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Study of Milwaukee Public Schools Literacy Coach Initiative, Year 2 Report

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2006, researchers at the Value Added Research Center at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) submitted the first report of a proposed three-year examination of literacy instructional support in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The report was titled, "Study of Literacy Coach Initiative: Phase 1 Report" and explored how the Literacy Coach Initiative was implemented and perceptions of impact on teachers' instruction. Based on that study's findings and recommendations, the MPS initiated several changes in the focus and structure of the Literacy Coach program for the 2006-2007 school year. Researchers at WCER were asked to carry out a second study to examine the implementation and impact of the changes. This report traces those changes and the perceived impact on training, coaching activities and instruction.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The second year study focused on an assessment of the impacts of the changes made to the Literacy Coach program during the 2006-07 school year, including an initial exploration of program design and role differences between Curriculum Generalists and Literacy Coaches and related impacts on literacy instruction. The following research questions were examined:

1. How are the changes the district made in the Literacy Coach program being implemented?
2. How are coaches carrying out their role in schools? Do coaching practices differ from those observed during the Phase 1 report?
3. What is the quality of Literacy Coaches' own learning opportunities?
4. What is the impact of the changes to the program on coaching activities and on literacy instruction?
5. How are Curriculum Generalists carrying out their role in schools and how do their activities and impact compare to that of Literacy Coaches?

Based on interviews with coaches or generalists, teachers, and principals in a sample of 14 schools and districtwide surveys administered to teachers, Literacy Coaches, and other school leaders, the following main findings were made:

How were the changes in the Literacy Coach program implemented?

- Implementation of changes occurred through tightening role definitions, management reorganization, and refocused training for Literacy Coaches. District efforts to send a strong signal to principals and Literacy Coaches about the expected roles of the Literacy Coach were largely successful. Almost all principals and coaches interviewed articulated that the district wanted the position focused on classroom support of teachers and not unrelated administrative functions farther removed from literacy instructional assistance (e.g., test coordination or student supervision).

How are coaches carrying out their role in schools? Do coaching practices differ from those observed during the Phase 1 report?

- Literacy Coaches' activities described during interviews by coaches, teachers and principals were more consistent with intended position description. One-on-one classroom interactions between coaches and teachers were more common in several schools than found last year. In some of these cases, this finding was a result of coaches being relieved of test administration duties and being encouraged by Literacy Specialists and principals to get into the classroom more frequently. However, as evident in both interview and survey responses, there was substantial variation in the amount, nature of support, and perceived impact of interactions between coaches and teachers. Further, survey results again indicate that coaches generally spend less time coaching than specified by their official time appointment.

- Literacy Coaches do focus their efforts on literacy support, but their work extends well beyond literacy instruction, including mentoring beginning teachers, curriculum planning, grant administration, and professional development on general pedagogical strategies. In some instances, coaches appear to carry out activities more akin to Implementors or Learning Coordinators. This finding is not limited to those coaches that split time with these other formal positions.

What is the quality of Literacy Coaches' own learning opportunities?

- Most coaches perceived formal district Literacy Coach Training to be improved, helpful to their practice, and more coherent with the primary district instructional strategies (i.e., Bloom's Taxonomy and Marzano's 9). Principal training also emphasized these instructional strategies and discussion of conducting walkthroughs and designing school professional development around the strategies was commonly described by coaches and principals.

- Literacy Coach training appears to have focused more on certain literacy coach responsibilities than others. Specifically, training helped coaches to focus their efforts on professional development related to literacy, curriculum alignment, and the Bloom's and Marzano strategies. However, evidence of training impact on how coaches observe, model and provide feedback on literacy instruction is less apparent. Establishing trust and gaining access to classrooms remains a persistent challenge for coaches.

- Coaches' primary interactions with specialists occur during training, or via electronic communication. One communication vehicle, the literacy logs, was seen as improved from the format last year, but still not particularly useful to most coaches interviewed. School visits by specialists typically occurred about 3-4 times per year and in some cases, coaches reported not seeing their specialist at the school.

<u>What is the impact of the changes to the program on coaching activities and on literacy instruction?</u>

- Teachers' answers to survey questions on the impact of their Literacy Coach on their instruction suggest that a great deal of variation exists in teachers' experiences working with coaches. Substantial percentages say they have not been impacted at all, while similar percentages say they have been impacted. Findings from school visits were consistent with the survey results. We heard a number of examples of how coaches positively affected instructional practice by working directly with teachers or through professional development provided. However, some teachers reported rarely interacting with coaches and minimal impact. Teachers reporting minimal impact indicated that it was due to limited interaction, the subject matter they taught, the extent of their teaching experience, receptivity to classroom visits and feedback, or because they did not think the coach had experience at their particular grade level or in bilingual education.

<u>How are Curriculum Generalists carrying out their role in schools and how do their activities and impact compare to that of Literacy Coaches?</u>

- The survey results indicated that, like Literacy Coaches, District Curriculum Generalists devote considerable time to developing instructional capacity. Unlike coaches, however, these leaders spend quite a bit of time monitoring teachers.

- The Curriculum Generalist position is still evolving. It may be too early to determine the impact of the role in schools that have access to the generalists. Survey results did suggest that District Curriculum Generalists were focusing on instructional support and monitoring instruction, both intended as primary roles. Our findings with respect to the Generalists are limited, since only two of the schools in our sample had Curriculum Generalists. In the schools, some principals looked forward to utilizing generalists for teacher evaluations. Others had concerns about the evaluation function and that the generalists will report to the district and not the principal. There is some uncertainty in schools about the expected role.

<u>Other Findings</u>

- There was some uncertainty among Literacy Specialists about the viability of their roles. The organizational change in leadership and oversight of the program from the Division of Teaching and Learning to Leadership Support occurred after the start of the school year. This change led to some confusion as the training agenda had been set and resources available for specialist training and for photocopying of Literacy Coach training materials was no longer available. The organizational change occurred at a time when specialists believed they were well focused and tightly coordinated with the prior program manager.

- Concerns continue to exist about the potential elimination of the Literacy Coach program. Teachers, principals, coaches, and some district leaders believed that the program could be terminated, despite their view that the program is having an impact. This impression appears to be influenced by perceptions of continual budget reductions and past experiences when other programs were unexpectedly eliminated even when some perceived that they were successful.

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations:

- Coaches could benefit from more training on effective coaching practices. In particular, these could include training and support on gaining entry to teachers' classes, establishing trust, and observation and feedback techniques.

- Literacy Specialists could also follow up with coaches to reinforce the training through more frequent observation and feedback.

- In order to free specialists to spend more time with coaches in schools, consideration might be given to reducing the number of trainings coaches are required to attend or to conducting some training during summer months, as was initially intended.

- Consideration could be given to establishing more concrete ways to support and hold schools accountable for coaching activities, including providing principals with training on effective uses of coaches during their professional development sessions, and making more explicit in the principal evaluation process the intended use of Literacy Coaches in schools.

- The aligning of human resource practices in support for the coaching role could be strengthened, particularly relating to performance evaluation, feedback and compensation. Literacy Coaches are evaluated based on the teacher evaluation instrument, which is of limited relevance to their role and potential contributions. Similarly, performance evaluation and feedback provided to Literacy Specialists does not appear to strategically align to their roles and potential contribution. Although specialists receive a slight pay adjustment for their duties, Literacy Coaches remain on the same pay schedule as classroom teachers, despite reporting long hours and expanded work responsibilities. As suggested last year, the district could work to develop a differentiated pay plan commensurate with the role coaches play and assess whether the pay add-on provided to specialists is adequate for their role.

- Future studies of the impact of literacy support provided to schools should examine more closely classroom instructional practices. Such a study could provide richer detail of literacy instructional change, and help validate general district instructional guidance, including Blooms', Marzano's 9 and the CHPUC.

I. Introduction

In May 2006, researchers from the Value-Added Research Center at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) completed the first part of a planned multi-year analysis of literacy support efforts in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The Phase 1 study examined the MPS Literacy Coach Initiative that was in its fourth year. That report was requested by the district to learn about the evolution of the program, which was funded in large part through Federal Title 1 resources, and the impact of Literacy Coaches on teaching practice.

The first report found that while coaches played key roles in their schools on Learning Teams, establishing Education Plans, and setting professional development priorities, on average they were spending more time with administrative functions than direct instructional coaching of teachers on literacy improvement. In addition, direct interactions between District Literacy Specialists and Literacy Coaches were limited due to the large number of schools supported by specialists and open positions in the ranks of Literacy Specialists. Perceptions of the impact of coach training were also mixed. Based on the cumulative evidence, it was found that the impact of Literacy Coaches on instructional practice was not likely deep. Appendix A includes the Executive Summary of the Phase 1 Report.

The current report was commissioned to identify the changes that were initiated to the Literacy Coach program during the 2006-2007 school year and to examine their impact. The first section briefly summarizes the intended changes planned by the district. The second section describes the mixed-method design and data sources applied in the study. In section three of the report, results are described relating to the program's implementation and perceptions of program impact. Section four includes a summary of the findings, interpretations, and recommendations.

The Year 2 study was prompted by the following main question: How are the changes the district made in the Literacy Coach program being implemented and what are the related impacts from the changes? To answer this question, four related questions were addressed:

1. How are coaches carrying out their role in schools? Do coaching practices differ from those observed during the Phase 1 report?
2. What is the quality of Literacy Coaches' own learning opportunities?
3. What is the impact of the changes to the program on coaching activities and on literacy instruction?
4. How are Curriculum Generalists carrying out their role in schools and how do their activities and related impact compare to that of Literacy Coaches?

Changes to Literacy Coach Initiative

A number of changes were initiated following the Phase 1 report. In the spring and summer of 2006, district leaders held several meetings to discuss implications from that report and to identify possible changes in order to address a primary finding that coaches were being

asked to carry out a number of roles in their schools, many of which did not directly pertain to the originally designed role. The following main program changes were addressed:

- Clarifying the intended role of Literacy Coaches.
- Focusing training on the intended Literacy Coach roles and providing a new format and reporting requirements for logs of literacy activities to be completed by coaches. Providing logs to principals, in addition to Literacy Specialists.
- Setting Literacy Specialists' schedule to allow them to work 3 days per week with Literacy Coaches and others in schools.
- Moving management of the program from the Division of Teaching and Learning to Leadership Support, with a new program manager.
- Creating a new position of Curriculum Generalists in low performing schools in lieu of Literacy Coaches, who could engage in evaluation activities and report to district leaders.

These changes were communicated in district written directives to principals provided by the Chief Academic Officer (see Appendix B) and during a special district meeting for principals and Literacy Coaches held by leaders within the Division of Teaching and Learning in August of 2006. The meeting was facilitated by the Language Arts Curriculum Specialist (who was program manager at the time), and also attended by Literacy Specialists. The message was reinforced through subsequent district Literacy Coach professional development sessions and within the *Toolkit for Literacy Coaches and Leaders for 2006-2007* published by the Division of Teaching and Learning. The Toolkit is a manual that contains information about district literacy efforts and was handed out to coaches at the beginning of the school year.

When initiated in 2001, the duties and responsibilities of the Literacy Coach position were defined as:

a. demonstration teaching, classroom modeling, and collaborative teaching
b. delivering professional development including facilitating study and/or action research groups
c. conferencing with teachers in regard to goal setting, observation and reflective feedback
d. strategic planning around student data
e. serving on the school learning team
f. maintaining an ongoing weekly summary report
g. attending summer training and weekly training during the school year
   (Source: New Literacy Coach 2005-2006 Toolkit)

As described in the September 7, 2006 letter to principals and other school leaders from the Chief Academic Officer, specific functions of Literacy Coaches were re-emphasized. As described in that letter, the role of the coach was to provide *direct support* (emphasis added) to classroom teachers through:

- Demonstration and collaborative teaching
- Classroom modeling

- Small group (such as grade level or content area groups) and /or one-on-one coaching
- Classroom visits and embedded professional development; providing feedback and suggestions to classroom teachers

In addition, the Literacy Coach:

- Collaborates with the Literacy Specialist to provide consistent support and direction to the school professional learning community from a district instructional support perspective
- Reviews assessment data, helps teachers interpret assessment scores, presents workshops on aspects of literacy instruction, and helps with implementation of instructional strategies for literacy identified in the schools' Educational Plan
- Is a member of the Learning Team

Principals were expected to:

- Directly supervise the Literacy Coach, and be responsible for appropriate utilization of the Literacy Coach
- Review the Literacy Coach's bi-weekly (every two weeks) literacy log
- Communicate, as needed, required activities congruent with the role expectations for the Literacy Coach
- Review on a weekly basis evidence of implementation of targeted instructional strategies with the Literacy Coach and/or Learning Team

Literacy Coaches were still to be supported by six Literacy Specialists[1] working at the District level. One additional specialist position provides support to schools that had adopted the Direct Instruction/SRA program. This Direct Instruction (DI) Coordinator/Specialist has a different job description and reporting structure than that of the other Literacy Specialists. Literacy Specialists were to work with coaches at school sites and in training through the school year in a non-evaluative, teacher-peer capacity. As initially designed, the specialists had the following identified responsibilities:

a. Interact with school-based Literacy Coaches and staff
b. Assist in identifying successful intervention strategies with readers and writers
c. Demonstrate and model appropriate strategies for Literacy Coaches and classroom teachers
d. Collaborate in the development of high quality on-going professional development to support school-based Literacy Coaches, Learning Teams and school staff
e. Collect and analyze information on research-proven practices in Balanced Literacy
f. Review and respond to logs submitted by Literacy Coaches
g. Deliver school-based professional development as requested

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[1] Throughout the report, the shortened title of "coaches" refers to Literacy Coaches, and "specialists" refers to Literacy Specialists. The district includes other types of coaches and specialists (e.g., Principal Coaches, English/Language Arts Curriculum Specialist), and when appropriate, these full titles may be referenced.

h. Engage in appropriate activities that support Family Literacy
(Source: New Literacy Coach 2005-2006 Toolkit)

Finally, a new position was created for 23 schools that were determined to need intensive assistance and oversight by the district, referred to as "NEA focus" schools. One part of the intervention was to hire a Curriculum Generalist who was initially intended to replace the Literacy Coach position. Rather than teacher positions like the Literacy Coach position, the Curriculum Generalists must have administrator certification. The district intended the Curriculum Generalists to work with school administrators and teachers by "providing resources, modeling and evaluating effective teaching strategies needed to increase student achievement" (Source: MPS Curriculum Generalist Position Description). A fundamental difference between the role of Literacy Coach and Curriculum Generalists was the evaluative function of Curriculum Generalists. In addition, rather than reporting to the principal as a member of the school leadership team, those in the position report directly to the District Office of Leadership Support, where they also receive monthly training. There were 20 Curriculum Generalists working in the NEA focus schools during the 2006-2007 school year.

