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Determining Support Needed for Implementation of the Balanced Literacy Framework in High School English Classrooms

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Determining Support Needed for Implementation of the Balanced Literacy Framework in
High School English Classrooms

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Language and Literacy

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2019

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Dedication

For my daughters Camden, Maci, and Dottie Rose.

"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop."

~Confucius

Abstract

This study used Action Research methods to explore how an English Language Arts Coordinator housed at the district office could employ an administrative model of coaching. The purpose of this study was to discover what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices and what support teachers need in order to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction. Teachers engaged in this study over the course of one semester. Semesters in this context encompass an entire course of English literature. Cycles of coaching were initiated that began with a pre-conference followed by observation, modeling, or co-teaching and ended with a post-conference to set goals and action steps for the next cycle. Findings add to the growing body of research on literacy coaching and teacher change. Implications for educational practice and research are explored.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My Journey in Education

I am the English Language Arts (ELA) Coordinator for my school district. I love helping children discover their voice as writers, and I love supporting teachers in turning their classrooms into reading and writing workshops. I have a secret. I never wanted to be a teacher. My story is not the typical one of the little girl who played school with her baby dolls. I never yearned for my own classroom. I despised our elementary school librarian. One of my earliest memories is of her reprimanding me about trying to secure a spot to read in the prized castle during library time. After that, I created my own book nook in my room at home and avoided the school library as much as possible.

I was indifferent about classroom literacy experiences as well. I was deemed a good reader, so I was never selected to read with Ma and Pa, our special guest readers each week in second grade. My indifference grew as I aged. I began to associate school reading with completing worksheets and vocabulary workbook pages. If it had not been for the gifted and talented program, I may have never experienced the learning that led me to teach.

My desire to learn was fed each week when I attended the day-long gifted program at the local high school. Units were arranged around a theme, and we were responsible for pre-assessing and post-assessing our success through our portfolios. I learned how to research a topic of my choice, write a research paper, and design a product to demonstrate my own learning. We engaged in field study experiences

where we dug for fossils, participated an architecture design lab at a local university, interviewed an astronaut, and produced our own film strips. In eighth grade, I was placed in the honors English 1 class taught by one of my former gifted and talented teachers where this style of learning continued. I enjoyed these experiences, but I still never envisioned myself as a teacher.

I began to toy with the idea of becoming a teacher after college when I taught creative writing to elementary school children in a pre-college summer camp. While I admittedly did not know much about teaching, I knew what types of learning experiences I valued as a student. I modeled my work with the children after the learning experiences I enjoyed as a child. After a short, focused lesson on a particular writing topic, children had extended time to write independently. The youngest writers and I collaborated on stories and poems on large sheets of chart paper before they began their independent time to write and draw. I conferred with writers daily by asking the children questions about their writing and coaching them in discovering ways to make their stories come alive. The children evaluated their own writing and chose their best pieces to display on parent visitation day. I had no idea what pedagogical approach I was using. I merely knew it felt right, and I enjoyed teaching.

A spark was ignited that summer. I returned to graduate school with new energy and soon became a high school English teacher. My eagerness to teach faded as quickly as it had been ignited. By my third year, I was ready to quit. I began to conform to the way others taught. I began to think the way I desired to teach was wrong because it was not the norm. I was frustrated with the system, and most of my students had disengaged with learning long before they entered my tenth grade English

classroom. I may have quit teaching had it not been for a grant to train high school teachers as literacy coaches.

Attending the professional learning sessions each month rekindled my love of teaching. This experience also equipped me with research to support the use of student-centered literacy practices that I had been trying to cling to alone in my own classroom. I continued to teach English courses during the first two years of literacy coach training. This allowed me to apply the theories to my teaching. The monthly professional learning sessions provided me a space to come together with others across the state who were applying the same literacy practices in their classrooms. Our shared struggles and triumphs fueled interest in uncovering my own teaching beliefs and examining how I chose to enact them within my classroom. As a literacy coach, I was able to facilitate similar spaces for professional learning and growth within my school. Slowly, teaching and learning at our school began to change.

My professional aspirations led me to an administrative position in a new district where English teaching looked more like the traditional classrooms I had left behind earlier in my career. As the district ELA Coordinator, I have the privilege of designing the district's ELA Curriculum Framework, purchasing literacy resources, and coordinating professional development for reading coaches, reading interventionists, and literacy teachers. One of the aspects of my administrative position is to support kindergarten through high school teachers using my background as a literacy coach. Because of my work with teachers, I am interested in exploring what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school teachers' beliefs and practices. This study seeks to discover how this type of professional development supports teachers as

they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework. The specific research questions are:

1. How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?

2. In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?

3. What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?

Statement of the Problem

In the wake of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its newest replacement—the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), high stakes testing has taken on an ominous presence in the lives of students and teachers (Guthrie, 2002). Teachers are spending an inordinate amount of time on test preparation which has a paradoxical effect on test scores (Guthrie, 2002). Students are spending less time in English language arts classes actually reading and writing when research suggests a clear relationship between reading volume and reading comprehension (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; National Endowment for the Arts [NEA], 2007). The social, emotional, and political pressures on teachers and administrators brought about by high-stakes testing can cause curriculum to be narrowed (Guthrie, 2002). This narrowing of curriculum and increased focus on test preparation creates a learning environment for students that limits creativity, ingenuity, and critical thinking (Guthrie, 2002).

We are losing our children. Students who struggle with school literacies become more disengaged in academics as instructional methods in secondary schools become increasingly teacher-centered (Eccles, Lord, Midgley, 1991; Alvermann,

2004). I saw this as an English teacher, and I see this in the schools I serve as an district administrator today. Students with the lowest reading achievement scores are dropping out at an ever-increasing pace (NEA, 2007). This problem is not a school-bounded issue. Many students leaving high school are unprepared for the demands of the modern labor market (Deil-Amen & DeLuca, 2010). Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Palma (2009) found that students who dropout of high school are 63 percent more likely to become incarcerated or institutionalized than their peers with four-year college degrees. In addition, 37 percent of high school dropouts were found to be living in a state of poverty or near poverty (Sum et al., 2009).

We are losing our teachers. In a recent report on teacher attrition, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found "about 90 percent of the nationwide annual demand for teachers is created when teachers leave the profession, with two-thirds of teachers leaving for reasons other than retirement" (p. v). This shows a phenomenon exists driving teachers from the profession. Studies have suggested that administrative support is a key factor in teachers' decisions to remain in the profession (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2011; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Unsupportive administrators who focus too narrowly on testing and accountability measures and less on professional collaboration and respect contribute to teachers' dissatisfaction with the educational profession. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that turnover rates are much higher in Title I schools that serve children of color in the South. These findings demonstrate a need to address teachers' dissatisfaction through supportive administration and professional collaboration in order to increase teacher retention in our most needy schools.

As an administrator in a high-poverty district, I see the devastating effects these phenomena have had on schools and students. Government-mandated labels such as "comprehensive support and improvement schools" and "priority schools" have been placed on educational institutions while common educational labels such as "struggling reader" and "at-risk" have been placed on entire groups of students. These labels position both the schools, teachers, and students in a deficit manner. Nieto (2010) reminds educators to be wary of deficit theories in education that view students' homes and families as the source of children's failure "rather than looking in a more systematic way at the role played by the schools in which they learn and by the society at large" (p. 49). Examining the role teachers and administrators play in creating a space for student-centered literacy learning is a central focus of this study.

This study aims to add to the growing body of research on professional collaboration and student-centered instructional practices in high-poverty schools. Specifically, this study seeks to explore what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices when preparing to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction. I am personally and professionally invested in exploring this topic within my school district. Claremont School District (pseudonym) has undergone a tumultuous consolidation process resulting in four superintendent changes over eight years. The three high schools from which participants hail have had three principal changes as well. These factors coupled with high-poverty rates and historically low standardized test scores, make this research essential in understanding how to best support high school English teachers with whom I work.

Considering Balanced Literacy Instruction

CSD is a district in perpetual transition. Beginning with consolidation and continuing through the rotating administrative changes at the district and school levels, high school teachers have held fast to traditional teaching methods even though the state legislature mandates student-centered literacy practices through legislation and State Department of Education guidance. This legislation requires all secondary teachers to complete a course in content-area literacy in order to renew their certificate. At the elementary level, teachers must complete additional coursework on reading theory, practices, and assessment. The literacy competencies, mandated by this legislation, support use of the balanced literacy framework in all grades.

Balanced literacy is an instructional approach that builds upon the reciprocal nature of reading and writing and emphasizes the importance of students' full engagement in the meaning-making process (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Students engage in reading, writing, and communication around integrated themes that support the use of these processes in authentic contexts. Teachers provide flexible levels of support as they work with students in individual, small-group, and whole-group settings. The goal is to assist students in developing a self-extending system whereby they can process literacy in increasingly complex ways (Clay, 2001). Reading and writing workshop are used to foster students' reading comprehension, writing, language use, research skills, independence, and collaboration within a community of learners which promotes students' ownership of literacy processes and practices (Au et al., 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Au et al. (2001) explain that balanced literacy instruction is comprised of a framework for curriculum development that places reading comprehension at the center of reading workshop and the writing process as the focus for writing workshop. Within these coequal curricular constructs, teachers strategically focus their instruction on the skills and strategies proficient readers and writers use. Language and vocabulary knowledge, word reading and spelling strategies, and independent reading and writing are all nourished and developed within both reading and writing workshops (Au et al., 2001). Literacy learning within this framework occurs both directly and indirectly. Teachers use modeling and guided practice during direct instruction in both whole-group and small-group settings to introduce, develop, and apply a particular skill or strategy. Students continue to apply the strategy or skill through authentic engagements with reading and writing. Learning is not linear. Teachers continue to revisit essential strategies and skills and scaffold students' learning based on their ongoing assessment of students' instructional needs. Students come to understand the reciprocity of skills needed to become adept readers and writers through the production of and interaction with authentic texts. While this model of balanced literacy provides a general construct for understanding how English language arts classes can be structured, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) provide a more detailed model for teachers to address how learning takes place within each portion of the framework.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) promote a three-block framework for literacy learning which serves as the basis for structuring curriculum experiences. Language and word study, reading workshop, and writing workshop comprise the individual components of the three-block framework; however, these constructs serve to unite the overall idea that

reading and writing are meaning-making processes. The components of this framework are fluid as literacy activity in the classroom incorporates its components throughout the day. Students use language as a vehicle for their learning. Through systematic use of the framework components, teachers extend students' use of language. While this model is more commonly used in early childhood and elementary classrooms, extending the terminology of the balanced literacy framework to high school classrooms may have the power to transform secondary students' literacy learning. Figure 1.1 defines the components of Fountas and Pinnell's (2001) literacy framework and essential instructional terminology.

Term	Definition
Reading Workshop	The reading workshop is a teaching method in which the goal is to help students improve reading and comprehension through the purposeful use of strategy instruction along with time for independent reading of choice texts, minilessons, small group instruction, and meaningful conversation around texts. The workshop model allows teachers to differentiate and meet the needs of all students. Reading workshop helps students develop a love of reading and gives students chances to practice reading strategies independently and with guidance.
Interactive Read Aloud	The teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small groups, stopping at a few points to invite comments and questions to strengthen comprehension skills and strategies. A carefully selected body of literature is used that connects to the unit theme or writing genre under study; the collection contains a variety of genres and represents our diverse society. The teacher often groups texts in "text sets" to be read across several days or throughout the course of the unit. Classic, contemporary, and children's literature can be used for various instructional purposes. This instructional strategy is generally used to build anticipation for a text, connect to larger theme, or analyze a key feature of a text. In secondary classrooms, interactive read alouds are used within the minilesson, mid-workshop teaching point, or sharing portions of instructional time.

