words evoked message and speaker.

Next, Mary took over and completed the same task with the next poem. She allowed the students to voice their opinions and added information to their thinking as they went through the stanzas. The class agreed on the speaker and message. Then, she followed up with a new poem the students had not seen in the WebQuest and asked them to do the same exercise we just did in class. As the students worked independently, Mary briefly whispered she felt that went well and had a lot more confidence once she saw it in action. She told me she felt uncomfortable with poetry and was not sure how to execute it with the students (Mary Transcript Reflection, p. 11). I could not wait to meet after school to get a better picture of how her second class went once, she was on her own.

Appendix H: Excerpts from email Conversations

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 10:04 AM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: So that fell flat

Hi Betty:

So that lesson fell flat! Sorry, what I envisioned in my mind versus how it actually went were completely different. Sorry, I hope you don't think I wasted the students' time. Theoretically it seemed like a good idea. Maybe they will have something to add to their writing!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:09 PM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Eh, it happens. hahaha. ☐

My second class went much better, actually! I made them do most of the work instead of just talking to them, and they handled it nicely. We can talk about it more later if you want!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Yeah, that would be good! Did you have them write anything?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:20 PM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

No, but I had them identify the POV changes, figurative language, interesting words, etc. My class did a good job with it.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:22 PM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

That sounds like it worked! I don't know it was definitely me not being on my game. May be a better lesson would be for them to also evaluate their own writing and enhance it with some of the ways that were identified in the quotes.?

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:41 PM

To: [REDACTED] >

Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Yeah! We are going to do an FSA practice write on Thursday. I'm going to encourage them to use some of the skills we discussed, then we are going to "grade" and discuss the essays in a writer's workshop on Friday. Do you have any other suggestions to help boost writing?

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 3:20 PM

To: [REDACTED] >

Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Sure! If you want to give me the topic they are to write about and the sources, I can write a sample essay with beefed up use of language. Or I would tell them to emphasize transitions within body paragraphs and to make sure that when they close out their body paragraphs they refer back to the subtopic sentence. Here is an example of what I mean:

Subtopic sentence Most importantly, the Titanic was not unsinkable due to cheap construction.

Last sentence in my body paragraph. As a result, that is why cheap construction caused the Titanic to sink.

Does that make sense?

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 8:17 AM

To: [REDACTED] >

Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Yes! I don't call them subtopic sentences, I Just call them reasons. For example, Body paragraph one should discuss reason 1 listed in the thesis/claim. Make sense?

Attached is the practice we will be doing. There are also some sample essays that the FSA website provided.

The articles for the writing are really interesting to me. I LOVE ANDY GOLDSWORTHY! I Taught him in art last year and loved it. I think I might forgo more Freedom Walkers so I can do an environmental project/Earth Day awareness mini-lesson. What do you think??

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 9:48 AM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

Ok, great Thanks. I am not real impressed with what they call a 10, but do you just want to use those, or should I draft an essay too.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 9:50 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: So that fell flat

I am going to write one in TEA format. Do you want to write one as well?