II. Study Methods and Data Sources

As applied in the Phase 1 report, we conceptualized that the Literacy Coach initiative would impact instruction through a two-stage model: Literacy Specialists training and supporting Literacy Coaches, with the Literacy Coaches then training and supporting teachers. Literacy Specialists are resources for the coaches, and the coaches are resources for teachers. In this model, the interactions between Literacy Specialists and coaches and between coaches and teachers are likely to be the primary mechanisms to generate program effects. Through these interactions, coaches will potentially be exposed to new forms of literacy instruction and assessment (e.g., through direct training or observing "model" lessons by Literacy Specialists), receive information about best practices and district policies, and receive advice and consultation about literacy issues in their assigned schools. Classroom teachers will potentially a) be exposed to new forms of literacy instruction and assessment, b) have opportunities to try out new literacy practices, c) receive formative observations of their existing practice and coaching to improve it, and d) have opportunities to discuss what they are learning with other teachers. Our study questions were addressed using a mixture of techniques, including interviews with MPS staff, surveys, and document analysis.

District-Level Interviews

Interviews with district leaders and Literacy Specialists were conducted in the spring of 2007. Semi-structured interview protocols guided the interviews. We interviewed all six Literacy Specialists, the district Direct Instruction Specialist, and four other district leaders who oversee or have been involved with the Literacy Coach Initiative, to learn about the intended changes to the program, how the changes were being carried out and reinforced at the district level, intentions of district training, and how the Literacy Specialists supported Literacy Coaches and their schools. Interviews conducted with Literacy Specialists and the district Reading

Curriculum Specialist were audio recorded. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed along with detailed notes and observations that were entered into matrices.

School-Level Interviews

Interviews at schools were conducted from March through May 2007. We visited fourteen schools (1 K-5, 8 K-8, 3 MS and 2 HS). One elementary school initially sampled declined to participate and an alternate school was selected. One high school did not respond to repeated requests for interviews and was also listed as declining to participate. Nine of the remaining schools were included from the first year study and four schools were sampled from the twenty-three low performing "NEA Focus" schools. School sizes in the sample ranged from a small, 170 student elementary school, to a traditional, 1500 student high school. School socio-economic status, as represented by eligibility for the free and reduced-prince lunch program, ranged from 47% to 98%. There was also a wide range of school achievement, with the lowest school at 13% proficient or advanced on the 10th grade 2006 Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) for reading, to the highest attaining school at 94% proficient or advanced in reading on the 4th grade 2006 WKCE.

School level interviews were conducted with principals or teacher leaders in each school (n=14), Literacy Coaches[2] or Curriculum Generalists (n=14), and two classroom teachers in each school (n=29) selected at random (3 teachers were interviewed in one of the schools). Principal interviews lasted about 40 minutes on average. Teacher interviews averaged about 25 minutes. Literacy Coach interviews ranged from 40 to 75 minutes. Interviews were done using semi-structured protocols designed to allow for triangulation of findings and exploration of emerging themes from principal, teacher, coach and generalist perspectives. Protocols covered the activities of the coaches, specialists, generalists and teachers, and their impact. Respondents were also asked about what changes they thought may improve the program. Interviews were transcribed and detailed notes and observations were entered into matrices for analysis across and within schools.

Surveys

Data from the 2006 MPS Instructional Survey of Teachers administered via the World Wide Web in December, 2006 were used in this study. The Instructional Survey was primarily intended to collect data on instructional practices within the MPS. As was done last year, a section was added to the survey on literacy coaching. This year's survey had 3,295 teachers respond or 60% of teachers in the district.

A survey of Literacy Coaches and other school teacher leaders was also conducted at the end of the 2006-07 school year. Similar to last year's survey of Literacy Coaches, this survey was designed to focus on 3 broad areas: 1) leader background and qualifications, 2) leaders' practice, and, 3) factors that support the development and improvement of leaders' practice including their professional learning experiences. In addition to Literacy Coaches, other formal teacher leaders within schools were asked to respond, including Curriculum Generalists,

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[2] A number of the Coaches were replaced or decided to leave the position for other opportunities or to return to the classroom. There were 7 new Coaches in the schools that we visited.

Learning Coordinators, Math Teacher Leaders, and Implementors. These additional respondents were intended to better understand how a fuller array of instructional leadership initiatives in the district supported instructional improvement.

The survey was administered to Literacy Coaches attending the May 3 district Literacy Coach professional development session. For all other respondents, and for those who missed the May 3 session, the survey was mailed to their school address. One follow up mailing was sent to those who did not respond to the first attempt, or who did not list their school name as requested in the survey. Three hundred fifty-eight Coaches and other school teacher leaders received the survey and 219 respondents returned completed surveys for a response rate of 61%.

In addition to the interviews and surveys, our team attended six of the nine regularly scheduled district Literacy Coach training sessions and the special August meeting held with coaches and principals. We also reviewed several documents, including the 2006-07 Literacy Coach Toolkit, position descriptions, agendas and materials from Literacy Coach training sessions, and other documents obtained during school interviews (e.g., learning team agendas, literacy logs) and from the MPS web site.

III. Results

Implementation of Program Changes

As noted previously, principals and coaches were informed at the start of the 2006-2007 school year that the district wanted the Literacy Coach position to be concentrated on classroom literacy support. In particular, the emphasis was placed on "modeling, one-on-one coaching, and professional development" or "MOP" as referenced by the Literacy Collaborative team (Literacy Specialists and the District Curriculum Specialists). In addition, coaches were not to be used as school assessment coordinators, or substitute or regular classroom teachers. These changes were communicated through written directives to principals, during the special meeting with coaches and principals that occurred in August, within the 2006-2007 Toolkit for Literacy Coaches and Leaders, and during the district Literacy Coach professional development meetings. The toolkit also contained the entire WCER Phase 1 report, which detailed findings and recommendations from the first year study.

These changes were reinforced in two primary ways. First, during district Literacy Coach training sessions, it was repeatedly emphasized that coaches should be focusing their activities on the three "MOP" priorities. Professional development materials and activities also included suggestions on how activities could tie into classroom observations and modeling. Second, a new literacy log format was developed by the specialists. The logs were to be completed bi-weekly by the coaches to report on what the school's goals were on the Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom and professional development related to these goals. Within the logs, reports were also prompted on the following five main coaching activities: examples of one-one-one coaching, modeling, ongoing professional development, and other activities; and question, concerns or resource requests. The logs were to be submitted to the principal and then to the assigned specialist. Although there was a perception among specialists that logs were

being more frequently completed than in prior years, only three of the principals in our qualitative sample spoke about receiving or reviewing the logs. Specialists also reported that they did not get logs from all their coaches. Four of the coaches we interviewed indicated that they did not submit logs or stopped submitting them during the year.

It was clear that principals and coaches received and understood the district message about the desired use of Literacy Coaches in schools. In a number of instances, teachers also expressed their awareness that coaches were expected to be in the classroom modeling and providing feedback on literacy instruction. However, there were more teachers in our sample who were uncertain about the role expectations for coaches and how they were to work with teachers. Coaches we visited in the same schools from last year did appear to be trying to get into classrooms with more frequency (these and other findings are discussed below in more detail).

In all cases, principals articulated the awareness that the district was not supportive of coaches carrying out non-Literacy Coach duties within the school and wanted the coaches focused on classroom literacy support. One principal explained that it was clear that the district wanted coaches focusing on working more closely with teachers on literacy instruction. When the prior coach left, there was an opportunity to refocus the role. He explained, "because of the district impetus and because [the coach] is new to the position, I think, you know, we have much more focus in terms of her function this year." It should be noted that most principals appeared to be choosing their words carefully when discussing the roles coaches played in the school. Several were aware of the Phase 1 study (8 were interviewed for that study) and the district directives, and they emphasized the activities of the Literacy Coaches that were stressed by the district. While some principals may have been exaggerating the extent of change, the responses of Literacy Coaches often confirmed or shed additional light on the principals' responses.

Although principals were aware of the expected roles of Literacy Coaches, specific mechanisms to hold principals accountable for how coaches were utilized in schools were lacking, as they were last year. Nor was there direct follow-up to ensure that Literacy Coaches were not holding positions at their school that took the majority of their time away from MOP activities. As several principals and coaches noted, there was often no one else to hold fill these other positions (such as grant coordinators or assessment coordinators).

Overall, the communication of the intended changes did appear to be effective given the confirming responses of coaches and principals about the district's intentions regarding coaching practices. There was still some uncertainty among teachers and several expressed the need for greater clarity about the role of coaches so they would know what to expect from coaches and what is appropriate to ask of them. Similarly some teachers in the NEA focus school were also unclear about the role of Generalists. We next turn to findings on the actual roles of coaches and how they differ from findings in the Phase 1 report.
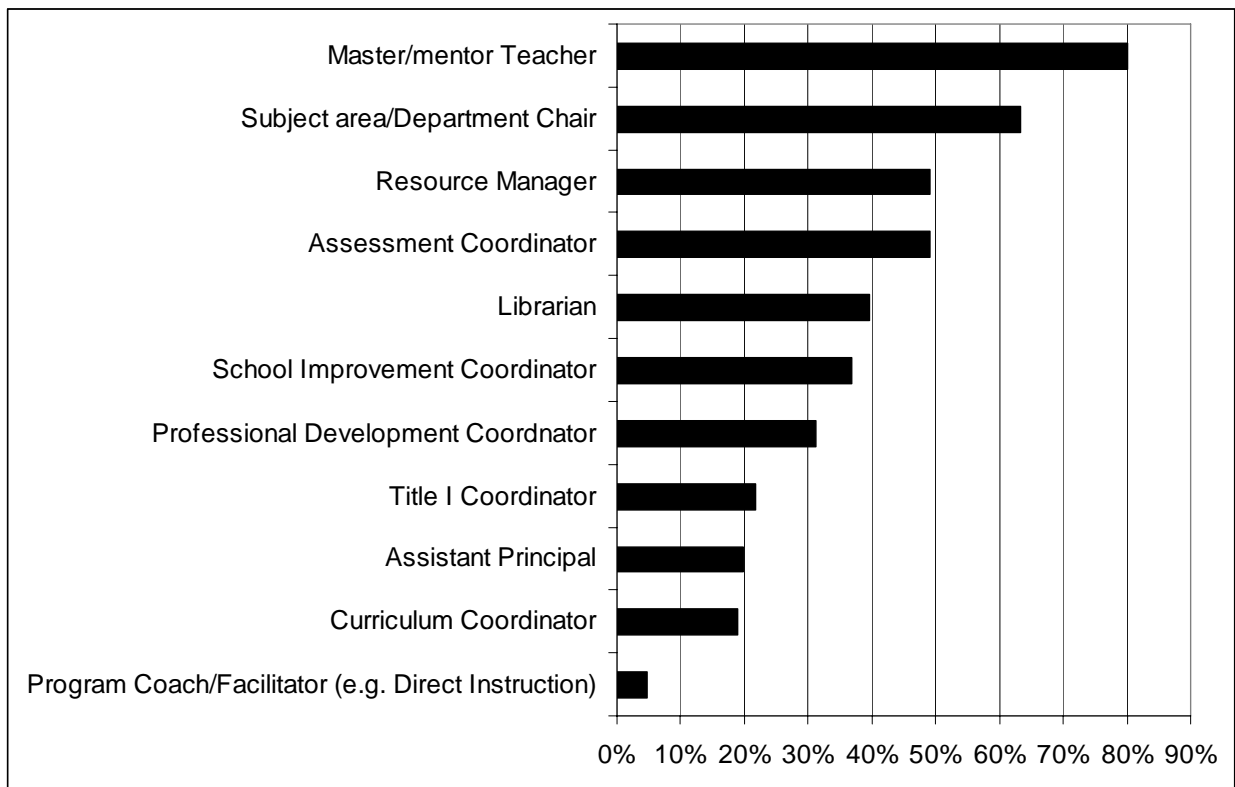
How are coaches carrying out their role in schools? Do coaching practices differ from those observed during the Phase 1 report?