Shared Reading	The teacher involves students in reading together using an enlarged text, portion of a text, or multiple copies of a text. The purpose of this instructional strategy is similar to the interactive read aloud. Shared reading can occur as part of a minilesson, mid-workshop teaching point, or sharing portion of the instructional time for the purpose of illustrating a key text feature, language concept, or building readers decoding skills. The process includes: ● Rereading novel excerpts, poems, songs, articles, short fiction ● Rereading retellings ● Rereading the products of interactive writing
Guided Reading	The teacher works with a small group of students who have similar reading processes. The teacher selects and introduces parts of whole texts, poems, or short articles and support students reading the selected section of the text to themselves (Round Robin reading is never used), making teaching points during and after the reading. The teacher engages the children in extension activities to further their comprehension which include vocabulary and writing. The groups are dynamic and change based on the instructional needs of the students. Texts on students' instructional reading level are used in this setting.
Literature Circles or Book Clubs	The teacher or students select the reading material. Students may read the same book or books with similar themes. The groups are small, temporary, and heterogeneous. Group meetings are scheduled and reading tasks or roles are sometimes assigned either by the teacher or group members. Students read the selected text independently and prepare for group meetings often through annotations or double-entry journals. Students meet several times to discuss the same book. Discussion often leads to further reading, writing, or projects for sharing. The teacher sometimes demonstrates, clarifies, gives information, or guides, showing ways of thinking about or responding to a text.

Independent Reading	Students read on their own or with partners from a wide range of materials on their independent reading level. The children have been taught how to choose books they can read with understanding and fluency without teacher support. Often students are engaged in reading novels for literature study/book clubs. The teacher gradually increases the amount of class time students read independently until they can engage in independent reading for sustained periods of time. The teacher uses data collection tools such as the Serravallo Engagement Inventory to gage students' progress and instructional needs.
Anchor Text	A picture book, novel, part of a novel, biography, informational text, short story, myth, or article that relates to the unit's genre and/or theme. An anchor text is used to teach a strategy or concept that can be referred to later to help students access their schemas, make connections, and transfer learning to new situations.
Writing Workshop	Students engage in writing a variety of texts. The teacher provides instruction through minilessons, conferences, and shared sessions, often using mentor texts to help the writers learn from effective writers.
Shared Writing	The teacher and students work together to compose parts of essays and stories; the teacher supports this process as scribe. This component is used during the minilesson to illustrate a writing concept or skill.
Interactive Writing	As in shared writing, the teacher and children compose parts of essays and stories that are written using a "shared pen" technique that involves students in the writing. This component is another option for writing-focused minilessons to illustrate a concept or skill.
Guided Writing	At times during writing workshop, the teacher pulls a small group of children with similar instructional needs to provide a guided writing lesson. This lesson encompasses a similar structure of a focused minilesson followed by guided application, individual application, and share.

Independent Writing	Students write their own narrative, argument, and explanatory pieces. The teacher gradually increases the time students spend writing independently until students can engage in independent writing for a sustained period of time. As students compose and revise their drafts during independent writing, the teacher instructs small groups or individual writers. Writing conferences also take place as needed during this time.
Vocabulary and Word Analysis	Teachers provide minilessons to help students learn more about how words work. Through direct vocabulary instruction, "teachers employ a variety of techniques to ensure that students have repeated exposure to words and to present opportunities for students to make connections between words and concepts" (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, p. 376). Differentiated vocabulary and word analysis minilessons can also be incorporated in guided reading lessons and literature study.
Minilesson	A short, focused lesson in reading, writing, or vocabulary that provides assistance to students. Topics most often emerge from what the teacher has noticed a majority of the students need to learn. Teachers use formative assessments such as informal observations, anecdotal notes, and students' writing to decide which minilesson will be most beneficial for their students at a particular point in a unit. Topics for minilessons can be categorized as procedural, strategy/skill, or craft.

Figure 1.1 Definitions of Balanced Literacy Terms

CSD uses an English language arts curriculum framework that promotes the implementation of balanced literacy instruction through curriculum units dedicated to reading workshop and curriculum units dedicated to writing workshop. CSD's framework for secondary English teachers incorporates the general idea of Au et al. (2001) by dedicating coequal time to reading workshop and writing workshop while using the Fountas and Pinnell (2001) terminology for the instructional components found within each workshop setting. Figure 1.2 shows a conceptual design for balanced literacy as it is used in CSD.
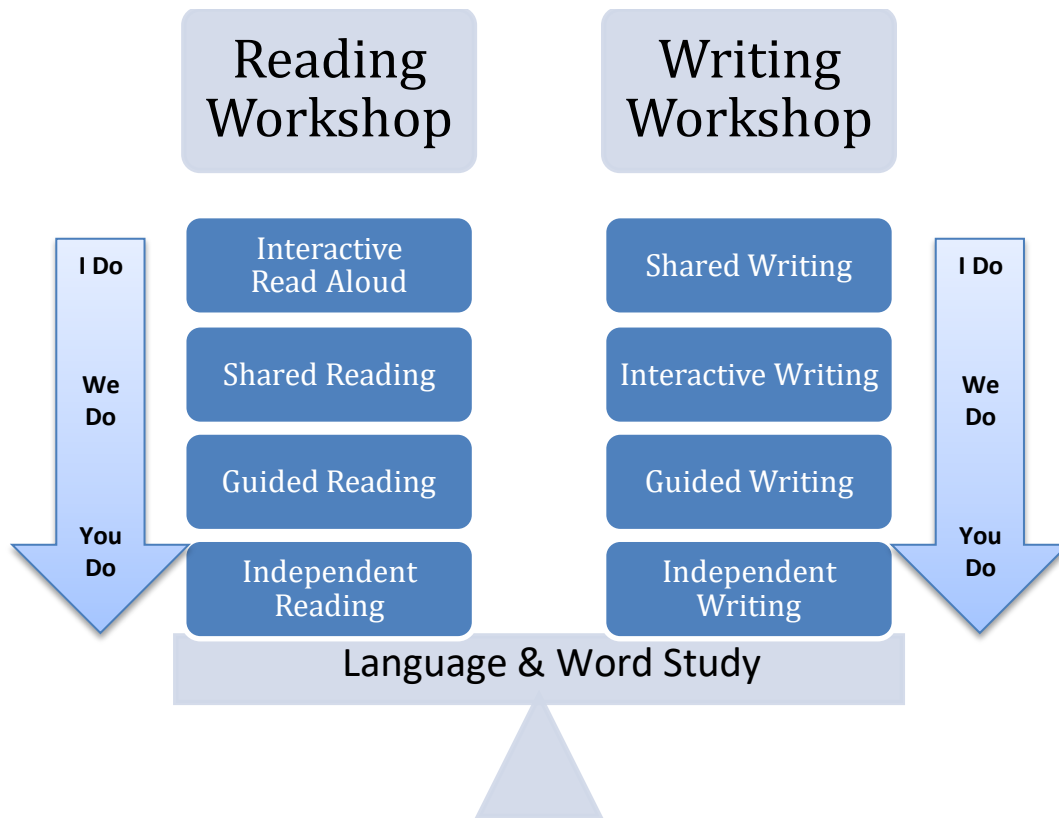
Figure 1.2 Conceptual design of balanced literacy framework

Documents explaining the framework and its related terminology are readily available for teacher use in the district's ELA Curriculum Framework document. Curriculum guides are also provided to support the implementation of the balanced literacy framework within secondary English classrooms. District-wide professional development is another vehicle for support; however, ongoing, job-embedded site-based literacy coaching is not. This study aims to bring aspects of the coaching model to secondary teachers through administrative use of the coaching model to support implementation of balanced literacy instruction.

Considering Literacy Coaching

A few secondary English teachers in CSD experienced school-based literacy coaching during the state department funded high school literacy coaching program.

While those who participated in the program refer to it fondly, the program ended before consolidation and was not funded during subsequent administrative changes. My role is currently defined as one of support for teachers; however, I entered CSD when district administrators were used to evaluate teacher effectiveness using a district-owned evaluation instrument. Support for teachers was given through written feedback on the scores administrators provided. Additional support was given through district-wide professional development sessions held three times per year. After the first superintendent change, my role as district ELA coordinator took on some qualities of the coaching model as I worked closely with teachers who principals determined needed instructional support.

The International Literacy Association [ILA], formerly International Reading Association [IRA], has developed standards for middle and high school literacy coaches. This document envisions "the role of secondary school literacy coaches as master teachers who provide essential leadership for the school's overall literacy program" (IRA, 2006, p. 7). This document describes coaching in secondary schools as a way to bring about institutional change through focusing on the disciplinary literacy practices needed in reading, writing, and communication within content areas. This focus has implications to change both teachers' instructional practices and as a result student learning outcomes. This study is grounded in the standards developed for middle and high school literacy coaches. While my position is not one of site-based support, one of my duties is providing support to teachers using a coaching model. This study not only examines how literacy coaching affects high school English teachers' instructional practices but also explores what coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices.

Considering Teacher Beliefs and Practices

Much research has been conducted linking teacher beliefs and classroom practice (Deford, 1985; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Llyod, 1991; Burns, 1992; Zheng, 2013). Deford (1985) confirms a positive relationship between observed classroom practices and teachers' theoretical orientation to reading instruction within elementary classrooms. Similarly, Burns (1992) contends that teachers' personalized theories about how to teach and how students learn underlie their classroom practices and often remain hidden and implicit. Zheng (2013) explains teachers' beliefs and practices are complexly intertwined with teaching conditions and are subject to variations based on context. These studies show the complex nature of unraveling the links between teaching practice and teaching beliefs. This study attempts to explore the links between observed practice and stated beliefs through coaching conversations with participants.

Research supports eliciting teachers to verbalize their beliefs in order to examine how these beliefs influence classroom practice (Richardson et al., 1991; Burns, 1992). Richardson et al. (1991) explain, "staff development programs should weave three forms of knowledge together: teachers' background theories, beliefs and understandings of the teaching and reading process; theoretical frameworks and empirical premises as derived from current research; and alternative practices that instantiate both teachers' beliefs and research knowledge" (p. 579). Without a clear focus in professional development on how beliefs and practices are interconnected, teachers' application of new teaching practices may be ineffectual or ineffective. Coaching conversations allow that space for reflection where teachers' can explore how their beliefs about balanced literacy instruction are reflected in their curricular design and implementation.

Purpose of this Study

This study holds promise in exploring what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and classroom practices as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy model of instruction. This study adds to the emerging body of research on secondary literacy coaching and implementation of balanced literacy instruction in high school English classrooms. This study also serves both personal and professional interests as I hope to discover ways in which I can effectively support high school teachers in CSD. The specific research questions guiding this study are:

1. How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?

2. In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?

3. What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?

If we are to avoid the reactive response low test scores have on secondary English classrooms in high-poverty schools, we must find avenues to provide the administrative support teachers' need to implement authentic, student-centered literacy instruction by means of the balanced literacy framework. We must also explore the complex interplay between teacher beliefs and observed classroom practice.

The purpose of this study is to discover what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices. As I interacted with teachers over the course of one semester, they had opportunities to grow their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge through coaching conversations and increased

literacy coaching support. It is important to note that this study is constrained to the

unique context in which the research conducted and is not meant to be generalized.

However, it may provide insight into ways in which district-level administrators can

support teachers as they transition to the balanced literacy framework in high-poverty

high schools.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Review of Relevant Literature

The theoretical framework grounding this study is rooted in my belief of the personal and social nature of learning. These beliefs are informed by the following conceptual statements: reading and writing are transactional processes (Rosenblatt, 1995); motivation for learning is person-centered (Knowles, 1984; Rogers, 1969); and learning occurs through social interaction (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). In the following sections, I will describe each concept and explain how they interact to create space for professional growth and application of student-centered instructional practices.

Theoretical Frame

Reading and writing are transactional processes. Rosenblatt (1995) explains, "there is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers or the potential millions of individual literary works. A novel or a poem or a play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols" (p. 24). The transactional theory of reading positions the reader as an active participant in creating meaning with a text. Rosenblatt (1995) contends that readers bring a history of prior experiences to texts that influences the way they interpret the author's words on the page. Readers' personal connections, feelings, memories, and prior knowledge create this reciprocal relationship. Meaning is created through a reader's interaction with the author's written word.

This interplay between readers and texts cannot be overlooked in planning for literacy instruction. Balanced literacy instruction creates a space where students can live

the lives of readers and writers. By providing these lived-though experiences for students, teachers demonstrate that reading and writing are active processes that place meaning at the heart of literacy.

In traditional approaches to literacy instruction, the efferent stance often takes dominance over the aesthetic (Probst, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1995). Rosenblatt (1995) describes the stance the reader takes toward a text as lying on a continuum between efferent and aesthetic. In the efferent stance, readers are focused on the information found within the text. In the aesthetic stance, readers experience a personal relationship with the text that leads to analysis. Rosenblatt (1995) explains, "teachers frequently approach a book or poem as though it were a neatly labeled bundle of literary values to be pointed out to the student" (p. 56). In preference of the efferent stance, teachers using a traditional approach to reading instruction focus students' attention on the inner workings and meaning of texts often sacrificing the aesthetic experience for the efferent.

After years of experiencing this approach to the study of literature, many high school students associate school reading with merely obtaining correct answers decided upon by the teacher or textbook company. They begin to see themselves as outsiders to the world of literary criticism. Readers' stance in this case is influenced by the perceived purpose of literacy instruction. Drawing on the work of Rosenblatt, Probst (2004) challenges this notion stating, "literature isn't the private domain of an intellectual elite. It is instead the reservoir of all humankind's concerns" (p. 34). When teachers embrace the transactional nature of reading, writing within the secondary classroom becomes a transactional experience as well.

Rosenblatt (1989) describes the writing process as a transactional experience drawing upon the personal, social, and cultural environment. Like the reading process, the subjectivity of the individual within the writing process cannot be ignored. Stance becomes a critical factor for writers. Rosenblatt (1989) explains:

> a major aspect of the delimitation of purpose in writing is the adoption of a stance that falls at some point in the efferent-aesthetic continuum. This will affect how much of public and private aspects of sense in the linguistic/experiential reservoir will be included in the scope of the writer's attention and hence determine the attitude toward the subject (p.8).

Writers must consider not only what message they wish to convey but also how that message is communicated to and received by potential readers. Rosenblatt (1989) describes these considerations as authorial reading. Teachers who understand the transactional process of reading and writing create opportunities in the classroom for this type of learning to exist and in doing so demonstrate the reciprocal nature of reading and writing as meaning-making experiences.

Motivation for learning is person-centered. Learners' desire to understand for personal growth and development is a key concept underlying this proposed study (Knowles, 1984; Rogers, 1969). This stance not only acknowledges that adult learners thrive when learning is experiential but students also greatly benefit from this approach as well. Rogers (1969) and Knowles (1984) are key theorists from the humanistic psychological tradition that have made impacts on learning theory. Their work emphasizes learning as an inherent need of all humankind, and the role of educators is to foster and facilitate learning (Knowles, 1984; Rogers 1969).

Rogers (1969) delineated two forms of learning—cognitive and experiential. While the first focuses on transmission of basic academic knowledge, its integration with the second transforms the learning experience. Placing the student at the center of learning and viewing the role of the teacher as facilitator are lasting contributions of his work. The student is positioned as a capable individual driven by the need to understand. Learning must derive from personal interest and hold relevance for the learner. Students learn through self-initiated discovery and learning becomes pervasive. Self-reflection becomes a tool for monitoring learning and determining additional learning needed.

The teacher serves as a facilitator of learning. Fostering interpersonal relationships through authenticity, caring, and empathy are essential in creating the conditions needed for experiential learning (Rogers, 1969). When the principles of experiential learning are applied in the secondary classroom, learning becomes student centered, personal, and focused on the growth of the whole child. Learning consists of opportunities, facilitated by the teacher, designed to tap into our natural human desire to make meaning. The balanced literacy framework embodies many of these elements as students work to make meaning of texts in reading workshop and produce meaningful, personally relevant texts in writing workshop.

Experiential learning (Rogers, 1969) can be applied not only as a model for secondary student learning but also as a model for professional growth. Administrators should facilitate self-initiated learning experiences for the teachers with whom they work. Rogers (1969) explains that significant learning is more likely to take place and have a lasting effect when: learning is self-initiated, relevant to the individual, and external threats are low. External threats in education could refer to both perceived and real

threats. If teachers feel threatened by possible negative evaluations from administration or pressure from administration to teach to the test, they may be less likely to adopt new attitudes or perspectives about student-centered literacy instruction.

Similarly, Knowles (1984) draws upon humanistic theory to develop his theory of andragogy. His theory is based upon five assumptions of adult learners: self-concept, previous learning experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and internal motivation (Knowles, 1984). This theory positions adult learners as self-directed and responsible for their own learning. Learners readily draw upon past experiences as resources for current learning. Driven by a need to understand, adult learners are motivated to find practical solutions to personal or professional problems.

These assumptions guide the principles of andragogy. Knowles (1984) identified four principles for working with adult learners. First, he explained that adults should have a voice in learning and evaluation of learning. Second, learning should be based upon prior experiences. Third, the content of learning should focus on topics relevant to the learner. Fourth, learning should be problem-centered in nature. Learning occurs in collaboration with the instructor through observation, application, and self-evaluation.

Knowles (1984) recognizes that adult learning is inherently personal and problem-centered in nature. The coaching model of administrative support incorporates these key principles of andragogy. Administrators who use a coaching model value teachers' need to make their professional learning relevant to the issues and dilemmas they face within their classrooms. Acting as a facilitator of learning, the administrator serves as a guide and a tool teachers can use for reflective practice. The administrator understands that professional learning is highly experiential, and teachers need freedom to test their

evolving ideas about student learning and learn from the application of new practices within the classroom setting. All experience, including perceived mistakes, are valuable to the learner. Administrators using a coaching model based in the principles of andragogy value this person-centered approach for professional development.

Learning occurs through social interaction. Social interaction strengthens learners' desires to understand and develops understanding (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky 1978). Bandura (1977) states:

> learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (p. 22).

In Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) and later Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), he theorizes that humans learn naturally through observation; however, the decision to act requires cognitive processing (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The coaching model of administrative support incorporates this theory of social learning where modeling within a teacher's classroom is one means of the teacher learning how to apply a new instructional strategy. This concept also applies to balanced literacy instruction where students learn from watching how the teacher interacts with texts during the minilesson.

Self-reflection is also an important component of SCT. Bandura (1986) states "people not only gain understanding through reflection, they evaluate and alter their own thinking" (p. 21). Through self-reflection, learners have the ability to process observed behaviors and decide whether or not they act upon them. Coaching conversations can be

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used to guide the reflective process as teachers begin to incorporate components of balanced literacy into their instructional practices. These conversations serve as external models for the reflection process.

Vygotsky (1978) also perceives learning and social interaction as inseparable because it is through our interactions and communications with others that learning is able to take place. He envisioned language as a tool to promote thinking, develop reasoning, and support literacy (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning occurs first culturally through interaction with others before it is able to be applied personally. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through interactions with others in communities of practice, learners are able to extend what they are capable of individually.

These theories have implications for work with both teachers through a coaching model of professional development and students through student-centered learning within the balanced literacy framework. The workshop structures within a balanced literacy framework allow for students to develop their abilities to analyze and produce texts within supportive communities of practice. When teachers have a clear understanding of students' strengths and possibilities for growth and design small group, guided reading and writing lessons to provide instruction that challenges and guides them to reach higher levels of capacity, teachers are using ZPD to differentiate instruction. Likewise, literacy coaching has the potential to provide high school English teachers needed support as they begin to implement balanced literacy instruction by taking into account where each teachers' strengths and possibilities for growth lie in order to provide a differentiated approach to professional learning and development.

Studies Supporting Components of the Balanced Literacy Framework

Balanced literacy as a framework for high school English instruction is grounded in research on the workshop approach. Based on the tenets of transactional reading theory, student-centered learning, and social constructivism, the studies reviewed in this section examine key components necessary for implementation of reading and writing workshop and factors that impede full implementation of this important work.

Process approach to writing instruction. Murray (1972) challenges practitioners to reexamine their approach to writing instruction by moving from a product to a process approach. He defines three stages in this process: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. In no uncertain terms he urges teachers to become "coaches, encouragers, developers, creators of environments in which our students can experience the writing process for themselves" (Murray, 1972, p. 13). Murray's shift from a product to a process approach carries implications for all educators. The underlying themes in his implications are choice, time, revision, and instructional support throughout the process. While Murray was primarily writing for an audience of college professors, contemporary practitioners in the field working with school-age children took up this challenge as well leading to the workshop approach for writing instruction (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983).

The process approach to writing has been championed by theorists and practitioners for over forty years (Atwell, 1998; Au et al., 2001; Calkins, 1986; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1972); however, the traditional paradigm of writing instruction in secondary schools continues to persist (Applebee & Langer, 2011). This paradigm typically consists of an assign, collect, and grade model which involves very little interaction among students and teachers in the development of writing ability

or confidence (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Hairston, 1982). The shift to teaching writing as a process within a workshop setting has been gaining momentum, but as Hairston (1982) suggests resistance to a new paradigm will only diminish once those who hold traditional beliefs can no longer see value in that method of teaching. The added pressures high-stakes standardized tests place on teachers has slowed the paradigm shift Hairston once saw taking hold. Writing tests that emphasize grammar and inauthentic writing samples have stunted the spread of valuing authentic writing in the classroom setting (NCTE, 2014).

Applebee and Langer (2011) conducted a four-year study that analyzed the amount of writing currently required, the audiences for student work, the impact of high-stakes tests, the approaches to writing instruction, and the impact of technology in the core subject areas in middle schools and high schools across the United States. They found that although students write more for their English classes, the amount they write for their other classes combined outweighed the amount produced for English. This emphasizes the need to employ authentic writing practices across the curriculum. In addition, they found that only 19 percent of writing represented extended writing of a paragraph or more. The rest of the writing activities consisted of fill-in-the-blank, short answer, or copying notes. These inauthentic writing practices show that American students are not being challenged to think critically using writing as a tool for learning. Additionally, they found only 43.9 percent of secondary English teachers employ a workshop approach to writing instruction. They suggest the demands of high-stakes tests limit teachers' time and willingness to engage in a process approach to writing (Applebee & Langer, 2011).

Strategy instruction within writing workshop. Graham and Perin (2007)

conducted a meta-analysis to identify effective instructional practices for improving the

quality of adolescent writing. They found 10 instructional practices impact the writing

performance of adolescents. Of those findings, strategy instruction within the writing

process was found to be the most effective practice. Additionally, they found structuring

writing by having students work collaboratively, establishing clear goals for writing

assignments, providing completed models of writing, and engaging students in activities

to acquire, organize, and evaluate ideas also positively impacted the quality of student

writing. However, they caution "if these practices are to be brought to scale, they must

become an integral part of both preservice and in-service teacher education for both

language arts and content teachers" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p.467).

Support for teachers in implementing writing workshop is also found readily in

professional literature. Graves (1994) encourages teachers to resist the urge to narrow

writing curriculum to skills standardized tests cover and instead use personal reflection

and students' writing to plan and teach focused minilessons that will support students in

becoming lifelong readers and writers. This plea has been echoed many times by notable

practitioners in the field of adolescent literacy (Atwell, 1998; Beers, Probst, & Rief,

2007; Kittle, 2008).

Applebee & Langer (2011) suggest teachers understand that strategy instruction

within a process approach to writing greatly benefits students, but time constraints and

test preparation negatively influence the time allocated for authentic literacy instruction.