On the instructional leader survey the Literacy Coaches were asked to report their official time percentage allocated to the coach role. As we found last year, coaches spend less time on the role than officially allocated. The vast majority, 72 percent, have 100 percent coach appointments. Eleven percent of the Literacy Coaches have appointments ranging between 51 and 75 percent, while another 12 percent have less than half time appointments. While 72 percent of the coaches responded that they have a 100 percent appointment, only 42 percent indicate that they *actually* spend 100 percent of their time performing the role.

This year's survey allowed us to gauge competing demands on coaches' time. Since the survey was given to all staff holding formal MPS instructional leadership roles, we are able to see how many coaches perform these other roles. Among the 106 Literacy Coaches who responded, we found that 15 are Implementers and that 14 are Learning Coordinators. Seven coaches apiece perform the roles of Math Teacher Leader and Curriculum Generalist (1 at the district level and 6 at the school level).

The survey also asked instructional leaders about an additional 12 school roles. Overall, we found that all but 4 of the Literacy Coaches perform at least one of these other roles in their schools. As Figure 1 illustrates, the additional role most frequently performed by coaches is that of master/mentor teacher. This role combination is sensible given the great degree of overlap in the purpose of these two roles. Other roles, which substantial percentages of coaches report performing strike us as potentially less congruent with the role of Literacy Coach as they appear to have the potential to diminish time that coaches might spend on direct work with teachers. These roles include Subject area/Department Chair (63 percent), Resource Manager (49 percent), Assessment Coordinator (49 percent), and Librarian (40 percent).

These results regarding the multiple roles that most coaches play may provide a partial explanation of the finding that coaches generally spend less time coaching than specified by their official time appointment. On average, Literacy Coaches reported performing an additional 4 roles in their school, suggesting that the typical coach has multiple, competing demands on their time. Given lean school budgets, and also given the fact that many schools in MPS are relatively modest in size, this sort of role sharing can be an efficient use of human resources. Yet these kinds of multiple and competing demands placed on coaches appeared to diminish their potential impact.

Figure 1: Role Responsibilities Reported by Literacy Coaches

Again this year the survey included questions about how frequently coaches engaged in certain activities when working with teachers. The results are displayed next to those from last year in Table 1 below. Last year, the most frequent activity in which coaches engaged was distributing and working with materials, analyzing achievement results, presenting instructional strategies, and problem solving with teachers about their instruction. There was a substantial decrease in the amount of time coaches spent distributing materials to teachers and testing students/scoring assessments. Otherwise, coaches reported spending about the same amount of time on the various activities we asked about.

In terms of the overall priority coaches give to these activities, problem solving with teachers about their instruction receives the most attention closely followed by analyzing student achievement results, planning for working with teachers, modeling lessons for teachers, and presenting a teaching strategy to teachers. The overall impression we get from this set of items is that in 2006-2007, coaches may have spent slightly more time directly working with teachers on instructional improvement than in 2005-2006. Coaches also appear to have spent less time on activities that are not as directly related to instruction such as passing out materials and examining achievement data in 2006-2007 than in 2005-2006. We still find it noteworthy that the coaches report spending slightly less than "a moderate amount of time" on activities involving direct coaching of teachers, though we acknowledge that this response pattern may also simply reflect the general tendency for respondents to select the category directly preceding the most positive category in a response scale.

Table 1: Literacy Coaches' Activities When Working With Teachers*

	2005-2006 Mean	2006-2007 Mean	Difference
Distribute materials to teachers	3.21	2.46	-0.75
Analyze student achievement results	3.11	2.87	-0.24
Problem solve with teachers about their instruction	3.06	2.96	-0.10
Plan & prepare for work with teachers	3.01	2.87	-0.14
Present a literacy strategy to teachers	2.91	2.84	-0.07
Test students or score assessments	2.85	2.44	-0.41
Model a literacy lesson for teachers	2.73	2.85	0.12
Work with teachers to analyze student work	2.67	2.66	-0.01
Observe a teacher's instruction	2.60	2.68	0.08
Give feedback to teachers after observing them	2.58	2.58	0.00
Help teachers plan lessons	2.18	2.33	0.15

Response scale: 1=no time, 2=very little time, 3=moderate amount of time, 4=large amount of time
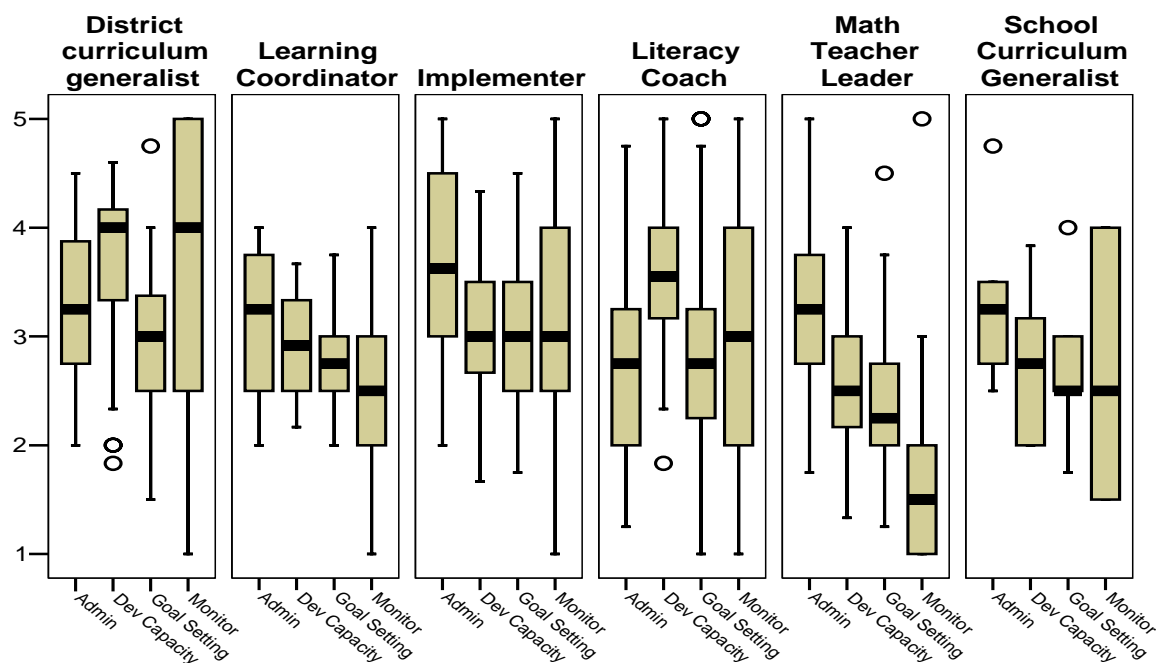
*Note: In the 2006-2007 questionnaire, in order to make these items relevant for instructional leaders who do not specialize in literacy instruction (e.g. Math Teacher Leaders), they were made "generic" with respect to subject matter. So for example, the item "Present a literacy strategy to teachers" was changed to "Present a teaching strategy to teachers."

This year's instructional leader survey also allowed us to gain an understanding of how the work of Literacy Coaches compares to that of other MPS instructional leaders. While the intended coach role focused primarily on direct, interactive coaching activities, there is a wide range of potential leadership functions that coaches might perform. Camburn, Rowan and Taylor (2003) developed a set of scales that measure leadership functions that might be performed by any formally-designated leader in schools including principals, assistant principals, department/subject area chairs, and teacher leaders in various roles. Here we focus on four functions: administration, setting goals, developing instructional capacity, and monitoring. The items making up these scales are displayed in Appendix C. Boxplots comparing how staff who perform the 6 MPS instructional leadership roles are distributed on the six leadership scales can be found in Figure 2. As we discussed above, a number of instructional leaders perform more than one role. For these analyses, we classified each respondent according to their primary role defined as the role to which they had the most time officially allocated.

Figure 2 illustrates that Literacy Coaches allocate proportionately more of their time to developing teachers' instructional capacity, and proportionately less time to administration, goal setting, and monitoring. In fact, when compared to those performing other leadership roles, as a group Literacy Coaches are the only ones to devote more of their time to directly supporting the instructional improvement of teachers. The figure further illustrates that Literacy Coaches are less variable in the amount of time they spend developing teachers' capacity than in the amount of time they spend on the other three leadership functions. The figure also shows that Literacy Coaches are highly variable in the amount of time they devote to monitoring teachers. These patterns, by and large, fit with the district's goals for the coach role that stipulate that Literacy Coaches should spend a greater portion of their time in direct support of teachers' instruction.

Instructional leaders in the other roles appear to allocate their time differently than Literacy Coaches. For example, like Literacy Coaches, District Curriculum Generalists devote considerable time to developing instructional capacity. Unlike coaches, however, these leaders spend quite a bit of time monitoring teachers. This makes sense given their walkthrough assignments and administrative functions. Learning Coordinators, Implementers, Math Teacher Leaders, and School Curriculum Generalists all spend more time on administration than any other facet of leadership. Math Teacher Leaders are further distinguished by the fact that they spend substantially less time than those in the other five roles developing teachers' instruction, setting goals, and monitoring teachers. This finding is not surprising since Math Teacher Leaders tend to have classroom teaching assignments.

Figure 2: Reported Performance of Instructional Leaders on Six Leadership Scales

Response scale: 1=Never, 2=A few times throughout the year, 3=A few times per month, 4=1-2 times per week, 5=More than twice per week

Evidence from School-Level Interviews

In most instances, coaches confirmed that the district directive helped provide them with more opportunities to be in the classroom, yet barriers still existed that inhibited some coaches. Overall, during the interviews we heard more examples of direct coaching occurring in schools visited this year compared to last year. Coach and teacher interactions in classrooms, including observing, modeling, and providing feedback on literacy instruction appeared to be a regular occurrence in 7 of the 14 schools we visited. In the prior study, such interactions were common in only 3 of 12 schools. In two other cases from the current study, coaches reported these activities, but the teachers interviewed did not see it as typical of their experiences. Two other coaches observed instruction through regular walkthrough exercises, but these did not result in direct feedback to individual teachers. Instead, walkthrough data tended to be shared to grade level teams or during schoolwide training activities.

In some cases, coaches concentrated their classroom interactions on new or struggling teachers. When asked how often and in what ways one Literacy Coach worked with teachers, one coach said, "I think it'd be better to look at my logs. You know, in a day I…do make sure that every week I'm modeling, I'm debriefing constantly. Right now my focus is a brand new

sixth grade teacher [who] came on two weeks ago" (Elementary Literacy Coach). A new teacher in this school spoke of extensive support received from the Coach:

> She actually observed my teaching I would say over ten times in the last year. She's observed me both in guided reading, word work, shared reading as well as writing because she did some modeling for me in some of those subject areas, and then she would watch me teach, and then come in and do some coaching with me, or give me some advice on what I could do to strengthen my lessons or change. And also in writing, this year she did writing for me, just modeled some lessons so I could get a better idea, idea of what they expected (Elementary teacher).

Coaches who were also the lead coordinator for their school on the Direct Instruction program and/or the Reading First Initiative indicated that these programs dominated their daily activities. These roles also involved classroom observations that were specific to the requirements of the instructional program. Two coaches who oversaw Reading First in their school spoke about how much of their time is taken up with that program. For that grant, they have requirements to meet with teachers and document that Reading First components and related training was happening. As one commented, "Well that completely changed my job because I have to be, there's so much accountability with this grant, being a federal grant…" (Elementary Literacy Coach).

In some schools we visited, the coaches acted as general instructional facilitators, helping teachers across content areas in lesson planning and curriculum alignment, (not just writing across the curriculum), classroom management, and with mentoring support. In their work with individual teachers, two coaches assisted primarily in a mentor capacity, with the focus of their efforts on classroom management and curriculum development, in subjects other than literacy. In one school, for example, the coach worked intensively with a new social studies teacher and a veteran special education teacher. In the other school, the coach conducted mentoring activities with four new teachers. In both cases, the coaches still developed and facilitated schoolwide professional development, but concentrated their classroom interactions on these few teachers.