Students need extended time for writing and reading so that they can employ strategies

taught through minilessons and become critical thinkers. Atwell (1998) and Kittle (2008)

provide practical ways teachers can balance instruction with time for sustained writing and reading. Building upon Graves' (1994) model for writing workshop, contemporary practitioners urge high school teachers to write and read alongside students and use reading/writing conferences to determine on which skills and strategies students need whole-group instruction through minilessons (Atwell, 1998; Beers, Probst, & Rief, 2007; Kittle, 2008). The premise is simple. Teens become better readers and writers when time is devoted to authentic reading and writing in the high school classroom.

Reading volume. Stanovich (1986) first explored the idea of reciprocal relationships in reading noting a "Matthew effect" where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer which lead to measurable gaps in student achievement. This recursive cycle shows that children who enjoy a literacy environment that provides print rich exposure become better readers at a young age which in turn leads to more exposure to print and increased cognitive growth. These children have positive associations with literacy which in turn result in positive attitudes toward reading. Conversely, children who from a young age have limited access to print struggle more with reading which leads to less exposure to print as these children age and often negative associations with literacy (Stanovich, 1986). When adolescents make the choice to read or conversely not to read, it creates a deficit model where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer linking reading volume with reading attitudes and proficiency.

Reading volume and attitudes toward reading. Secondary schools attempting to revive reading for pleasure are instituting programs that increase the amount of time students spend reading independently. Research advocates developing a school-wide sustained silent reading (SSR) initiative where students read pleasure books for extended

amounts of time (Allington, 2005; Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2003; Weaver, 2002). The freedom of choice and extended time for reading has well documented positive effects on students' reading attitudes and motivation (Dougherty, 2005; Waff & Connell, 2004; Yoon, 2002). Yoon (2002) conducted a meta-analytical approach to examine the effectiveness of SSR on attitude toward reading. This review included published studies and unpublished dissertations from 1970 - 2002. Yoon (2002) found that students made significant gains in reading attitudes when given time to read independently thus linking SSR with improved attitudes toward reading.

Once students' attitudes toward reading are improved, they begin to view themselves as readers (Dougherty, 2005; Waff & Connell, 2004). Waff and Connell (2004) conducted a case study investigating the effects of implementing SSR in a ninth-grade social studies classroom. After implementation of SSR and accompanying written reflections three times a week, the researchers found that "reflecting on their reading gave the students an opportunity to express themselves and opened a channel for real dialogue about reading" (p. 14). The researchers assert that the students, even striving readers, in this case study began to view themselves as readers and writers (Waff & Connell, 2004). Dougherty (2005) conducted action research in her own eleventh and twelfth grade English classroom to determine if SSR improved students' attitudes toward reading and found similar effects. Dougherty (2005) found a "dramatic decrease in off-task behavior and an increase in engagement in previously unmotivated and uncommitted readers" (p. 10). These studies suggest that SSR is associated with students' improved attitudes toward reading at the secondary level.

Reading volume and student-centered instruction. However, merely increasing time spent reading in school may not result in students becoming better readers. Several reviews of SSR programs have concluded that the effect of SSR on reading proficiency may in itself not be sufficient enough to impact students' reading skills and vocabulary development (Marzano, 2003; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NIH], 2000). While the NIH could not find sufficient data to support the practice of SSR as a way to increase reading proficiency, the report does state that the "findings do not negate the positive influence that independent silent reading may have on reading fluency, nor do the findings negate the possibility that wide independent reading significantly influences vocabulary development and reading comprehension" (p. 13). This suggests links exist among reading volume and increased comprehension which can be strengthened through purposeful teaching and extended time for wide reading.

Parr and Maguiness (2005) suggest introducing planned instructional supports facilitate improved attitudes toward reading by creating opportunities for purposeful conversations about texts. Parr and Maguiness (2005) propose that reading conversations benefit both students and teachers. Their qualitative study using participatory action research methods investigated how conversation supported reading engagement. The teachers "developed and tried an instructional conversation model to support SSR practice where, through talk, teachers and students shared experiences, exchanged knowledge, and made explicit the practice of choosing and engaging in text" (Parr & Maguiness, 2005, p. 99). They found that teachers learned more about their reluctant readers, and students were better able to articulate specifics of their reading behaviors

(Parr & Maguiness, 2005). This study shows that by integrating purposeful talk about what students are reading, teachers build trust which is essential in forming meaningful relationships. This allows teachers to develop a coaching relationship with students during these conversations enabling them to assist students in reflecting about their reading.

Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, Scafiddi, and Tonks (2004) suggest that student-centered instructional practices where motivational support is combined with strategy instruction leads to increased engagement thus leading to greater opportunities for reading success. The researchers developed a framework for concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI) which incorporated both strategy instruction (SI) and motivational practices. They then tested CORI against SI alone in third grade classrooms in the first study and then compared their results of the first study against traditional instruction (TI) within third grade classrooms in a second study (Guthrie, et al., 2004). Findings indicate that CORI was significantly more successful than SI and TI. Guthrie et al. (2004) state "our findings contribute to the knowledge base on reading comprehension instruction by showing experimentally that explicitly combining motivation practices with SI increases reading comprehension relative to SI alone or to TI" (p. 416). This study explicitly links increased reading volume, student-centered instructional methods, and increased student achievement at the elementary level.

Slavin, Cheung, Groff, and Lake (2008) in their review of secondary reading intervention programs found that traditional instruction must be dramatically changed to include student-centered teaching methods in order to see change in students' reading proficiency. This study used best-evidence synthesis, an approach similar to meta-

analysis, to discern the impact common characteristics of reading programs and instructional approaches had on middle and high school students' reading achievement (Slavin, et al., 2008). The researchers grouped the studies reviewed into four areas: reading curricula, mixed-method models, computer-assisted interventions, and instructional process programs and developed a list of nine criteria each study must meet in order to be included in the best-evidence synthesis (Slavin, et al., 2008). The researchers determined effect sizes for individual programs and pooled these effect sizes across studies to determine the effect size of each category under review (Slavin, et al., 2008). Their findings suggest that while more rigorous, scientific research is needed to adequately review secondary reading programs, trends in the research indicate positive effects of cooperative learning and programs intended to improve teachers' classroom practices (Slavin, et al., 2008). This research establishes the need for increased student-centered instructional practices in secondary English language arts classrooms.

Schmakel (2008) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the relationship between early adolescent developmental needs, classroom instructional practices, and academic motivation and achievement. She recruited 67 seventh-grade students from four ethnically diverse parochial schools in a midwestern urban setting that were self-reported by central office administration to be low to average performing schools (Schmakel, 2008). Teachers in these schools were involved in the second year of a two-year project focused on innovative teaching strategies. Teachers then grouped the participating students into one of two categories: low achievers and high achievers (Schmakel, 2008). Data were collected through an essay response, focus group interviews, and one-on-one interviews. Students were asked first to respond to an essay

prompt asking them to reflect how they would get students to improve their school learning and achievement if they were teachers. Schmakel (2008) found that students' responses indicate motivational instruction and motivational support as two main factors that increase student motivation and achievement. Patterns of responses indicated that students "yearned for some of the educational fun and games and hands-on experience they had in elementary school" (Schmakel, 2008, p. 740-741). They described wanting more challenging and engaging curricula with teachers who made learning relevant and interesting (Schmakel, 2008). These findings support other studies reviewed thus far, and suggest that improved instructional practices may engage students and increase secondary students' authentic engagement with texts.

Alvermann (2002) contends that adolescents require literacy instruction that promotes and fosters self-efficacy and engagement. She asserts that participatory approaches to instruction are essential in developing students' abilities to navigate disciplinary texts and grow their self-reliance in using effective literacy practices. Alvermann (2002) explains:

> effective literacy instruction for adolescents must take into account a host of factors, including students' perceptions of their competencies as readers and writers, their level of motivation and background knowledge, and their interests. To be effective, such instruction must be embedded in the regular curriculum and make use of multiple forms of texts read for multiple purposes in a variety of learning situations (p. 203).

Additional studies of student engagement and instructional practices support Alvermann's position regarding adolescent literacy instruction. This research supports

Alvermann's (2002) assertion and Slavin et al. (2008) findings that adolescent readers, especially those who struggle, require student-centered approaches to literacy instruction that promote self-efficacy and motivational engagement. A reading program that includes the positive aspects of SSR coupled with scaffolded, student-centered instruction to increase students' metacognitive awareness is the most effective way to improve the reading proficiency of struggling adolescent readers (Slavin et al., 2008). This type of reading program can be readily found in elementary schools; however, there appears to be a gap in the research for this approach with high school students (Alvermann, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2004; Slavin et al., 2008).

Implications for teaching. Several implications for classroom practice are apparent from the research reviewed. First, the benefits of independent reading and writing are well documented. Students need access to interesting books and time to read and write in a non-threatening atmosphere. This increased volume can create positive "Mathew Effects" associated with reading volume (Stanovich, 1986). However, increased volume alone is not enough for students, especially striving readers, to become proficient (Marzano, 2003 & NIH, 2000). Second, teachers must create a classroom culture where talk about texts is explicit and purposeful. Strategic instruction in reading and writing is essential in students becoming producers and consumers of authentic texts. Third, teachers must use conversations with and between students to encourage reflection. Through this reflection, teachers can scaffold students' metacognition. The balanced literacy framework of instruction incorporates all of these conditions thus creating a classroom culture conducive for student-centered learning. The studies reviewed address instructional methods that provide learning experiences designed to

increase student engagement in authentic literacy practices. However, studies addressing

using these instructional approaches with high school learners are largely

underrepresented in the research.

Studies Addressing Literacy Coaching

Unless effective literacy programs are implemented in middle and high schools,

where the NEA's 2007 report shows they are desperately needed, Stanovich's (1986)

"Mathew Effects" could result in striving readers being relegated to a life in the bottom

economic strata. Basic and below basic readers account for more than half of high school

dropouts, the unemployed, and the adult population in prison (NEA, 2007). The obvious

conclusion from the NEA's 2007 report is that secondary teachers need to change their

instructional methods. Literacy coaching encompasses aspects of adult learning theory

and social constructivism to provide educators with the support needed to make effective

and lasting change in their instructional practices. The studies reviewed in this section

indicate literacy coaching is an effective form of professional development.

Literacy coaching in secondary schools is a relatively new form of professional

development. In 2006, the International Reading Association [IRA] developed standards

for literacy coaches working with middle and high school level teachers stating:

> The chief goal is to assist content area teachers in addressing the reading
>
> comprehension, writing, and communication skills that are particular to their
>
> disciplines. This includes activities that promote instructional reform, improve
>
> staff's capacity to use data, as well as actions directly aimed at supporting content
>
> area teachers at the building level with one-on-one demonstrations, observations,
>
> debriefings and classroom follow-ups, and small-group learning of new content

and pedagogy" (IRA, 2006, p. 7).

Coaches serve as ongoing, job-embedded professional development tools administrators can use to transform the academic culture of their schools.

Support systems for literacy coaching. A review of the current research on literacy coaching reveals its relatively new emergence in the education field. While the extent of the research is not vast, the theme of support threads itself throughout the research reviewed. Successful coaching initiatives have an extensive network of support systems. The research suggests that these thriving programs are characterized by strong administrative support and professional reflection which results in teacher acceptance and instructional change.

District context. According to a research study examining how district context influences the effectiveness of the coaching program, the most successful coaching programs occurred where districts implemented the classic coaching role and supported their coaches in fulfilling that role (Mangin, 2009). This qualitative study examined how the literacy coaching program was implanted in 20 districts. Superintendents of curriculum, or their designee, were interviewed which revealed contexts that both assisted and hindered the coaching initiative (Mangin, 2009). Several factors were found to generate a positive influence on the coaching program. The most significant was a district's focus on professional learning. Districts that valued professional growth used student performance data to demonstrate to teachers that current instructional practices were ineffective, exposed teachers to coaching practices through other district programs, and shifted focus from student-centered intervention efforts to teacher support created the most favorable context for successful implementation of the coaching role (Mangin,

2009). Conversely, districts who failed to implement coaching successfully did not provide sufficient support for change. Lack of funding and reluctance to allow the literacy coach to assume the classic role appeared as significant hindrances (Mangin, 2009).

School context. Support for the program must also continue on the school level. Principals provide leadership for lasting reform. They also set the tone for any new program adopted by the school or district. Matsumura, Sartoris, Bickel, and Garnier (2009) examining the principal's role in launching a new program found that when principals acknowledge the coach as a valuable professional, participate in the program, and acknowledge the coach as a source of literacy expertise, teachers interact more with coaches. This qualitative study used separate interviews following a structured protocol with both coaches and principals to demonstrate the strong correlation between the principal's perceived attitude toward and support of a new coaching program and the teachers' acceptance of it (Matsumura et al., 2009). Teachers were also surveyed to determine how frequently teachers met with the literacy coach in team-grade level meetings and on an individual basis, how often coaches observed the teacher during a reading lesson, how frequently the coach modeled lessons, and how often coaches and teachers co-taught lessons (Matsumura et al., 2009). Trust of the coach by the principal also appeared as a strong indicator of the program's success. In schools were the teachers met frequently with the coach, principals reported that they trusted their coach to make and implement their own schedules (Matsumura et al., 2009).

Self-reflection. Two articles reviewed highlight how coaches to grow professionally into the coaching role. The first, a case study involving two elementary

literacy coaches, examined how their perceptions of themselves as coaches grew throughout the year. The second qualitative study examined secondary coaches' perceptions of their roles, needs, and advice for future coaches.

Gibson (2005) found that the two primary coaches involved in the case study articulated three themes of agendas, readiness, and the nature of change when talking about their practice and refined their understanding of the coaching role throughout the school year. Coaches in this study reported feeling tension between their agendas and the teachers' (Gibson, 2005). As the year progressed, the coaches began to focus less on their own agendas and began to articulate an "emphasis on the co-constructed nature of coaching conversations" (Gibson, 2005, p. 69). Another theme that coaches refined as they progressed through the year was that of teacher readiness. In the beginning the coaches simply remarked that the teachers were not ready for coaching; while at the end of the year, the coaches had developed "a multifaceted, procedurally based understanding of the varying needs of teachers" (Gibson, 2005, p.70). The coaches were able to articulate that centering the focus on one area of teacher need during coaching sessions helped the teacher progress in a more targeted way (Gibson, 2005). The last theme that the coaches expressed was the nature of change. The coaches at first merely acknowledged the teachers' reluctance to change, but over time the coaches came to understand that the change process is gradual and that their role was to assist teachers in becoming more self-reflective (Gibson, 2005). The findings in this case study show that coaches develop their understanding of how to work effectively with teachers over time much like teachers understand through experience how to work with and relate to students (Gibson, 2005).

Another qualitative study that expressed the need for coaches to develop their identities over time surveyed middle and high school literacy coaches. This study used online surveys to investigate what coaches at secondary level are doing, what they want help doing, and advice for future coaches (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2008). The survey consisted of 25 force-choice and open-item responses to determine if current coaches felt prepared to fulfill activities as collaborators, coaches, and evaluators and if secondary coaches felt qualified to coach teachers in multiple contents (Blamey et al., 2008). The results showed that secondary coaches' felt that their roles are ambiguous, much time is spent developing identity, and coaching content teachers is difficult (Blamey et al., 2008). Coaches expressed their primary activities as collaboration with teachers followed by actual coaching and more infrequently evaluation of student data (Blamey et al., 2008). The coaches surveyed also expressed a need for a collaborative professional development network where coaches could meet regularly with each other to "strengthen their research-based knowledge of literacy strategies, content area literacy instruction, and effective adult learning techniques" (Blamey et al., 2008, p. 321). This study also sought secondary literacy coaches' advice for future coaches. From the survey data three trends of advice emerged. Coaches suggested that future coaches must present themselves as credible teachers, focus on student data, and learn to differentiate their coaching based on teacher need (Blamey et al., 2008).

Literacy coaching and professional growth. Previous studies cite teacher acceptance of the literacy coaching initiative and willingness to work with a coach to change teacher practice as a concern of coaches (Blamey et al., 2008; Gibson, 2005).

The following studies address what coaches are doing effectively to inspire instructional change and teacher acceptance of coaching.

The first study focuses on the introduction of using literacy strategies as part of a professional development project in middle and high school content area teachers' classrooms. This qualitative study used teacher interviews to examine teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009). Working with a literacy coach was one part of the professional development project introduced through the research study. Researchers sought to understand content teachers' perceptions about their ability to effectively use literacy strategies, literacy teaching and student literacy learning in the content areas, and "the impact of professional development paired with on-site coaching in content literacy techniques" (Cantrell et al., 2009, p. 76). This study suggests that when coaches modeled literacy techniques, teachers were more likely to try and implement the techniques themselves (Cantrell et al., 2009).

Another study focused on literacy coaches' use of reflection to guide instructional change. This qualitative study used observations to determine what coaches do during coaching conversations with teachers in schools where gains have been made in students' reading achievement (Peterson, Taylor, Burnham, & Schock, 2009). Analysis of the data revealed four patterns of questioning. Coaches in these schools used protocols for data collection and conversation, data from specific lessons to focus on crucial elements of instruction, asked questions to elicit conversation, and engaged in conversations that built connections between professional development and instruction (Peterson et al., 2009). The findings from this study suggest that reflections on teaching using concrete data helped teachers become more purposeful practitioners (Peterson et al., 2009).

A third study examining the impact literacy coaching has on teacher practice also found that coaching did increase teachers' use of best practices in literacy instruction. This case study followed two elementary literacy coaches working in urban locations. Separate interviews were conducted with coaches, teachers, and principals. The teachers working with coaches reported an increase in their ability to use formative assessments, match materials to students, set up classroom libraries, conference with students, implement independent and guided reading and writing, and a greater ability to perform mini-lessons (Steckel, 2009). This study also suggests that for coaching to be successful school culture must support teachers' on-going learning and risk-taking, and the school must be organized to allow teachers time to collaborate with each other and the coach (Steckel, 2009). Another implication suggested by the study is that coaching must capture the interest of teachers, demonstrate the effects on students, provide model lessons, and empower teachers (Steckel, 2009).

Pathways to Success, a partnership between Kansas University Center for Research on Learning (KU-CRL) and six middle schools and three high schools in Topeka, Kansas, find that coaching is a successful tool to inspire teacher change (Knight, 2004). This four-year long program provides coaching in all content areas and classroom management techniques. Findings show that teachers who have participated have fewer discipline referrals and increased student achievement (Knight, 2004). This article also offers advice for coaches and administrators when beginning a new coaching program. Knight (2004) suggests that to employ a successful coaching program that inspires teacher participation, the coach must not push for rapid change because it can alienate staff. He urges coaches to focus on relationships, have a partnership mindset, and finally

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to offer teachers choices by letting them choose to participate in coaching (Knight, 2004). The studies reviewed show that literacy coaching is a worthy form of professional development that can create lasting change if support is provided by school and district administration and coaches and follows the standards set forth by the IRA.

Implications for Research

The research reviewed indicates that implementing a balanced literacy framework (reading and writing workshop) for secondary English language arts instruction coupled with ongoing job-embedded professional development have the potential to make a positive impact on students' attitudes and achievement; however, the tensions that exist within the particular context of this study cannot be ignored. High turnover in both school-level and district-level administration coupled with the effects of high-poverty and pressure to raise standardized test scores have constrained the full implementation of balanced literacy. The research indicates literacy coaching is a valuable tool that can be used to transform school culture. The principal plays the most influential role in initiating the effectiveness of the coach. Therefore, any research study that incorporates aspects of literacy coaching must first gain the support of the principal and administrative team. The studies reviewed show that support is the major factor in determining the success or failure of the literacy coaching initiative. The principal must be fully aware of the how the coaching program operates to be able to support it successfully.

With backing from the building-level administration and a clear vision for improved instruction from district-level leadership, teachers can apply new teaching methods in a non-threatening, supportive environment. Adding the support of a literacy

coach who works alongside teachers to offer constructive and reflective feedback has the potential to make lasting change according to the research reviewed.

Several areas of interest are underrepresented in the research. One such area are the supports needed for high school English teachers to implement balanced literacy. Several studies reviewed provided supportive evidence for adding SSR to the high school classroom, but none focused on the supports teachers need to implement increased time for reading as part of the class structure. Balanced literacy as an instructional model in high school English classrooms is also widely underrepresented in current academic research. Finally, studies that combine literacy coaching with the implementation of a balanced literacy framework at the high school level within a high-poverty district are noticeably absent from research.

This study seeks to fill this gap. After working in my current district for six years, I have formed positive relationships with many high school teachers and their administrative teams. Several English teachers have begun to implement components of the balanced literacy framework; however, full implementation has not occurred. This study combines teachers' willingness to implement reading and writing workshop with literacy coaching to explore what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and classroom practices as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Conceptual Framework

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) explain that "qualitative research is a situated activity that situates the observer in the world…[and] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p. 6). My view of the world straddles the traditions of the interpretivist paradigm and critical theory and in so doing forms the bricolage which "highlights the relationship between a researcher's ways of seeing and the social location of his or her personal history" (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2013, p. 350). The interpretivist paradigm is an approach to qualitative research that allows researchers to understand phenomena from the perspective of the individual. As opposed the positivist paradigm which assumes reality is real and measurable, an interpretivist paradigm views reality as a social construction (Glesne, 2011). Individuals and their view of the world are extremely important to the researcher who adopts this approach. It is in the mind of the individual where reality exists. Reality cannot exist separate from the individual who makes sense of the world. Glesne (2011) acknowledges the importance of the individual to researchers stating "the role of the social scientist then becomes that of accessing others' interpretations of some social phenomenon and of interpreting, themselves, other's actions and intentions" (p. 8).

Glesne (2011) explains while it is possible to trace philosophical underpinnings of interpretivism to Greek and Roman philosophies, "interpretivism as a form of social science research grew out of the work of eighteenth century German philosopher

Immanuel Kant and was expanded on by William Dilthey, Max Weber, Edmund Husserl and others" (p. 8). The focus of researchers who take up this paradigm is on individuals' interpretation of the world around them. Methodological approaches can vary widely depending on the researcher's discipline and area of focus. Several common methodologies to the interpretivist paradigm include: ethnography, case study, hermeneutics, narrative analysis, phenomenology, life history, and discourse analysis (Glesne, 2011). While methods differ depending on the phenomena under study, researchers who employ an interpretivist paradigm "share the goal of understanding human ideas, actions, and interactions in specific contexts or in terms of the wider culture" (Glesne, 2011, p. 8).

The critical theory paradigm moves beyond merely interpreting the world and begins to consider possibilities of what the world could become (Glesne, 2011). Critical researchers in this tradition are constantly aware of the ideologies, processes, structures, and mechanisms in society that work to distort reality (Glesne, 2011). In this paradigm, research is a means of revealing and critiquing. Researchers move beyond description and seek to raise awareness among their participants (Glesne, 2011).

Ontological Assumptions. Interpretivists view a world "in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing" (Glesne, 2011, p. 8). Knowledge is built upon how social actors perceive their reality. This reality is not perceived in isolation of the individual; however, the individual lives within a world with other individuals who are continually constructing their own realities. It is then within the intersection of individuals within a social context where reality is constructed. Reality is also complex and ever changing. Social actors are not held static in time. They

constantly reconstruct their interpretation of the world through their actions and interactions with others. Glesne (2011) explains, "these constructed realities are viewed as existing, however, not only in the mind of the individual, but also as social constructions in that individualistic perspectives interact with the language and thought of the wider society" (p. 8).