In one interesting case, the principal was trying to get the coach into the classroom more, but the coach resisted and was not comfortable providing instruction-related feedback to teachers. As this principal commented,

> There isn't coaching going on… I don't know if it's the case where she's just not sure what to do, but supposedly our district has helped with the regular meetings they have for Literacy Coaches and, you know, that word has been put out, but I think she's still doing what she did as a reading resource teacher, and that hasn't changed. So we're having another conversation this year where I'm just going to basically put it into perspective. Eighty percent of your time needs to be coaching (Middle School principal).

School size and school level (i.e., elementary, middle or high school) appear to affect how coaches work with teachers. In our analysis, school size appears to outweigh the influence of school level in affecting coaching activities. In smaller schools, Literacy Coaches are able to access a greater number of teachers while in larger schools coaches had a harder time reaching

all teachers. Several teachers we interviewed at large high schools or K-8 schools had not met individually with their coach. According to one high school coach, "I can't be in everyone's classroom. I'm in those classrooms [and] for those teachers who have requested [me] and for new teachers. So some of the seasoned teachers, they don't see me in the classrooms." Though coaches in larger schools did work to find ways to use their time most effectively, for example by working with teachers (such as English and science) across content areas on writing, these Literacy Coaches had a harder time reaching all teachers. One specialist asserted that large schools needed more than one coach. The specialist worked with a number of large schools in the district and, in her opinion, the schools had very strong coaches; however, given the large number of teachers each coach had to work with teachers still questioned their effectiveness. Regarding one of these coaches, the specialist said, "The Learning Team's questioning her effectiveness. She's brilliant at what she does, however, she's barely making an impact."

School Professional Development

Literacy Coaches were heavily involved in developing professional development for their schools. The professional development related to: school-specific literacy programs (e.g., Six Traits of Writing), federal grant programs (primarily Reading First), general curriculum alignment, use of formative assessment data, and pedagogical strategies emphasized by the district. The latter included CHPUC, Marzano's 9 and Bloom's Taxonomy of student engagement.

Principals and coaches both spoke of training in CHPUC, Bloom's and Marzano's 9 and how they were applying these strategies to school professional development. The alignment in training for coaches and principals has facilitated collaboration between principals, coaches and learning teams on common professional development strategies. In some cases, principals spoke of hearing the "language" of these initiatives in teacher interactions. Principals also emphasized that coaches were integral to the success of their school's professional development strategy. According to one middle school principal:

> "The Literacy Coach basically is an individual from whom we get a lot of professional development. So she's constantly sharing best practices with the entire staff. We meet once or twice a month with a reading theme. [One] was about note taking, and how to take notes and so there is always some ongoing professional development. She goes to many, many different meetings and then she brings back all that she learns… She's involved in every possible aspect of the curriculum, everything, so we have kind of like an ongoing dialogue as it relates to learning, all aspects of learning in the school community." (Middle School principal)

In one small high school, the coach spent the month of August analyzing student assessment data for all teachers, then initiated professional development sessions for the year to get them to incorporate student academic standards into their instruction. The intention was to gradually build to curriculum mapping, but since several teachers were new to the school, they did not have a set curriculum from which to map. The coach also solicited teachers to lead different professional development sessions in areas they felt strong in to keep them engaged

with the schoolwide professional development. These sessions focused on the school's selected instructional strategies from "Marzano's 9".

A number of coaches were also involved with school walkthrough activities. Eight of the 14 coaches/generalists participated in walkthroughs. The coaches and generalists at the NEA focus schools talked about being required to do 20 walkthroughs per week. The walkthroughs were seen as helpful in exposing the principal and coaches to classroom practices. In some cases, the experience yielded "unpleasant surprises;" for example, when observations showed levels of student engagement across classrooms that were lower than expected. The data from walkthroughs were shared during grade level or schoolwide meetings, but it was not clear how the information was uniformly used to change instructional practices or guide professional development.

Administrative Activities

Most coaches in our school sample continued to fill administrative roles, although their focus on administrative activities was relieved to some extent when compared to last year's study. Coaches continued to play leading roles on school learning teams and many were the main facilitators of the learning teams, which included coordinating the Education Plan development. They also set agendas, and scheduled and ran the Learning Team and other school committee meetings.

The most notable change in our sample related to administration functions was the reduced frequency of assessment coordination in most schools. Due to district directives to principals at the beginning of the year, all but three of the coaches in our sample were no longer the designated school assessment coordinators for their schools. This change freed them to do more professional development and classroom support work and was greatly appreciated by the coaches. There were some concerns, however, that given on-going budget reductions, there was a possibility that these types of administrative activities would again fall to the coaches by default. One coach was resigned to the reality of coaches carrying administrative activities, such as test coordination, since budget reductions had eliminated others in her school who were qualified and did not have classroom responsibilities. This was particularly a problem at the elementary level and in small schools.

There were also fewer instances than last year of coaches being used as substitute teachers or substitute administrators (e.g., when the principal is out for training). One coach began the year teaching four classes and acting as a fill-in assistant principal. During this period, the coach rarely attended district training, and only had two hours a day to work with teachers. During the second half of the year, the principal relieved the coach of both teaching and the quasi-administrator duties and her work with teachers increased considerably.

Regarding the ebb and flow of administrative demands on coaches, one specialist explained a common conversation with Literacy Coaches: "Lots of coaches said to me, but who's going to do these other jobs, who's going to be assessment coordinator? I'm the only person in my building. And, you know what? It all sort of worked itself out." As the year progressed, however, the specialist felt that this focus was not always maintained. She continued:

"Slowly, as the year has gone on I think coaches have picked up more and more of those jobs again."

What is the quality of Literacy Coaches' own learning opportunities?

We found that coaches received professional development that was tightly focused on the promotion of literacy instruction practices that are reflective of district goals. Coaches gave generally positive reports of their professional development experiences this year. In this section we report interview and survey results that detail the professional development received by coaches this year.

Monthly Training Sessions

The Literacy Coaches attended monthly professional development sessions led by the Literacy Specialists. These sessions were guided by the year-long theme: "customizing best practices school-wide through the lens of the district-developed Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom." An agenda was provided each session detailing the focus and purpose of the day. Foci included, for example: active engagement of student learners, strategic instructional choices, and routine use of a variety of assessments.

The monthly trainings were broken down into four sessions. In the mornings, the Literacy Coaches received three content-focused sessions. During each training day, one session focused on differentiated instruction. The other sessions were guided by Marzano's 9, Bloom's Taxonomy, the Wisconsin Teacher Standards, the Comprehensive Literacy Framework and/or CHPUC. The Literacy Specialists worked in teams of two to lead each session. The coaches were broken apart by their level of experience and/or familiarity with the particular content. During the afternoon session, Literacy Coaches met in cadres with their assigned Literacy Specialist to receive additional information, reflect on the morning, and discuss any individual pressing issues.
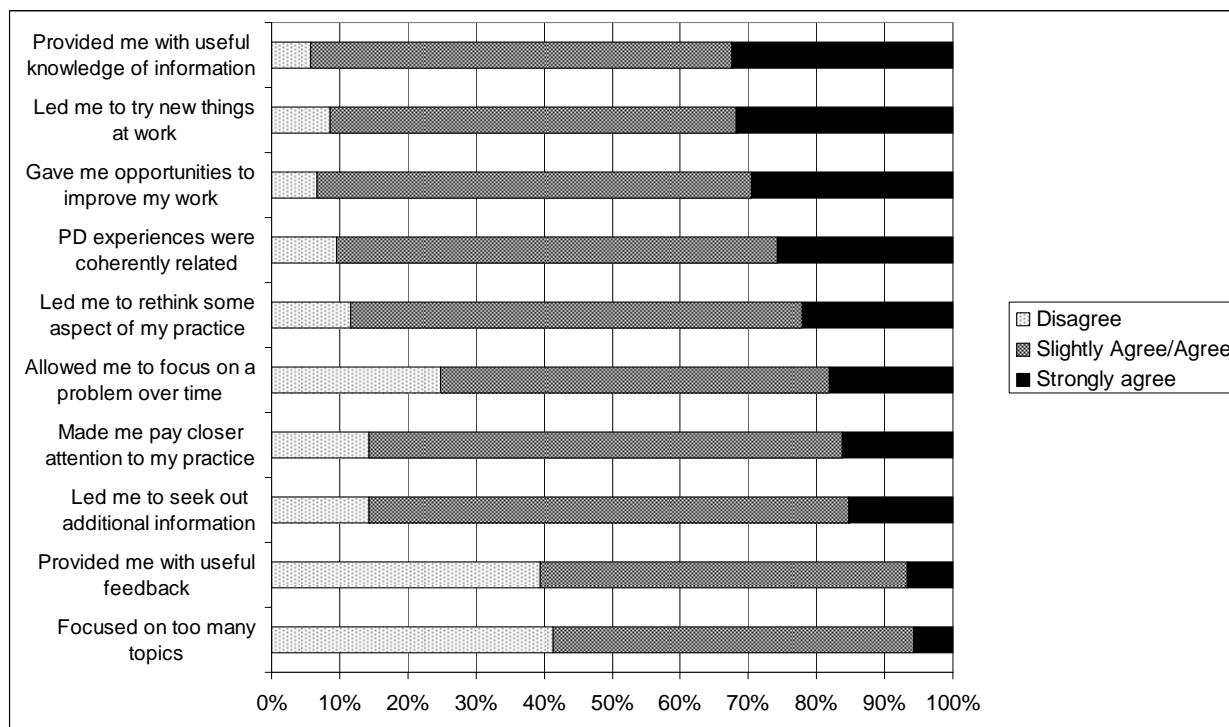
The Literacy Specialists frequently integrated technology into the training. Specifically, one session each month was held in the computer lab and participants utilized the computers. Examples of activities included accessing the district web portal, engaging in web-quests, or working on power point presentations. During each session, Literacy Specialists prepared packets for the Literacy Coaches containing written information of the session themes and content. This information included the "MOP" connections. The activities coaches engaged in ranged from: teachers working together to read articles from literacy journals, specialists leading activities the coaches could then bring back to their schools for the teachers, and the specialists providing the coaches with relevant information to plan their own professional development.

Impact of Training

Recent research has identified characteristics of effective professional development programs for school practitioners (Porter, et. al., 2003; Kelly & Peterson, 2002). Among other things, this research indicates that professional development will be more effective when it provides practitioners with long-term, sustained learning opportunities to work on a problem

over time; opportunities to work on their practice in the workplace (learning in context), and cultivates conceptual approaches to work (habits of mind). The Instructional Leader survey contained questions that elicited leaders' assessment of the extent to which their professional development this year reflected these kinds of ideals. Figure 3 displays Literacy Coaches' answers to these questions.

Figure 3: Reported Impact of Professional Development Activities

In general, Literacy Coaches were quite positive about their professional learning experiences. Nearly every coach agreed that their professional development provided them with useful knowledge, led them to try new things at work, and gave them opportunities to improve their practice. Many coaches also had positive opinions of the topics covered in their professional development, with large percentages agreeing that topics were coherently related to each other, and a substantial percentage disagreeing that there were too many topics. According to adult learning theories, effective learning experiences will provoke people to reflect on what they are doing. It appears that substantial numbers of Literacy Coaches may have had such experiences as many of them agreed their learning experiences led them to rethink an aspect of their practice, made them pay closer attention to their practice, and led them to seek out additional information. The only question that reflected negatively on coaches' learning experiences asked whether the coaches received useful feedback about their practice from their professional development. Nearly 40 percent of the coaches disagreed with this item suggesting

that for a substantial number, there is not a tight linkage between their professional development and feedback on specific aspects of their work.

<u>School-Level Interview Results on Training</u>

Similar to the survey findings, the majority of the Literacy Coaches we interviewed who regularly attended the trainings found them useful and stated that they were more focused and effective than the 2005-2006 trainings. Coaches reported that they shared strategies learned at the trainings in their educational plans, at staff meetings, after-school information sessions, grade level meetings, and occasionally on banking days. For example, one shared Marzano's note-taking strategies with a middle school science teacher and a language arts teacher. Another created a bulletin board on Marzano's 9 and also used recent training on summarizing strategies with a group of teachers. As the year progressed, Literacy Specialists videotaped Literacy Coaches in their own schools implementing activities learned during professional development trainings. The tapes were later played during professional development sessions. For example, one Literacy Coach was working with her staff on analyzing test score data. These examples were shown and discussed to explicate how information learned during district professional development could be used at the school level.

Coaches also noted other positive components of the trainings. They commented that the connections to district initiatives (including Marzano's 9, Bloom's taxonomy, and CHPUC) were clearly made. One coach who regularly attended the district literacy training and was familiar with the monthly training for principals explained that from last year to this year there was more alignment between Literacy Coach training and the district principal training, and the district was making an effort to show that alignment. Coaches also mentioned that the web portal was more user friendly, was referenced frequently during training or through feedback from specialists, and when accessed, contained useful information. Describing the improvements to the web portal, one coach explained, "but this year it really helps with whatever they present to us, it's on the portal, we can give our teachers the directions to get to it, and …it's really like [they are] going to meetings themselves and… they get the resources faster and can use what they want to use." (Elementary Literacy Coach). In addition, coaches appreciated the areas of expertise drawn on by Literacy Specialists in the professional development sessions, and in some instances these also extended as Literacy Specialists occasionally modeled for teachers or gave presentations to teachers.