Critical theorists "work to situate the experiences and perspectives of the oppressed group in a social, historical context, revealing how conditions serve certain groups and not others" (Glesne, 2011, p. 10). Researchers in this tradition view knowledge as power and view their work as a means to expose and transform the lived experiences of the oppressed (Glesne, 2011). Reality is not only socially constructed but also historically constructed and carries with it the issues of power and domination created through the voices of the dominant.

Epistemological Assumptions. If reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing, then the social actors who work to construct reality are the central focus for researchers attempting to understand social phenomena. Knowledge then is located within the interpretation of the social world by individuals. Researchers seek the perspectives of those who are experiencing phenomena within their social context. Researchers using the interpretivist paradigm seek knowledge through interactions with participants primarily through interviews and observations. Each approach in the interpretivist paradigm privileges the knowledge of the individual and "primarily seeks to understand and describe social phenomena from perspectives of participants" (Glesne, 2011, p. 17). Researchers in the critical theory paradigm are interested in the "praxis, or the relationships between thought and action, theory and practice" (Glesne, 2011).

Key Theoretical/Conceptual Notions. Several key theoretical/conceptual

notions undergird interpretivism and critical theory. Prasad (2005) explains the

interpretivist paradigm draws upon "human interpretation as the starting point for

developing knowledge about the social world" (p. 13). Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba

(2013) acknowledge the relativist notion that multiple realities exist as mental

constructions of the individual which are socially and experientially based. Knowledge

then is constructed through lived experiences and through interactions with other

members of society (Lincoln et al., 2013). This transactional/subjectivist notion suggests

that "we are shaped by our lived experiences, and these will always come out in the

knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects" (Lincoln

et al., 2013, p. 212). Methodological notions are hermeneutic and dialectic in nature in

the interpretivist paradigm. Multiple realities that are produced and negotiated by social

actors must depend on language that is consensually constructed (Lincoln et al., 2013).

Like interpretivism, critical theory explores the lived experiences of individuals "with a

commitment to social critique and praxis" (Prasad, 2005, p. 149). The focus is primarily

on awareness and action after an interpretive understanding of the world and its

sociocultural structures and processes has been realized (Prasad, 2005).

Methodological Stance

Participatory action research (PAR) is a research stance that embodies both the

traditions of interpretivism and critical theory. Similar to action research where a

practical solution is initiated by a researcher to address an area of concern, PAR values

and encourages collaboration among participants and the researcher in order "to

understand and/or solve organizational or community problems" (Patton, 2014, p. 220).

This collaborative approach to the inquiry process results in power sharing among the researcher and participants as they investigate and attempt to solve a problem or make a change for the betterment of themselves and their community. Patton (2014) explains:

> One of the negative connotations often associated with evaluation is that it is something done *to* people. Participatory evaluation, in contrast, involves working *with* people. Instead of being research "subjects," the people in the research setting become "coinvestigators" or "co-inquirers." The process is facilitated by the researcher but is controlled by the people in the program or community. They undertake a formal, reflective process for their own development and empowerment (p. 221).

This process of inquiry-driven collaboration has the potential to transform the participant as they learn the methods of research and apply this new stance to other situations. Patton (2014) explains the "purpose of the evaluation is ongoing learning, internal improvement, and program development" (p. 214).

I hoped that by using this research approach as I worked with teachers in coaching cycles, I would better support their reflective practice as they tried to implement new strategies and methods of teaching. Patton (2014) states:

> The learning that occurs as a result of these processes is twofold: (1) The inquiry can yield specific insights and findings that can change practice, and (2) those who participate in the inquiry learn to think more systematically about what they are doing and their own relationship with those with whom they work (p. 214).

This approach to research has the potential to benefit both the researcher and participants as they share the power for ongoing, continual improvement of teaching practice,

research, and reflection of the educational system in which this work resides. Rather a stance than a method, PAR is a cyclical process that moves from identification of the issue or problem through action cycles where a change is employed, observations are made, and reflections guide the next phases of the process (Patton, 2014; Walter, 2009).

McTaggart (1994) concludes that PAR is not only transformative in nature to the individuals who undertake the process but also seeks to change the culture of the institution, group, or society to which these individuals belong. Individuals are an inseparable part of the institutions in which they work, so any research endeavor which seeks to examine a change in individual practice has the potential to create ripple effects across the organization. Kemmis (2006) challenges those who take up action research to intentionally investigate these how the act of this type of research challenges the nature of the educational process. Brydon-Miller and Maguire (2009) expand on his premise by identifying three key principles of PAR which are: "research as political engagement, a focus on systems of power and privilege, and collaborative relationships as a framework for effective practice" (p. 83).

The context and nature of this study was perfectly suited for PAR. As I will discuss in the next section, the district has experienced significant, recurring change in recent years, and the teachers who remain have been most affected by this turmoil. The high school English teachers interested in implementing the balanced literacy framework were already seeking change. Because of the specific nature of my relationships to both the institution and participants, I believed PAR would enable a shared examination of an administrative model of literacy coaching, any impacts the coaching model had on teachers' beliefs and practices, and what additional supports teachers needed to

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implement balanced literacy instruction through the teachers' use of a reflective journal during the cycles of coaching.

While I began this study attempting to fully engage participants as co-researchers in examining and coding their reflective journals in relation to the research questions, this level of engagement did not materialize. At the beginning of the study, I focused on strengthening the coaching relationship and building trust. I believed that teachers needed to keep their reflective journals private in order to create a space for authentic self-reflection. I provided each teacher with a guide for coding; however, I did not actively code their journals with them during cycles of coaching. I anticipated a time later in the study where we could analyze the journals together after they had attempted to code their entries. When I asked each teacher to bring in their journals to the last coaching conference, two of the four had journals. Neither were coded.

McTaggart (1994) states, "a distinctive feature of participatory action research is that those affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on courses of critically informed action which seem likely to lead to improvement, and for evaluating the results of strategies tried out in practice" (p. 317). While teachers' may not have coded their own journals, they did participate in the cycles of coaching in an attempt to improve student learning. This included participatory methods such as co-examining observation data, determining goals and action steps, and co-planning future lessons. This stance clearly situates them as co-researchers in the inquiry process.

Glesne (2011) describes action research in education as a systematic way of engaging in cycles of observing, reflecting, and taking action in an effort to become agents of change. The teachers became co-researchers in their own classrooms as they

engaged in cycles of literacy coaching. They became agents of change as they made intentional instructional decisions after engaging in reflective conversations during the coaching process. As I will discuss in later chapters, the unique context of this study and my relationship with both the institution and participants (co-researchers) supports the use of action research methods during the study and continued engagement with the co-researchers to bring about institutional change.

Context

Claremont School District (pseudonym) is a high-poverty district situated within the southeastern United States. The district of nearly 17,000 students includes 14 elementary schools, six middle schools, three high schools, one K-8 school, one career center, and one alternative school for middle and high school students. The racial/ethnic composition of the district is 63 percent African American, 30 percent Caucasian, and seven percent Hispanic. The Title 1 designation is based on poverty criteria in Title 1, Section 111.3(a) (5) of ESEA identifying 74.4 percent of the student population as economically disadvantaged. Additionally, CSD, qualifies through the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students in grades PK-12. Standardized test scores consistently fall below state average, and the three-year average for teacher retention is 86.3 percent.

CSD has experienced multiple district and school-level administrative shifts since consolidation. The district was consolidated from two separate school systems. This initial shift and emergence of new district-level leadership was short lived. After a nation-wide search, an out-of-state superintendent was hired and remained for two years

before resigning. The community at large did not support this hire and turned to activism to pressure the school board into releasing him.

After this initial superintendent's resignation, the school board decided to invite a previous superintendent from one of the former pre-consolidated districts to serve as interim superintendent. This superintendent was retained as the new superintendent for the consolidated CSD; however, many community members never supported the school board's decision. Community unrest emerged again, evidenced by contentious school board meetings. A multimillion dollar deficit found added to the community activism and a resulting scandal in alleged mismanagement of funds resulted in the district being placed on fiscal watch by the state department of education. After only four years, this superintendent retired and was replaced with an interim superintendent from a neighboring district. This third superintendent remained as interim superintendent for two years while another nation-wide search was held. At the conclusion of this study, the district was in the process of welcoming a fourth new superintendent.

Each of the three high schools in CSD have experienced administrative changes as well. All have had three principals since consolidation. Because of the fiscal deficit, teaching positions were eliminated through attrition and class sizes have increased. Teacher morale is an ongoing issue with overcrowded classrooms, a lack of administrative stability at the district and school levels, and negative community perceptions of the organization as a whole.

Participants

Researcher and co-researchers. Since action research requires a stance where researcher and participants work symbiotically to investigate an issue or program in the

effort of making change (McTaggart, 1994; Patton, 2014; Walter, 2009), I include myself as a participant in this study. Throughout my tenure in my current position as English Language Arts Coordinator for CSD, I have sought to establish relationships that break down the typical barriers among teachers and district-office administrators. This study uses these established relationships to select high school English teachers who are interested in implementing the balanced literacy framework of instruction. This specific criteria meets the definition of criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) defines criterion sampling as cases that "meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 238).

The teachers who chose to participate in this research met the criteria of teaching high school English and expressed they were willing to participate in a project that called on them to examine their beliefs and practices as they prepared to implement a new teaching method and co-research their application of the method. During district departmental meetings, I asked department chairs to share with their teachers that I was searching for participants in this study. From that initial invitation, two participants expressed interest and joined the study. During regular school visits to observe teachers, I asked two other teachers to join because they expressed interest in implementing balanced literacy. Co-researchers signed an informed consent form.

Co-researcher 1. Sandra (pseudonym) is an African-American female in her thirties who has taught high-school English in the district for five years. She has been teaching juniors and seniors in English 3 and English 4 until this year. She is now teaching two classes of ninth-grade English 1 students for the first time since transferring to CSD. During the first semester, these students were enrolled in an elective English

course designed to prepare them for English 1 CP and the state end-of-course exam. While the curriculum guides for this course support the balanced literacy framework, Sandra has not used them with fidelity. Many of these students are continuing with Sandra in English 1 CP for the second half of the year. She self-reports that teaching these students has been a struggle, but she is eager to continue learning more about balanced literacy.

Co-researcher 2. James (pseudonym) is a white male in his fifties who returned to teaching English from the business world four years ago. He has taught English 1 since beginning in CSD. He is currently engaged in professional development workshops offered by the state department of education and serves as the department chair where he also engages in professional book studies within a professional learning community of all middle and high school department chairs in the district. He teaches semester-long English 1 CP courses to ninth grade students. Although his approach has been more traditional, he is interested in implementing balanced literacy.

Co-researcher 3. Carl (pseudonym) is a white male in his forties who has been a teacher in the district for over twenty years but is a new staff member at his current school. He has taught all levels of English since beginning in CSD. He has served in school-level leadership positions, and has received National Writing Project training through a local affiliate in the past. He teaches semester-long English 2 Honors courses to freshmen and sophomores.

Co-researcher 4. Amy (pseudonym) is a first-year teacher who is currently earning her teaching license though an alternative certification program. She is a white

female in her twenties. She teaches English 3 CP to juniors and has expressed interest in learning more about balanced literacy.

      Positionality. I am a middle-class white woman from the southeastern United States. I work in CSD where the dominant racial group of the students is African American. Thompson (2001) explains that "personal/relational theories of whiteness address the ways in which white privileging mechanisms find a home in our relationships, our sense of self, and our assumptions about growth, morality, and decency" (p. 3). The fact that I am a white woman who was reared in an upper middle-class family blinded me to the normalization of whiteness. Through my continued study of critical theory including critical race theory (CRT) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), I have become aware of the white-privileging mechanisms at work in educational institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Thompson, 2001). These mechanisms have afforded me the opportunity to become college educated and continue graduate studies without consideration of the privileges my racial identification has given. I strive through my work with teachers and students to remain vigilant of how these white-privileging mechanisms affect student-teacher and administrative-teacher relationships.

      As an ELA coordinator housed in the central office within the district where this research was conducted, I must recognize the political power I hold within the institution as I interact with teachers, instructional coaches, reading coaches, reading interventionists, and administrators. I am ultimately responsible for decisions concerning the framework of instruction and supplemental materials used within the district. I coordinate kindergarten through high school literacy professional development during

district in-service days, and I lead professional learning workshops at the school level upon administrative request. I coordinate ongoing professional learning through district-wide ELA department chair meetings for middle and high schools, and I work with the other district-level coordinators to facilitate monthly professional learning sessions for all reading and instructional coaches. In addition to coordinating professional learning workshops, coordinators are expected to observe classroom teaching at least three times per week. I always engage in a reflective conference with teachers after an observation. Other times, administrators ask that I support specific teachers through coaching cycles. I am responsible for coordinating ELA curriculum planning, and I am responsible for planning and facilitating summer reading camp for approximately 200 elementary students. In addition, I am responsible for ensuring compliance with the state reading legislation which includes developing yearly school and district reading plans and determining exemptions to mandatory third-grade retention.

Although I feel I have worked hard to dissolve the typical barriers in the way district-level administrators are perceived by teachers, I cannot claim that they are unaffected by the unintentional power my position affords. I am neither an evaluator nor can I make recommendations for employment or termination. My role is one of support through observation and reflection; however, it is impossible to establish this supportive relationship with every teacher in the schools within the district. Because of this, teachers who only interact with me during district-wide professional development or the occasional observation are not always aware of my role as teacher support rather than teacher evaluation.

As I worked to develop closer relationships with the teachers in this study, I had to remain aware of how my position as the district ELA coordinator was perceived. I felt compelled to build trust if I wanted the co-researchers to feel comfortable engaging in coaching cycles. I attempted to do this by focusing on the topics the teachers wished to explore rather than my own coaching agenda. I also asked teachers to keep a reflective journal that they would share with me at the end of the semester. I also shared observation notes and a record of our coaching conversations with each co-researcher.

Methods of Data Collection

Each teacher entered into cycles of coaching over one semester. The cycle began with a pre-conference, then followed with observation, modeling, or co-teaching, and ended with a reflective coaching conversation during a post-conference where goals and action steps were set for the next cycle. Cycles typically lasted two to four weeks depending on contributing factors such as researcher and co-researcher availability and school vacation schedules. Figure 3.1 shows the calendar of coaching cycles.

February 19, 2019	Coaching conversation James
February 19, 2019	Coaching conversation Carl
February 20, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra
February 21, 2019	Email Sandra (Infographic, articles, political cartoons)
February 22, 2019	Email Sandra (Follow-up from coaching conversation)
February 26, 2019	Observation Carl
February 27, 2019	Observation James
February 27, 2019	Coaching conversation James
February 28, 2019	Observation/co-teaching Sandra
February 28, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra
March 1, 2019	Coaching conversation Carl
March 1, 2019	Email Carl (Julius Caesar resources)
March 1, 2019	Email James (vocabulary strategies)
March 1, 2019	Email Sandra (lesson plan)
March 4, 2019	Model lesson Sandra
March 4, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra
March 5, 2019	Email Sandra (problem-solution essay resources)
March 6, 2019	Observation Amy

March 7, 2019	Coaching conversation James
March 8, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
March 15, 2019	Observation/co-teaching Sandra
March 15, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra
March 15, 2019	Email Sandra (unit planning resources)
March 18, 2019	Email Sandra (reading strategy-SWBS)
March 21, 2019	Email Sandra (follow-up on unit planning)
March 25, 2019	Observation Carl
March 25, 2019	Coaching conversation Carl
March 25, 2019	Email Carl (balanced literacy information)
March 27, 2019	Email Carl (Annotation strategies – DEJ & Costas)
March 29, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
April 3, 2019	Observation James
April 4, 2019	Coaching conversation James
April 4, 2019	Observation Carl
April 4, 2019	Coaching conversation Carl
April 9, 2019	Observation James
April 9, 2019	Coaching conversation James
April 10, 2019	Observation Amy
April 11, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
April 11, 2019	Observation/co-teaching Sandra
April 11, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra
April 12, 2019	Email Sandra (feedback on writing prompts & literary analysis unit plan)
April 25, 2019	Observation/co-teaching Amy
April 26, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
April 29, 2019	Email Carl (Night resources for literature circles)
May 2, 2019	Observation/co-teaching Amy
May 3, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
June 5, 2019	Coaching conversation Carl
June 5, 2019	Coaching conversation Amy
June 6, 2019	Coaching conversation Sandra

Figure 3.1 Calendar of coaching cycles

As a participant observer, I collected data in several ways: questionnaires,

coaching conversations, observations, and reflective journals. Qualitative researchers use

a variety of methods to collect descriptive data. Glesne (2011) states, "qualitative

researchers have an active role in producing the data they record through the questions

they ask and the social interactions in which they take part" (p. 47). For this reason,

descriptive data were collected in multiple ways in an effort to develop a rich picture of

how the data worked to answer the research questions. As an active member of the

community in which I am researching, I consciously remained "open to exposing and

rethinking" what I may have taken for granted or overlooked in the past (Glesne, 2011,p.

67). Figure 3.2 shows the research questions alongside their corresponding data sources.

Research Question:	Data Collected:
How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?	- Co-researchers' initial and final questionnaires - Notes of coaching conversations - Field notes of classroom observations - Excerpts from participants' reflective journals
In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?	- Co-researchers' initial and final questionnaires - Notes of coaching conversations - Field notes of classroom observations - Excerpts from participants' reflective journals
What is revealed about teachers' beliefs and practices through participating in coaching cycles?	- Co-researchers' initial and final questionnaires - Notes of coaching conversations

Figure 3.2 Research Questions and Data Sources

Questionnaires. I began collecting data on participants' initial beliefs about

support needed to implement balanced literacy through an initial questionnaire, which

can be found in Appendix A. This questionnaire also asked teachers to reflect on their

current use of the balanced literacy framework in relation to what they hoped to

accomplish through participation in this study. A final questionnaire asked teachers to

reflect on support given throughout the study and what additional support is needed to

continue progress in implementing the balanced literacy framework in future English

courses taught. This questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. Pre- and post-study questionnaires were essential in determining how teachers' beliefs and practices were affected by engaging in coaching cycles.

Coaching conversations. I also collected data through reflective coaching conversations held with individual teachers. To ensure the authentic and organic nature of these conversations, no audiotapes were made. Instead, handwritten notes were taken by the researcher during coaching conversations. These notes were transcribed immediately following the coaching conversation to preserve details of the conversations. Notes and transcriptions were kept in a locked file cabinet within my office. A synopsis of these coaching conversation notes were kept by the researcher and emailed to the teacher using the form in Appendix C.

Field notes. During classroom observations, I used handwritten field notes to record what the teacher and students were doing during the portion of class observed. These notes provided evidence of teaching practices used as teachers prepared to and/or implement balanced literacy instruction through the use of reading and writing workshop components. Field notes were shared with the co-researcher during coaching conversations and served as the basis for the coaching conversation.

Reflective journals. I also collected data from my own reflective journals and my co-researchers' reflective journals. These journals included open-ended written reflections on instruction, support given or received, and impressions or thoughts about the research process. Teachers were asked to keep a reflective journal to think deeply upon their attempts at implementation of balanced literacy components and support

needed or received. I kept a reflective journal to process my thoughts about how the research was going.

Reciprocity

Throughout data collection and analysis, I remained conscious of my positionality as an administrator and doctoral student. My position as an administrator has allowed me to make connections and build rapport with teachers within my district. I was able to identify with the participants in many ways as a former teacher and literacy coach. While this aided in building rapport, I must also acknowledge my roles as an administrator, literacy coach, parent, and researcher which may have influenced my interactions throughout data collection. I attempted to maintain transparency as I interacted with co-researchers and reflected upon those interactions in my reflective journal. This self-reflection functioned as a means to explore my interpreter's lens as I coded and analyzed the data.

Obtaining Human Subjects Approval (IRB)

IRB approval was obtained by following the guidelines set forth by the University of South Carolina. While this research involved observing students and engaging with them during class as I modeled instructional practices, these activities are within the parameters of my job description and expectations. The primary focus of this study is on the teachers' instructional beliefs and practices.

Organizing and Managing Data

Electronic data were kept confidential on a secure server. All questionnaires and electronic notes were kept electronically on a password-protected computer. Files for each co-researcher were kept and organized both electronically and physically. Physical

artifacts including field notes and coaching conversation notes were organized in a locked filing cabinet in my office. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the school district, schools, and teachers involved in this research study.

Data Analysis

Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, and Terry (2012) define thematic analysis (TA) as "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (p. 57). This method of analysis provides flexibility between inductive and deductive approaches to coding and analysis, but researchers primarily choose one orientation. The six phases of TA outlined by Braun et al. (2012) are: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Data collection and analysis are ongoing in TA and movement among the phases occurs as data are analyzed and re-analyzed throughout and after the data collection period in relation to both the research questions and the scholarly field in which the study resides (Braun et al., 2012).

TA clearly aligns with the purpose and design of this study. Braun et al. (2012) suggest the flexibility and accessibility of this approach to data analysis are perfectly suited for participatory action research. As co-researchers, I asked the teachers involved in this study to keep reflective journals and attempt to code their own data. I hoped this approach to data collection and analysis would provide a multidimensional view of the coaching process and insight into how literacy coaching affects teachers' instructional beliefs and practices. In addition to reflective journals, I collected data through field notes of classroom observations, notes from coaching conversations, and questionnaires.

Analysis was ongoing throughout the study. After collection of the pre-study questionnaires, I entered phase one of analysis by reading and rereading the entire data set before generating any initial codes in phase two. This approach allowed me to both read the data analytically and personalize coaching cycles to the needs and interests of the individual teachers. From this initial read, I began to locate pieces of data from the questionnaires that were relevant to my study. Once I began generating initial codes, I used an electronic spreadsheet to categorize the responses and codes.

I followed this same pattern as I collected other forms of data. Working from an inductive approach, I desired to understand what the data revealed in relation to my research questions. As new data were collected, I moved among phases of reading the data analytically and generating initial codes. I used these initial codes to describe and interpret the data collected. These initial codes were consolidated into categories within the spreadsheet program. From these categories, patterns began to emerge.

I employed the method of writing analytic memos within my reflective journal to consider and reconsider the data collected as well as the inquiry process itself. Saldaña (2013) states, "the purposes of analytic memo writing are to document and reflect on: your coding processes and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data" (p. 41). This approach resulted in many codes that I consolidated into categories and patterns.

This examination and reexamination of the data, initial codes, and consolidated patterns led to the construction of themes. Braun et al. (2012) state, "analysts are like sculptors, making choices about how to shape and craft their piece of stone (the "raw

data") into a work of art (the analysis)" (p. 63). In constructing themes, I sketched maps detailing my preliminary ideas before representing these in the form of a table. This table was further revised as I moved through the final phases of reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report of the findings. In these phases, I reviewed and selected extracts from the data in order to generate a strong and thorough argument that answered the research questions guiding this study.

Research Issues

   Triangulation. I used triangulation of multiple sources of data to increase the trustworthiness of this study. Glesne (2011) explains that multiple sources make the data more rich and findings more complex. Data included initial and final questionnaires, classroom observations, coaching conversations, field notes, and reflective journals of the participants and myself. These multiple sources of data allowed me to form an authentic picture of my co-researchers' experiences and professional growth.