We found the training sessions to focus on and impact one primary feature of the "MOP" focus, providing professional development. Coaches mostly brought back strategies in the area of professional development. In our observations of training, we noted that while connections to one-on-one coaching and modeling were presented in writing by the Literacy Specialists, these were rarely expanded upon in depth during the training sessions and were infrequently mentioned as examples of impact from the district professional development by Literacy Coaches or teachers. One principal interviewed suggested having trainings take place at different schools to see the strategies and particularly coaching in action. A few coaches reported during interviews that they needed more time to develop the strategies learned at the training sessions to

make them usable in their schools. They needed more support and guidance to move the ideas learned during professional development into their specific contexts.

There were several instances of coaches who had not attended the majority of the trainings. In one case, referenced above, the coach initially had classroom teaching responsibilities and administrative responsibilities as a "quasi-Assistant Principal" during the first half of the year. The coach was relieved of these responsibilities during the second half of the year. Another coach replaced an ineffective coach half-way through the school year and had to focus on shoring up the Direct Instruction program in the school as well as the Education Plan and formative assessment reporting. These coaches did not have time to attend the training given their other responsibilities. It is unclear why other coaches may have missed training sessions. But a Literacy Specialist commented, "These coaches should have to come to training. I know stuff comes up, but lots of times it is that their principal wouldn't let them go."

What is the impact of the changes to the program on coaching activities and on literacy instruction?

Impact of Specialists on Coaches

In the Instructional Leader Survey we asked the Literacy Coaches to report on their work with Literacy Specialists. On average, coaches met with their specialists about 6 times between the start of the school year and in May when the instructional leader survey was administered (see Figure 4). About half of the coaches said they met with a specialist 4 times or less during the school year. It is important to note that these results might overstate how often coaches and specialists met as about one quarter of the 106 instructional leaders who identified themselves as coaches on the survey did not answer this question. It is our guess that a substantial number of these coaches simply left this question blank because they did not meet with their specialist at all this year.

Figure 4: Reported Frequency of Literacy Coaches Working with Literacy Specialists

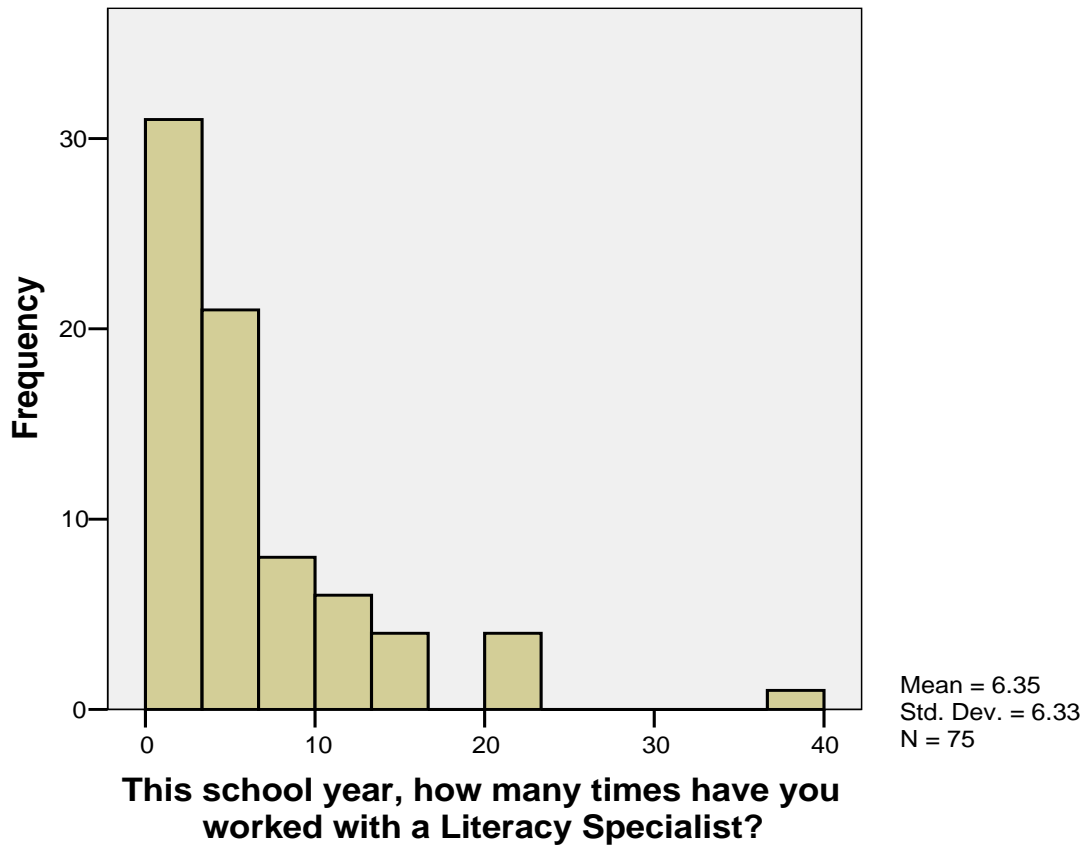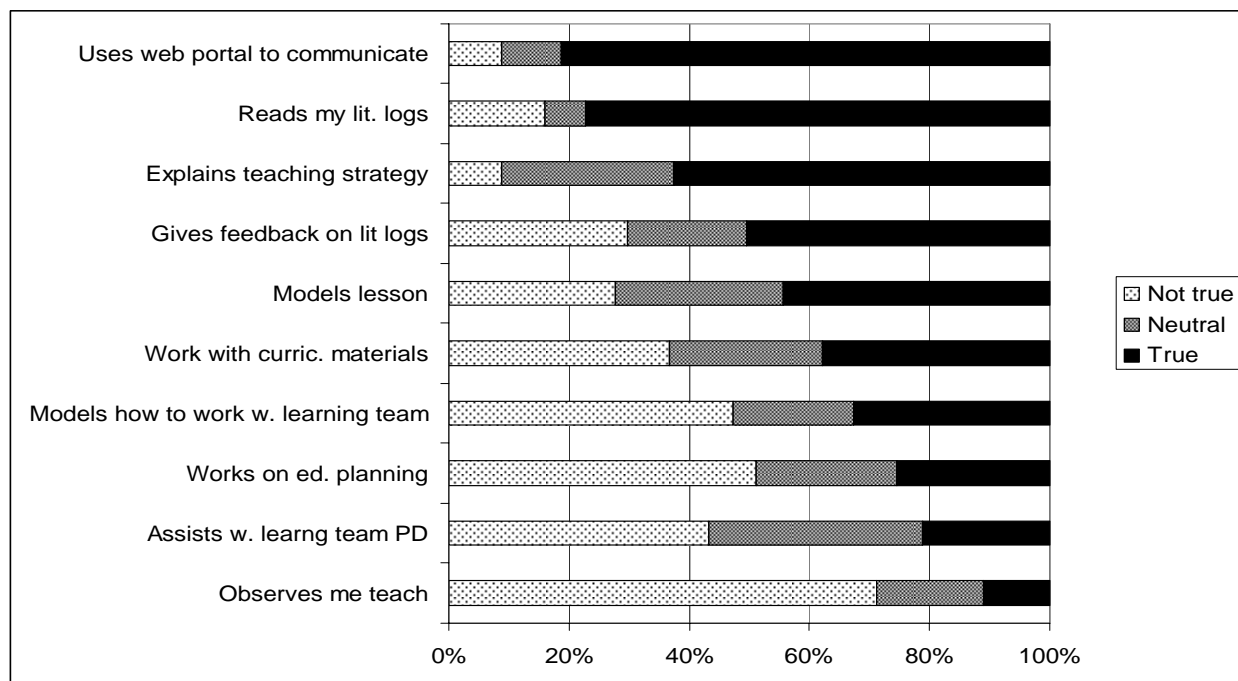

Mean = 6.35
Std. Dev. = 6.33
N = 75

Figure 5: Nature of Support Provided by Literacy Specialists to Coaches*

*Note: The response scale for these items had 6 choices. The leftmost response choice was labeled "Never True" and the rightmost response choice was labeled "Always True." To produce this figure, choices 1 and 2 were combined into a category labeled "Not True," choices 3 and 4 were combined into a category labeled "Neutral," and choices 5 and 6 were combined into a category labeled "True."

Most Literacy coaches reported that their Literacy Specialists communicated with them via the web portal and that the specialists read their literacy logs. Coaches' responses to both these items appear to indicate potential clear lines of communication between many coaches and their specialists. While many coaches reported having their literacy logs read by specialists (around 80 percent), a much smaller percentage (about 50 percent) reported getting feedback on their logs from a specialist. A substantial percentage of coaches (about 60 percent) also reported that a Literacy Specialist explained teaching strategies to them suggesting that interactions between coaches and specialists regularly focus on issues of instruction. Similarly, a little less than half of the coaches reported that a specialist modeled a lesson for them, although the results indicate that very few coaches were observed by specialists while they taught. The results also show that coaches and specialists spend substantially less time on issues associated with learning teams. Compared to other issues, considerably smaller percentages of coaches said their work with specialists focused on how to interact with learning teams, developing professional development for learning teams, and working on education planning with learning teams.

District-level interview results

Although each specialist varied in their specific type of interaction with their coaches and schools, specialists listed modeling, helping with technology, gathering resources, reviewing and establishing goals, working with the principal, emailing, calling, curriculum mapping, and Direct Instruction, as among their responsibilities. The majority of specialists held coaches as their priority as opposed to establishing relationships with the principals. Two of the specialists mentioned that their coaches have their cell phone number and can reach their specialist at any time. Many specialists listed professional development as one of the main roles they provide within the schools, either providing it for coaches who are not comfortable in doing so, modeling how to provide embedded professional development, or helping to present data analysis. Most specialists also described their involvement on the Education Plan Team amongst their involvement in the schools.

Specialists have between 30 and 39 schools. In many cases, they are divided according the specialists' background or expertise. One specialist is assigned to all NEA-focus schools, most of which received Curriculum Generalists in place of coaches. While the NEA-focus specialist provides the same support for both Curriculum Generalists and Coaches, she asked that NEA schools contact her if they did or did not require her services. Only two schools' Curriculum Generalists responded that they did not need her services.

Every specialist mentioned the high number of assigned schools as limiting their effectiveness. As one specialist expressed, the expectations are realistic, but the number of schools prevents them from making a substantial impact. Most said that while they aim for more visits per school, they visit each school a minimum of three times per school year. The prior program manager of the Literacy Coach initiative set the weekly schedule to ensure that specialists were in schools at least three days of the week. An issue raised by one specialist was the difficulty in being assigned to schools without Literacy Coaches. Like the schools with the Curriculum Generalists, some specialists focused primarily on the schools that contacted them. One specialist cited the WCER report as the reason they are in the schools more this year compared to last year and that they enjoy the increased school interactions.

Although coaches spoke positively about their training, there was less discussion of how the Literacy Specialists supported them directly in their school. Most coaches talked about being visited by their specialists at least once by the time they were interviewed (May-June). In some cases, visits occurred 3 or more times. One coach speculated that her specialist did not know her and had not visited the school (although an attempt to schedule was recently made). This coach wondered if the visit was for accountability rather than support, since the appointment was coming so late in the school year. A few coaches who said they were infrequently visited or contacted by their specialists indicated that they did not need the support at their school, but held the view that they could reach their specialist if needed. Coaches did indicate that their specialist was a knowledgeable resource and thought they could go to them if needed. Several others spoke of receiving timely responses from specialists when requests for information or resources were made. But a number empathized that the specialists were very busy, with many schools to support. As one of these coaches explained, "But so much of what we're doing this year directly relates to our Ed Plan, so I haven't really had too much of a need to call her. I'm used to giving

in-services, you know, providing professional development, so I have some experience in that, so I don't need to take her time" (Middle School Coach).

Two coaches mentioned that their specialist had visited several times and provided useful support. Support included checking in with the coach on strategies learned during district training, attending evening family literacy nights, and feedback on the school's Education Plan. One middle school coach cited a positive impact from her specialist from the interactions. They had contact by email, phone, and monthly visits. Once the specialist came out and helped work on the Education Plan. The specialist also provided useful information and resources which she was able to email and post to staff.

Few coaches could cite specific feedback from specialists on their required literacy logs. Several said that the format was an improvement over the prior version and that it was more streamlined. Others, however, did not see the logs as a useful tool for them. As one explained, "It's a flat form, there are some pull-down menus, but the thing is that it's not user friendly really because you have to keep inputting the same information every two weeks, and it's like you already got this. And why I need to put in the textbooks that we use in our building. I mean, I could see giving that information once if somebody wants it" (Elementary Literacy Coach). Some specialists were more successful than others in having their coaches complete their logs. Although specialists frequently found the log reports of variable quality, they were seen by the specialists as good for their records and for connecting with the coaches.

Impact of Coaches on Teachers

In this section we report on how teachers have been impacted by the coach initiative. We found that substantial percentages of teachers have worked with coaches, and that this work generally focuses on topics and activities that align well with district goals for the initiative. The survey and interview results indicate that the impact of coaches on teachers is quite variable. A substantial percentage of teachers report that they have been positively impacted by their work with a coach; another equally substantial percentage of teachers say they have not been impacted greatly by their work with coaches. These general patterns are discussed in detail below.

Clearly, to be by impacted by Literacy Coaches, teachers have to work with them, and presumably, the more time teachers spend with coaches, the greater the potential they will be affected by these interactions. For the past two years, the Instructional Practices Survey (IPS) given to teachers has asked about whether and how often teachers worked with Literacy Coaches. In 2005-2006, 69 percent of the teachers who completed the IPS reported that they have worked with a coach at some point in time, and this percentage remained unchanged in 2006-2007 (Table 3). Not surprisingly, higher percentages of teachers in elementary and K-8 schools have worked with coaches as compared to teachers in middle schools and high schools. While roughly three quarters of elementary and K-8 teachers have worked with coaches, only about two thirds of the middle school teachers and one half of the high school teachers have done the same.

Table 3: Percentage of Teachers Who Have Worked with a Literacy Coach in Their Current School

	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total	69%	69%
Elementary	74%	76%
Middle	60%	65%
HS	50%	49%
K-8	72%	74%
Other	57%	54%

Last year, 80 percent of the teachers responding to the IPS said they were currently working with a Literacy Coach (Table 4). This year that percentage has dropped to 69 percent. Again, high school and middle school teachers are considerably less likely to be currently working with a Literacy Coach than elementary and K-8 teachers. As Table 4 illustrates, the pattern of decreasing percentages of teachers currently working with coaches between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 held for all types of schools.

Table 4: Percentage of Teachers Who Are Currently Working with Literacy Coaches

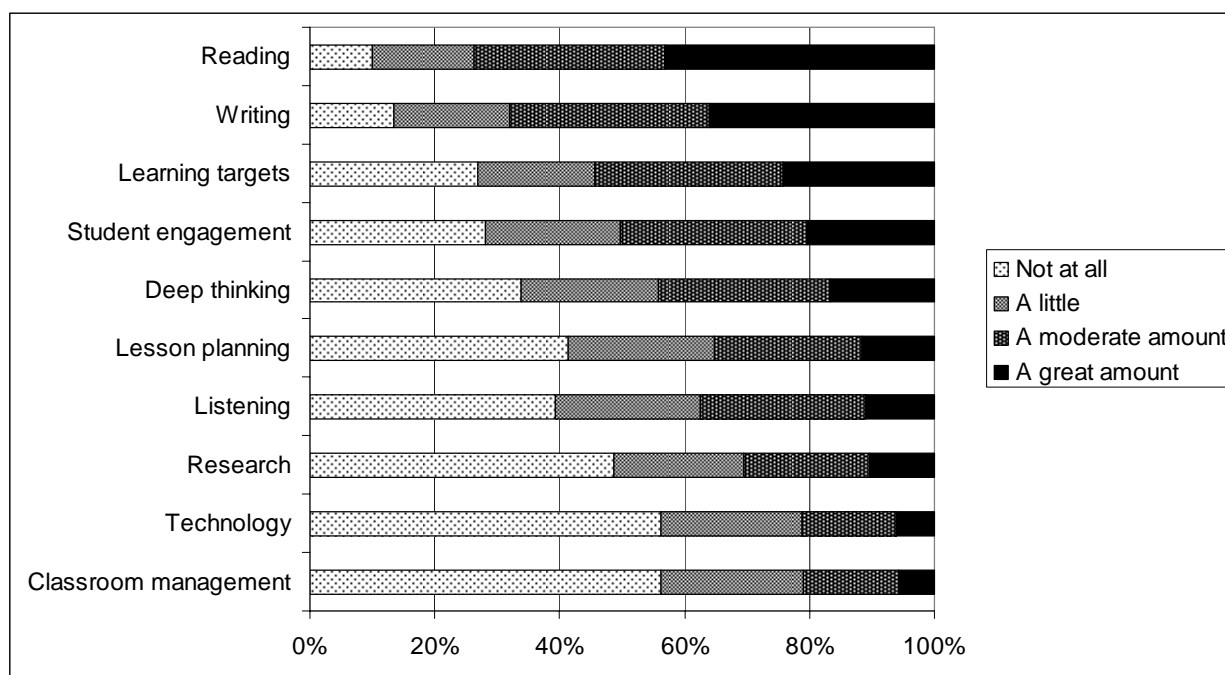|	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total	80%	69%
Elementary	82%	73%
Middle	76%	72%
HS	63%	50%
K-8	83%	69%
Other	75%	69%

The IPS also allows us to look at the frequency of teachers' interactions with coaches in 2006-2007. As Table 5 shows, on average, teachers who worked with Literacy Coaches met with them about 9 times during the year. Again, the frequency of contact with coaches varied quite a bit by school type. Elementary school teachers worked with coaches the most often, meeting more than 10 times this year on average. Middle school teachers followed closely behind, meeting with coaches slightly more than 9 times per year. Teachers in K-8 schools met with coaches 8 times per year, and high school teachers had the fewest contacts of any group, only meeting with coaches slightly more than 5 times this year.

Table 5: Average Number of Times Teachers Have Met with a Literacy Coaches

	2006-2007
Total	9.01
Elementary	10.65
Middle	9.57
HS	5.63
K-8	8.23
Other	8.68

In the 2006-2007 IPS we also asked teachers to report on the topics on which their work with coaches focused. The results of these questions are displayed in Figure 6. Teachers reported that the most frequent focus of their interactions with coaches was literacy content, specifically reading and writing. This strong emphasis on literacy content strikes us as very much in line with the district's desire for the Literacy Coach initiative to focus primarily on literacy instruction. More than 50 percent of the teachers said that their work with coaches addressed MPS learning targets either a moderate amount or a great amount. This finding aligns well with other evidence we have seen that Literacy Coaches provide an important conduit for communicating the district's goals and priorities. Teachers reported spending a modest amount of time with coaches on student engagement and deep thinking, topics which reflect the CHPUC standards. Research, technology, and classroom management were topics that received the least amount of attention from coaches and teachers, with substantial percentages of teachers reporting that their work with coaches did not focus on these areas.
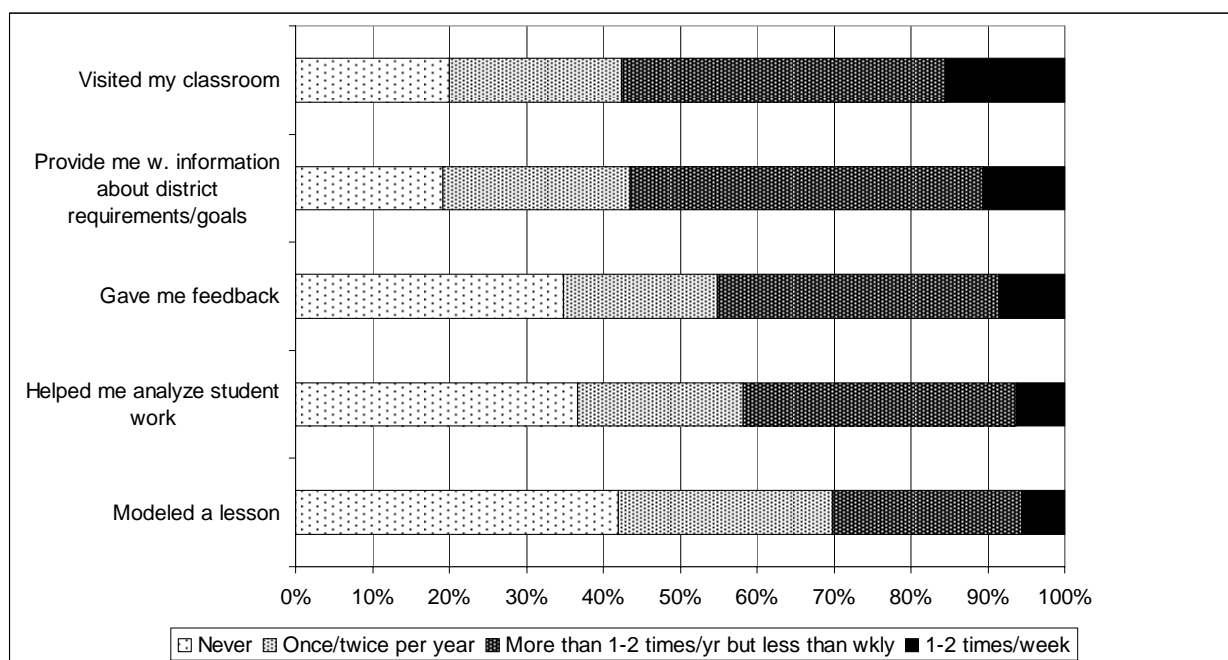
Figure 6: Topics On Which Teachers Worked With Coaches

The IPS survey results also give us an idea of the different ways in which coaches interact with teachers and the kinds of tasks on which teachers and coaches work. The type of interaction most frequently reported by teachers was a simple visit to teachers' classrooms (Figure 7). Approximately 15 percent of all teachers said they were visited by their coach at least once a week. High percentages also said that coaches provided them with information about district requirements and goals when they visited. As mentioned previously, we have seen evidence from multiple sources that Literacy Coaches are seen as being conduits for communicating district goals to teachers. Getting feedback from coaches and getting assistance

from coaches in analyzing student work occurred with moderate frequency. More than half of all teachers reported that these two things happened more than twice per year, although roughly a third of teachers said these two activities never occurred during the school year. Coaches modeling lessons for teachers was the least-frequently occurring activities reported by teachers. Slightly more than 40 percent of all teachers reported that their coach never modeled a lesson for them this school year.

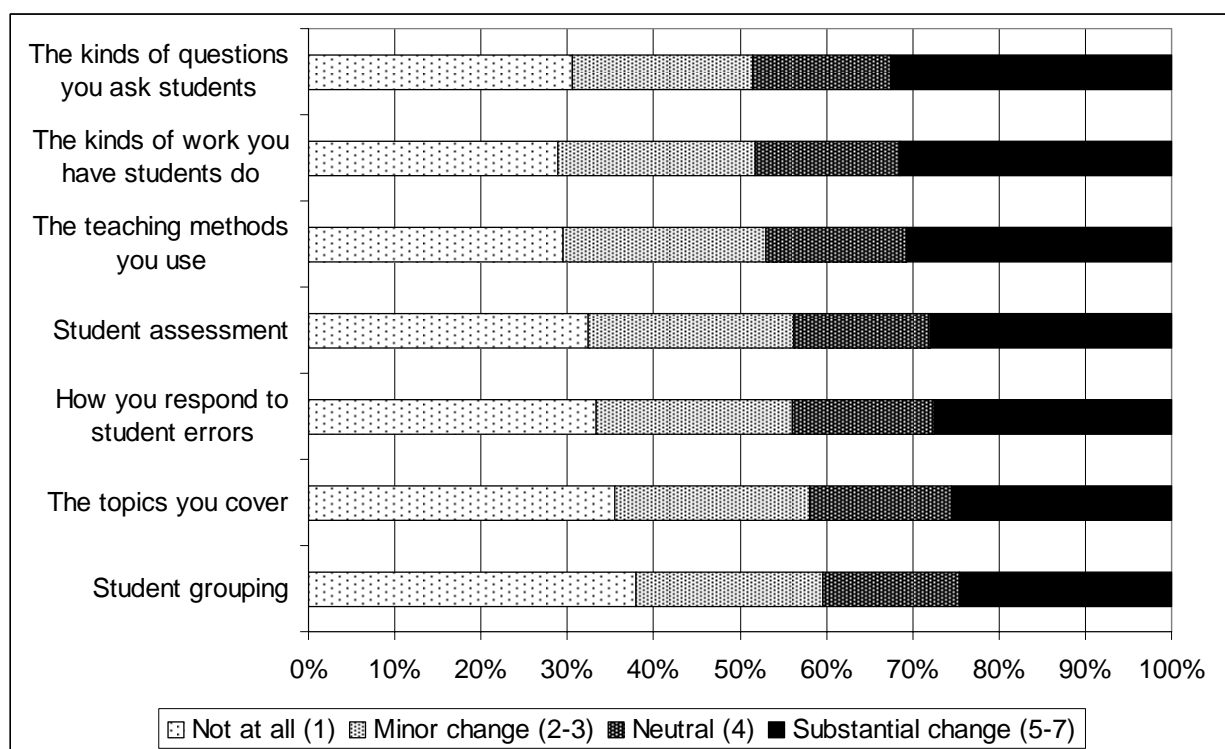**Figure 7: Activities On Which Teachers and Coaches Worked**

We now turn our attention to teachers' reports of how their practice has changed as a result of their interaction with Literacy Coaches. In the 2006-2007 IPS teachers answered questions that reported how seven separate aspects of their teaching practice had been impacted by coaches. Their responses to those questions are displayed in Figure 8. Teachers' responses to each of the seven questions were strikingly similar. Teachers were slightly more likely to say that their questioning strategies and the kind of student work they assigned had been affected by their work with coaches, though teacher reports about other aspects of their teaching were not remarkably different. By far, the most common response to each question was category 1, which indicated that teachers practice had not changed at all as a result of their interactions with coaches. As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of teachers who said they were not affected at all by their coaches ranged between 30 and 40 percent. Fairly sizeable numbers of teachers chose category 4, the middle choice in the response scale thus indicating a neutral response.
In addition to large percentages of teachers who said they either were not affected or expressed neutrality on the issue, there were also considerable percentages of teachers who chose the 3 highest response choices to these questions, suggesting that they *were* positively affected by their

work with Literacy Coaches. The percentage of teachers who appeared to have been affected ranged from about 25 to 33 percent.

Teachers' answers to these items suggest that a great deal of variation exists in teachers' experiences working with coaches. Substantial percentages say they have not been impacted at all, while similar percentages say they have been impacted. These results suggest to us that further inquiry is needed to understand why teachers have such wide ranging experiences working with coaches.

Figure 8: Teachers' Reports of Aspects of Their Teaching Affected by Working With Coaches*

* Note: These items utilized a 7 category response scale with the middle choice 4 indicating a neutral response. The leftmost choice was labeled "Not at all" and the rightmost choice was labeled "A great deal." All other categories were unlabeled. For this graph we have collapsed categories 2-3 and have labeled the new category "Minor change." We also collapsed categories 5-7 into a single category which we labeled "Substantial change."

Similar to the variation in the teacher survey results, teachers interviewed reported a wide range of responses on how the coaches impacted their practice, from no direct interaction to frequent and influential direct support. Overall, teachers appear to be getting more support in literacy and general pedagogical strategies from their coaches than indicated from the prior study. In some schools, this is a result of coaches being freed from some administrative

responsibilities or through the active encouragement of principals to be in the classroom. Some teachers were not impacted that much due to the subject matter they taught, if they were experienced teachers, if they were not open to having the coach in their classroom, or if they didn't think the coach had experience at their particular grade level or in bilingual education. Other teachers did not have much exposure to the coach in their classrooms, but most spoke of professional development led by the coach, or seeing the coaches during grade level or cohort meetings.

Teachers spoke of Literacy Coaches performing many roles, roles that were seen as important, but that can divert them from direct support of instruction. More direct classroom support would be welcomed by most teachers interviewed. However, there were some who admitted that they were hesitant or knew of other teachers who were resistant to "intrusions" in their classrooms. In order to provide more predictable support, some teachers recommended that Literacy Coaches develop a schedule for regular classroom visits to observe, model and provide feedback. Further, there was still some uncertainty among teachers about the specific role of coaches. It was recommended that the district and school principals should relate the appropriate role of coaches to teachers, rather than leaving it to the coaches to explain their roles to teachers.

Credibility of coach expertise did not appear to be a major obstacle in most schools we visited. Almost all teachers said that the coach was a credible and useful resource. There were a few concerns expressed about coaches who had primarily taught in the upper grades working with lower grades and vice versa. But this concern typically did not effect perceptions of professional development organized and/or delivered by coaches.

Finally, the interviews disclosed a number of factors that may act to mute the impact of Literacy Coaches on literacy instruction. These factors included hesitancy on the part of teachers to welcome the coaches into their classrooms, lack of knowledge to work with teachers in given content areas (especially bilingual educators) and a multitude of competing demands on coaches time (e.g., assessment coordination, attending trainings, grant administration). A number of teachers and principals expressed that the coaches were very busy, with complicated schedules that made it difficult to work directly with teachers and provide them with feedback on their classroom instruction. There was also the perception among principals and teachers that coaches had to be out of the building frequently for training, which also limited their in-school availability.

How are Curriculum Generalists carrying out their role in schools and how do their activities and related impact compare to that of Literacy Coaches?

The role of Curriculum Generalist was designed to provide more accountability to how teachers are supported, monitored, and evaluated in low performing schools identified for district interventions. These schools were referred to as "NEA focus," and in addition to increased accountability, were provided resources to assist with professional development and curriculum alignment. The Curriculum Generalist position was intended to fill both purposes. These individuals were district-hired and trained instructional administrators who would observe instruction, plan professional development based on observations and assessment data, and conduct teacher evaluations. During the first year of this intervention program, the Curriculum

Generalists were trained by the Leadership Support division and began carrying out some of the intended activities. Despite some interest among principals in the Generalists beginning to conduct teacher evaluations, the district told the Generalists to refrain from doing so during the first year.

Earlier we presented survey data that examined how staff in the 6 MPS formal leadership roles allocated their time across four leadership functions: administration, developing teachers' instructional capacity, goal setting, and monitoring (see Figure A). In that analysis we found that School Curriculum Generalists devote more time to administration than any other function. That analysis also indicated that School Curriculum Generalists devote about the same amount of time to developing teachers' instruction as Learning Coordinators and Implementers. However, they devote substantially less time to this function than Literacy Coaches.

We had very limited exposure to the Curriculum Generalist role in the NEA focus schools that were sampled for our school-level interviews. Only two of the four schools had formal Curriculum Generalists at the time of the study. One had an interim Generalist, who was also the Literacy Coach. The other school had not yet hired for the position (in May). In discussions with principals and teachers in the four schools, however, it appears that some are not clear on how the role will be carried out in their school. In one school, the principal was not certain of the intended role of the Generalist and was not in favor of the position reporting directly to the district rather than the principal. Teachers in a school that was to get a Curriculum Generalist were also not clear about the role, and wondered whether they would be losing the Literacy Coach in the transaction.

In the school with the split role, the Literacy Coach/Curriculum Generalist did spend a considerable amount of time visiting classrooms to observe teaching, model practice, and to conduct walkthroughs. These activities were in addition to analyzing student achievement data, entering formative assessment data into district reports (CABS), planning professional development, and working on the schools Education Plan. Teachers spoke of the benefit of the classroom visits to their instruction.

Program Stability

Another theme that emerged from this study related to program stability. Continuing a pattern that was discussed in the Phase 1 report, the district again changed the leadership of the Literacy Coach program during the 2006-2007 school year. This change was not completely transparent and appeared to contribute to some program instability. In particular, with the change Literacy Specialists were in charge of designing training sessions. They still vetted training designs with the former program manager to solicit her feedback and guidance, but also had to submit plans weeks early to get approval from the current program manager. In addition, specialists expressed concerns about lack of a budget for making photocopies, despite being asked to make paper versions of training material available. There was also a concern that professional development resources identified for specialists to attend regional or national conferences or training was no longer available when the program shifted to the new division. Although the specialists expressed a greater sense of cohesion and collegiality than appears to have occurred over the history of the initiative, and despite the long hours and strong

commitment they held toward the initiative, there were concerns that some in the district office did not understand or respect their role in supporting literacy instruction in the district.

On-going budget challenges have also impacted the effectiveness of the program. Budget reductions and resulting staff cuts at the school level were identified as reasons Literacy Coaches inherited a number of roles that were not specific to their official position. These roles included assessment coordination, curriculum mapping and grant compliance, substitute teaching, which were reported more often in the Phase 1 study, but were still evident in a few cases in this study. Several teachers and principals expressed concerns about losing the support from Literacy Coaches if that position were eliminated.

IV. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Overall, our findings can be summarized as follows:

How were the changes in the Literacy Coach program implemented?

- Implementation of changes occurred through tightening role definitions, management reorganization, and refocused training for Literacy Coaches. District efforts to send a strong signal to principals and Literacy Coaches about the expected roles of the Literacy Coach were largely successful. Almost all principals and coaches interviewed articulated that the district wanted the position focused on classroom support of teachers and not unrelated administrative functions farther removed from literacy instructional assistance (e.g., test coordination or student supervision).

How are coaches carrying out their role in schools? Do coaching practices differ from those observed during the Phase 1 report?

- Literacy Coaches' activities described during interviews by coaches, teachers and principals were more consistent with intended position description. One-on-one classroom interactions between coaches and teachers were more common in several schools than found last year. In some of these cases, this finding was a result of coaches being relieved of test administration duties and being encouraged by Literacy Specialists and principals to get into the classroom more frequently. However, as evident in both interview and survey responses, there was substantial variation in the amount, nature of support, and perceived impact of interactions between coaches and teachers. Further, survey results again indicate that coaches generally spend less time coaching than specified by their official time appointment.

- Literacy Coaches do focus their efforts on literacy support, but their work extends well beyond literacy instruction, including mentoring beginning teachers, curriculum planning, grant administration, and professional development on general pedagogical strategies. In some instances, coaches appear to carry out activities more akin to Implementors or Learning Coordinators. This finding is not limited to those coaches that split time with these other formal positions.

What is the quality of Literacy Coaches' own learning opportunities?

- Most coaches perceived formal district Literacy Coach Training to be improved, helpful to their practice, and more coherent with the primary district instructional strategies (i.e., Bloom's Taxonomy and Marzano's 9). Principal training also emphasized these instructional strategies and discussion of conducting walkthroughs and designing school professional development around the strategies was commonly described by coaches and principals.

- Literacy Coach training appears to have focused more on certain literacy coach responsibilities than others. Specifically, training helped coaches to focus their efforts on professional development related to literacy, curriculum alignment, and the Bloom's and Marzano strategies. However, evidence of training impact on how coaches observe, model and provide feedback on literacy instruction is less apparent. Establishing trust and gaining access to classrooms remains a persistent challenge for coaches.

- Coaches' primary interactions with specialists occur during training, or via electronic communication. One communication vehicle, the literacy logs, was seen as improved from the format last year, but still not particularly useful to most coaches interviewed. School visits by specialists typically occurred about 3-4 times per year and in some cases, coaches reported not seeing their specialist at the school.

What is the impact of the changes to the program on coaching activities and on literacy instruction?

- Teachers' answers to survey questions on the impact of their Literacy Coach on their instruction suggest that a great deal of variation exists in teachers' experiences working with coaches. Substantial percentages say they have not been impacted at all, while similar percentages say they have been impacted. Findings from school visits were consistent with the survey results. We heard a number of examples of how coaches positively affected instructional practice by working directly with teachers or through professional development provided. However, some teachers reported rarely interacting with coaches and minimal impact. Teachers reporting minimal impact indicated that it was due to limited interaction, the subject matter they taught, the extent of their teaching experience, receptivity to classroom visits and feedback, or because they did not think the coach had experience at their particular grade level or in bilingual education.

How are Curriculum Generalists carrying out their role in schools and how do their activities and impact compare to that of Literacy Coaches?

- The survey results indicated that, like Literacy Coaches, District Curriculum Generalists devote considerable time to developing instructional capacity. Unlike coaches, however, these leaders spend quite a bit of time monitoring teachers.

- The Curriculum Generalist position is still evolving. It may be too early to determine the impact of the role in schools that have access to the generalists. Survey results did suggest that District Curriculum Generalists were focusing on instructional support and monitoring instruction, both intended as primary roles. Our findings with respect to the Generalists are limited, since only two of the schools in our sample had Curriculum Generalists. In the schools, some principals looked forward to utilizing generalists for teacher evaluations. Others had concerns about the evaluation function and that the generalists will report to the district and not the principal. There is some uncertainty in schools about the expected role.

Other Findings

- There was some uncertainty among Literacy Specialists about the viability of their roles. The organizational change in leadership and oversight of the program from the Division of Teaching and Learning to Leadership Support occurred after the start of the school year. This change led to some confusion as the training agenda had been set and resources available for specialist training and for photocopying of Literacy Coach training materials was no longer available. The organizational change occurred at a time when specialists believed they were well focused and tightly coordinated with the prior program manager.

- Concerns continue to exist about the potential elimination of the Literacy Coach program. Teachers, principals, coaches, and some district leaders believed that the program could be terminated, despite their view that the program is having an impact. This impression appears to be influenced by perceptions of continual budget reductions and past experiences when other programs were unexpectedly eliminated even when some perceived that they were successful.

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations:

- Coaches could benefit from more training on effective coaching practices. In particular, these could include training and support on gaining entry to teachers' classes, establishing trust, and observation and feedback techniques.

- Literacy Specialists could also follow up with coaches to reinforce the training through more frequent observation and feedback.

- In order to free specialists to spend more time with coaches in schools, consideration might be given to reducing the number of trainings coaches are required to attend or to conducting some training during summer months, as was initially intended.

- Consideration could be given to establishing more concrete ways to support and hold schools accountable for coaching activities, including providing principals with training on effective uses of coaches during their professional development sessions, and making

more explicit in the principal evaluation process the intended use of Literacy Coaches in schools.

- The aligning of human resource practices in support for the coaching role could be strengthened, particularly relating to performance evaluation, feedback and compensation. Literacy Coaches are evaluated based on the teacher evaluation instrument, which is of limited relevance to their role and potential contributions. Similarly, performance evaluation and feedback provided to Literacy Specialists does not appear to strategically align to their roles and potential contribution. Although specialists receive a slight pay adjustment for their duties, Literacy Coaches remain on the same pay schedule as classroom teachers, despite reporting long hours and expanded work responsibilities. As suggested last year, the district could work to develop a differentiated pay plan commensurate with the role coaches play and assess whether the pay add-on provided to specialists is adequate for their role.

- Future studies of the impact of literacy support provided to schools should examine more closely classroom instructional practices. Such a study could provide richer detail of literacy instructional change, and help validate general district instructional guidance, including Blooms', Marzano's 9 and the CHPUC.

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Appendix A: Executive Summary of May 2006 Phase 1 Report

In November of 2005, the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Division of Assessment and Accountability asked the Value Added Research Center at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research to conduct a study of the Literacy Coach initiative.

Based on the literature on literacy coaching and the structure of the MPS program, we conceptualized the Literacy Coach initiative as a two-stage intervention. Literacy Specialists train and support Literacy Coaches who in turn train and support teachers. Literacy Specialists are resources for the Coaches, and the Coaches are resources for teachers. In this model, the interactions between Literacy Specialists and Coaches and between Coaches and teachers are likely to be the primary mechanisms for program effects to propagate.

The first phase of the study was conducted during the period of December 2005 to February 2006. The three major research questions guiding the study were:

1. How has the initiative been implemented?
2. What is its impact on teachers?
3. What is its impact on student achievement in reading/language arts?

The first two questions are the major foci of this report. They were addressed using a mixture of techniques, including interviews with Literacy Specialists, Literacy Coaches, teachers, principals, program managers, and participants in program design.

We believe that the information we collected during this study implies the following conclusions.

1. Literacy Coaches function as key members of school Learning Teams and help to focus administrators and teachers on literacy. As well as being the 'go to' people in the school for literacy, they are also key links with the District office on literacy matters.

2. Overall, there is less emphasis on Coaches doing one-on-coaching with teachers aimed at instructional improvement than the original design seems to have envisioned, and less than portrayed in the Literacy Coaching literature. It would appear that, over time, the role of the Literacy Coach has been shifting away from direct coaching interactions with teachers toward more time and effort spent in quasi-administrative activities.

3. Coaches appear to have the support of leaders and teachers at their schools, have positive attitudes toward the Comprehensive Literacy Framework, and understand the expectations of the initiative.

4. While many Coaches do not appear to be literacy experts, they appear to be credible to teachers, they seem to have the skills they need for their coordinative and administrative responsibilities. However, new Coaches may need additional introductory training, as was provided in the initial year of the initiative.

5. Factors such as Specialist turnover, the fewer number of Specialist and high school/Specialist ratio, and increased emphasis on using the Specialists to communicate District-level priorities have limited the scope for one-on-one interaction between Coaches and Specialists around literacy instructional practices. The transition of Specialists to a more coordinative role parallels the evolution of the Coach role within the schools.

6. Coaches' impact on instruction is on average not likely to be deep. There is not, in most schools, the emphasis on the kind of intensive one-on-one or small group coaching that research on teaching practice improvement suggests is needed to make major changes in how teachers teach.

   Based on our results, we believe the district should consider the following questions:

1. To what extent should Coaches be providers of embedded professional development rather than coordinators and facilitators of literacy programs in schools?

2. How much flexibility in the use of the Coach positions should schools be allowed? A high flexibility approach provides the ability to use the Coaches as needed for local priorities, but it appears to facilitate using Coaches in ways not intended by the original program design or the literature on coaching.

3. Should schools and especially principals be held accountable for how coaches are used? Currently, there is no specific accountability for how Coaches are used, which in turn contributes to Coaches taking on coordinative or administrative roles.

4. What activities would be most valuable for Literacy Specialists to undertake that could help Literacy Coaches improve literacy instruction within their schools? Should the primary emphasis be providing expertise to Coaches on literacy instructional practice or being a conduit for communication between District and schools?

5. What level of staffing and professional development is most appropriate for the Literacy Specialists? If the District decides to use Specialists more as literacy experts, it might want to provide them with more professional development resources and resolve issues around the "underfilling" of these positions.

6. How can the human resource management system be aligned to help support coaching? Modifications to performance evaluation, selection, and pay for Coaches and Specialists should be considered. For example, it is not clear how Coaches are now held accountable for their responsibilities. They are evaluated using the general teacher evaluation system, which appears largely irrelevant to specific Coaching duties. The recently introduced Literacy Logs provide a potential accountability mechanism, but they provide information to District office staff rather than principals, who are the Coaches' direct supervisors.

7. Would it be useful to look across all of the coaching initiatives in operation, including the Math Lead Teacher and Principal Coach programs to identify the conditions under which effective coaching is most likely to occur, and allow the cross fertilization of best practices between programs?

Appendix B: Text of Memo to principals/school leaders from Chief Academic Officer

Milwaukee Public Schools
Office of Academic Excellence

September 7, 2006

To: Principals/School Leaders

From: Aquine Jackson, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer

Re: Expectations of the Literacy Coaches

During May 2006 the Wisconsin Center for Education Research released a report; *Study of Literacy Coach Initiative, Phase 1 Report.* The report was included in the packet distributed during the informational sessions for principals/school leaders on August 21, 2006. As a result of feedback and findings from this study, the role of the Literacy Coach needs to be focused and targeted toward direct classroom support to realize stronger improvements in teaching and learning. The study states:

"Overall, there is less emphasis on Coaches doing one-on-coaching than the original design seems to have envisioned, and less than portrayed in the Literacy Coaching literature. It would appear that, over time, the role of the Literacy Coach has been shifting away from direct coaching interactions with teachers…"

According to the report, the two most frequent tasks with which Literacy Coaches were engaged were completing routine paperwork and monitoring public spaces. Distributing materials was the activity the Coaches worked on most frequently with teachers. The report also indicated that numerous Literacy Coaches are occupied with administrative / organizational matters that do not directly result in significant gains in student literacy. The report defined literacy coaching as an intervention aimed at improving the instructional capacity of content teachers, so that they can provide better literacy instruction for all students.

According to the literature, Literacy Coaches are most effective when they perform the following activities: visit classrooms when literacy lessons are taking place and provide suggestions, model lessons in teachers' classrooms, and coach teachers one-on-one or in small groups. The role may also include reviewing assessment data, helping teachers interpret assessment scores, presenting workshops on aspects of literacy instruction, and helping create literacy plans for schools.

Please review the attached sheet for clarification of the expectations of the Literacy Coach. Questions and comments may be addressed during the 2006-2007 School Year Meeting for Principals / School Leaders and Literacy Coaches / Leaders scheduled September 18 or 21st (select one) per the Administrators' Bulletin.

Have a productive and rewarding year. Thank you for your cooperation.

Attachment
c. Literacy Coaches Arleen Dansby
Literacy Specialists Dorothy St. Charles
Patti Ball Kathy Williams

Expectations Regarding the Literacy Coach Role

The Literacy Coach will provide direct support to classroom teachers through:

- Demonstration and collaborative teaching
- Classroom modeling
- Small group (such as grade level or content area groups) and /or one-on-one coaching
- Classroom visits and embedded professional development; providing feedback and suggestions to classroom teachers

In addition, the Literacy Coach:
- Collaborates with the Literacy Specialist to provide consistent support and direction to the school professional learning community from a district instructional support perspective
- Reviews assessment data, helps teachers interpret assessment scores, presents workshops on aspects of literacy instruction, and helps with implementation of instructional strategies for literacy identified in the schools' Educational Plan
- Member of the Learning Team

Principals:
- Direct supervisor of the Literacy Coach, and responsible for appropriate utilization of the Literacy Coach
- Review the Literacy Coach's bi-weekly (every two weeks) literacy log
- Communicates as needed required activities congruent with the Role Expectations for the Literacy Coach
- Reviews on a weekly basis evidence of implementation of targeted instructional strategies with the Literacy Coach and/or Learning Team

Please use this reference for the clarification of expectations for the Literacy Coach role. This clarification does not replace the job description for the Literacy Coach.

Appendix C: Scales and Survey Items on School Leadership Roles

Scale	Items
Administration	During the current school year, how often did you… a. Monitor public spaces, such as the cafeteria, hallways, playgrounds, etc. b. Work with students and their parents on discipline/attendance issues c. Complete routine paperwork (such as reports and record keeping) d. Assist with the administration of special education (for example, working with IEPs)
Developing instructional capacity	During the current school year, how often did you… a. Demonstrate instructional practices and/or the use of curricular materials in a classroom b. Observe a teacher teach c. Informally discuss ideas about teaching with a teacher d. Examine and discuss what students were working on during a teacher's lesson e. Personally provide staff development f. Troubleshoot or support the implementation of school improvement efforts
Goal setting	During the current school year, how often did you… a. Frame and communicate broad goals for school improvement b. Examine the school's overall progress toward its school improvement goals c. Set explicit timelines for instructional improvement d. Clarify expectations or standards for students' academic performance
Monitoring	During the current school year how often did you… a. Monitor the curriculum used in classrooms to see that it reflects the school's improvement efforts b. Monitor classroom instructional practices to see that they reflect the school's improvement efforts

Appendix D: Proposed Year 3 Research

It is our impression that the research performed during the first two years of the Literacy Study has been effective at providing the district with a *general* picture of efforts to improve literacy instruction, but in many ways this research has merely scratched the surface. In contemplating potential directions for year 3 research, we came to believe that the district might benefit from more in depth research on instructional improvement. Research that begins with teachers, who are the primary agents of change, and then maps backwards and attempts to paint a portrait of the different factors that affect teachers' efforts to change their practice, might give the district a more valid picture of how district initiatives like Literacy Coaches, are supporting instructional improvement.

Focus and Purposes of the Proposed Research

Building on two years of evaluation work in MPS that have attempted to shed light on the Literacy Coach Initiative, we propose a third year of research that would take an in-depth look at the factors that support and constrain teachers' adoption of literacy instruction practices that are aligned with MPS instructional priorities. These priorities are expressed in three different frameworks: 1) the district's Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom (CHPUC), 2) Robert Marzano's 9 essential instructional strategies, and 3) the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

The third year of research described below would allow us to gain a better understanding of: 1) how district resources such as Literacy Coaches support teachers' adoption of practices that are aligned with district priorities; 2) what other factors constrain and support teachers' adoption of such practices; 3) the validity of evidence currently used by MPS to evaluate instructional quality and improvement, including CHPUC indicators from the instructional practice survey and data from instructional walkthroughs; 4) the impact of school practices reflective of CHPUC on student achievement, and the impact of Literacy Coaching on student achievement.

Study Design

The study would employ mixed methods, but would be primarily qualitative. We propose to use an extreme case sampling approach to select 3 schools in which there appears to be considerable activity focused on the improvement of literacy instruction, and 3 schools in which there is very little activity focused on the improvement of literacy instruction. Case selection would be based on an examination of a wide range of survey indicators measuring among other things: 1) the prevalence of CHPUC practices, 2) the degree of direct coaching performed by the school's literacy coach, 3) the degree to which teachers have been impacted by the literacy coach, 4) instructional leadership, and 5) the prevalence of positive working relationships among leadership staff in the school.

Within each school, several classrooms would be sampled for a number of observations using classroom observation protocols tested in other studies. One of the primary purposes of these observations would be to document the degree to which teachers' practices reflect CHPUC,

"Marzano's 9", and Bloom's Taxonomy. A second purpose of the observation data would be to serve as the subject of follow-up interviews where interviewers probe factors that affected: 1) teachers' choices of instructional strategy (e.g. professional development, work with coach), 2) teachers' goals in using various strategies (as a check against observers' interpretation of instructional purposes), and 3) teachers' descriptions of how instruction that was observed reflects teachers' efforts to change their instruction. In addition to periodic follow-up interviews with teachers, we also propose to interview principals and other school instructional leaders in order to gather evidence that is independent of the classroom teachers on factors in the school that might impact teachers' efforts to change their instruction.

We also propose to use data from the 6 schools to validate data currently used by the district to evaluate instructional improvement – the CHPUC indicators from the IPS and data from "walkthroughs." The observation and interview data described above will provide rich evidence of the extent to which the instructional strategies used by teachers reflect district instructional priorities as reflected in the CHPUC, Marzano's 9, and Bloom's Taxonomy. As discussed above, survey data will be used to select extreme school cases. The qualitative data should provide solid evidence of whether the survey data are providing valid characterizations of practice in the sample schools.

We also propose to conduct interviews with teachers, principals and instructional leaders, but not the classroom observations, in four additional schools. These additional schools would provide additional evidence to validate the IPS and CHPUC walkthroughs.

Finally, as part of the third year effort, we propose to continue to explore the impact of school-level practices and processes related to literacy instruction on student achievement. VARC researchers are currently modeling the effect of indicators taken from the 2006 IPS and Literacy Coach surveys on student achievement. Year 3 of the Literacy Study would involve similar kinds of analyses using survey data from 2007.