   Member Checking. Maxwell (2013) describes member checks as essential in determining your own biases and misunderstandings as well as "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on" (p. 126). Reflecting on data with my participants as co-researchers is an essential step in participatory action research. Through coaching conversations I actively sought their interpretations and understandings as well. Through this interactive process, we determined initial patterns emerging from the data. At the end of data collection, we shared findings and reflected on the implications for professional practice that emerged. I strived to maintain a feeling of equality as we explored the data and conclusions together.

Trustworthiness and Generalizability. This study sought to discover what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices. As I interacted with teachers over the course of one semester, they had opportunities to grow their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge through coaching conversations and increased literacy coaching support. Since the English teachers in this study are at different stages of balanced literacy implementation, they also had the opportunity to begin or continue implementation of the balanced literacy framework of instruction.

It is important to note that this study is constrained to the unique context in which the research was conducted and is not meant to be generalized. However, it may provide insight into ways in which district-level administrators can support teachers implementing balanced literacy through professional collaboration in high-poverty schools. This study may also provide insight into the effects of teacher and administrative turnover in a historically underperforming district.

Ethical Considerations. Using action research as a research methodology requires constant negotiation and mindfulness of issues of ethics in the research. This study gained approval from IRB and the researchers remained conscious of the specific ethical considerations necessary when conducting participatory action research. Stuart (1998) envisions this as a two-step processes where the researcher and co-researchers begin by developing a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities in the research project and by developing a specific plan of action followed by considerable attention to the principle of care and concern in order to advocate for change. This study followed those guidelines by maintaining transparency among the researcher and co-

researchers throughout each phase of the inquiry process. Every consideration to maintain anonymity was kept through the use of pseudonyms for the purpose of writing this dissertation; however, as Stuart (1998) recognizes action research within an organization cannot remain fully anonymous when the very nature and purpose of the research seeks individual and institutional change.

Subjectivity. Garaway (2004) asserts, "the nature of education, development, and learning *is* subjective" (p. 261). My personal and professional interests guide this research as both a participant and researcher investigating phenomena within the context of my professional work. As the English Language Arts Coordinator, I have actively worked with elementary reading coaches to implement the balanced literacy framework in the elementary schools within CSD. Extensive on-going professional learning and resources have been provided to elementary teachers. Middle and high school teachers do not have the support of reading coaches at the school level. To provide them with similar professional development on the reading and writing workshop model, I have led district-wide professional development sessions on using a balanced literacy approach to increase student engagement including demonstration workshop lessons and have provided teachers with a district ELA curriculum framework modeled after the one created for elementary teachers. This professional development, however, is limited to district professional development days once a year. The teachers involved in this study are aware of my beliefs and experiences implementing balanced literacy in CSD.

Conclusion

In summary, I used action research with participatory methods to explore what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school teachers' beliefs and

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practices. My study sought to discover how this type of professional development supports teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction. I engaged participants in an active inquiry process where they became co-researchers moving toward individual and possibly institutional change. I used the phases of thematic analysis (TA) to analyze data collected and construct themes that answered the following research questions:

1. How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?

2. In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?

3. What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?

In the next chapter, I will argue how this work will contribute to the growing body of literature on literacy coaching as a model for support as high school English teachers move toward using the balanced literacy framework of instruction.

Chapter 4: Findings

Over the course of one semester, I entered into cycles of coaching with four high school English teachers. The high schools in Claremont School District (CSD) follow a block schedule. This type of schedule is similar to college where students complete an entire course within one semester. The teachers with whom I worked all taught on this type of schedule. Two taught English 1 College Preparation (CP), which was comprised of ninth grade students. One taught English 2 Honors, which was comprised of mostly ninth grade gifted and talented students and some tenth grade students, and one taught English 3 CP, which was comprised of eleventh grade students. In this chapter I will discuss what I discovered about ways teachers' instructional beliefs influence their literacy practices. I will also examine how an administrative model of coaching can support teachers' professional needs as they prepare to implement the balanced literacy framework of instruction.

Having been a literacy coach before, I was well aware of the time needed to effectively support teachers in making changes to their instructional practices. I felt confident in my ability to manage my time between my district administrative duties and coaching since one aspect of my position as ELA coordinator is to support teachers through observing and reflecting. At the start of this study, I did not feel that those aspects of my job were in conflict. Having prior knowledge of how a coaching relationship functioned allowed me to prepare by planning cycles of support. These cycles began with a pre-conference to set a focus for the cycle. The pre-conference was

followed by observation, modeling, or co-teaching depending on the teachers' focus area. Cycles ended in a post-conference to debrief and set goals and action steps for the next cycle.

Because of my position as ELA Coordinator, I had previously formed relationships with the teachers involved in the study. All were receptive to beginning an extended coaching relationship. My goal for this study was to help them prepare to implement the balanced literacy framework. I was eager to see how an administrative model of coaching would affect their instructional beliefs and practices.

When I reviewed the literature on literacy coaching, support became a common trend in the studies reviewed. Exploring my role as both an administrator and as a tool for supporting teachers' professional growth was a main interest going into this study. I was most interested in exploring how administrators could use the coaching model to support teachers with whom they work. In addition, I was interested in what effect on instructional practices literacy coaching played, and what coaching conversations revealed about teachers' instructional beliefs and practices. I formalized these three interests into the following research questions:

1. How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?

2. In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?

3. What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?

I employed cycles of coaching over the course of one semester to explore what these questions could reveal. As I coded and analyzed the data, I began to notice patterns

in the excerpts. Upon further examination, themes related to reflective practice and

teaching identity began to take shape. The excerpts presented in this chapter illustrate

major themes and findings present in the data.

This chapter is divided into three sections based both on the research questions

and the major findings. Figure 4.1 relates an overview of the findings and related

themes.

Research Question	Findings	Themes
How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?	Literacy coaching provides a tool for differentiating support.	"Let's talk": Engaging in reflective conversation Being there: Modeling and co-teaching
In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?	Strategies employed are of personal interest and immediate need.	"Make your chart!": Interest and need
What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?	Incorporating new practices challenges teaching identity.	"I know me": Maintaining comfort and Control

Figure 4.1 Overview of findings

Differentiated Support

My first research question centered on the idea of support. This question asked

how an ELA coordinator could support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced

literacy framework of instruction. Analysis of the data for this question resulted in one

major finding: literacy coaching provides a tool for differentiating support. Support for

teachers presented itself primarily in two ways. The first was through coaching

conversations, and the second was through working within teachers' classrooms to model

and co-teach. These forms of support are represented by the following themes: "Let's

talk": Engaging in reflective conversation and Being there: Modeling and co-teaching. The following sections provide excerpts from the data that exemplify each theme.

"Let's talk": Engaging in reflective conversation. Coaching conversations offered a form of differentiated support through the use of reflective feedback. Conversations typically followed a three-step pattern of examining current instructional practices, exploring the purpose behind the use of current practices, and suggesting small changes to modify current practices. I employed this method of guided reflection to create a non-judgmental space for teachers to consider the purpose behind their current practices and to envision how modifying their practice might better serve their intended purpose.

Amy. One exemplar of this theme comes from a post-observation reflective coaching conversation with Amy. During the observation, I tracked student engagement during the shared reading portion of her lesson as well as the frequency and type of questions asked. Amy read aloud from *The Great Gatsby* while students followed in their copy of the text.

Although she had intended to use shared reading for this section of the text, the actual use of the component did not follow the qualities of shared reading. Amy had been concerned about her students' ability to read and comprehend grade-level texts independently. She felt that using shared reading would help students analyze the text better by providing students with a fluent model and drawing students' attention to significant segments in the chapter. This portion of the following coaching conversation

illustrates how reflective feedback assists teachers in examining current instructional practices and provides space for considering small changes in practice.

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, April 11)

Me:	So I noticed that you were attempting shared reading today. Tell me about what you wanted to accomplish with that? What was the purpose?
Amy:	So many of these students struggle with reading. They just can't read it by themselves. I really wanted them to understand this part before we got into the study guide. They just don't seem to get what's going on.
Me:	I noticed you stopped to ask questions. Tell me about the places you stopped and why.
Amy:	There's so much I want them to get out of *Gatsby*. They really have to pay attention to all the details. There's just so much, and I have to lead them or they won't see it. There's so much with color symbolism and they struggle with that.
Me:	Yes, I saw you were asking lots of questions during that part. When you started at 12:40, all students that I could see were tracking text along with you, but you stopped at 12:42 to ask questions. During the time period from 12:45 to 12:55 you stopped seventeen more times during the reading to ask questions (read some examples of questions asked), and each time I noticed less students tracking when you started reading again.

Amy: Oh, I knew I was stopping to ask questions, but I didn't realize I was stopping so much.

Me: What do you think about stopping less often so that they can get into the flow of the text? I know *Gatsby* has a lot that you want them to notice, but you can set that up before the reading by telling them what you want them to pay attention to and limiting the places where you stop to only three that are essential places where they should have just noticed something important.

Amy: Yeah, I can try that. I can focus on areas they need to analyze for their character analysis.

In this portion of our coaching conversation, I named the component Amy was attempting and asked her to reflect on her purpose for using shared reading. At first she viewed shared reading as a way to ensure all students had read and understood the pages needed to answer the chapter questions on the study guide. This purpose led her to stop often and ask questions that served to check students' comprehension of what was happening in the text. These questions often asked students to recall details from the previous sentence. She realized students did not comprehend the material, but she did not connect their inability to comprehend to the frequency at which she was interrupting the flow of reading to ask questions.

Through this series of interchanges, I attempted to acknowledge a technique she was trying, narrow the focus, provide reflection through observation, and provide a strategy to complement what she was already doing. In this case she was attempting to use shared reading to build comprehension; however, the frequency and type of questions

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asked blocked students from reading the text as a fluent reader would. She never allowed students to do the work of comprehending the text on their own. My suggestion to set the focus before reading and limit herself to no more than three key places to stop and question provided her with a clear direction to implement a new strategy in order to refine a technique she was already using.

One of the goals in this unit was to prepare students to write an essay analyzing Fitzgerald's use of character in relation to the idea of the American dream. This reflective coaching conversation provided a space for Amy to process her use of an instructional practice and to consider how that practice was meeting or not meeting her pre-determined goals for student learning. The suggestion portion of this coaching conversation closely aligned with her original goals and met a specific instructional need.

Amy was able to further modify the practice and incorporate it in her approach to reading the novel. Between this coaching conversation on April 11 and her reflective journal entry on April 25, Amy began applying this strategy to her reading of the novel with students as seen in the following excerpt:

(Notes from Amy's reflective journal, April 25)

I like the idea of having only three major questions per chapter as suggested by Mrs. Kimpton. This forced me to dive a little deeper into the text than I normally would have. I began putting the questions on the Promethean board for students to copy down at the beginning of class and having them answer the questions throughout the reading by themselves really encouraged individual thinking.

Amy further refined this suggestion as she began to apply it in her classroom. Her decision to display the questions on the Promethean board and have students respond first

in writing provided an additional scaffold for students' comprehension and analysis of text.

For Amy, coaching conversations created a space to explore why she chose the practices she employed in the classroom. She continued exploring her practices and refining her use of the strategies I suggested through her use of a reflective journal. As a new teacher, Amy was eager to align her instructional practices with ways of being in the classroom that matched her instructional goals for the students and her desire "to become an all-star educator" as she indicated in her pre-study questionnaire. Reflective coaching conversations served as a model for how she could reflect on her own long after the coaching conversation ended.

James. An excerpt from a coaching conversation with James also exemplifies this theme. In this exchange, James was frustrated with his students' performance on the vocabulary portion of a test he had given in class. He felt that he had provided enough instruction in the vocabulary related to the short story they were studying. In our reflective coaching conversation that followed, James expressed frustration with how the students performed on the vocabulary section of the short story selection test. The following excerpt demonstrates how coaching conversations must follow a teacher's lead even when the coach may want to move in a different direction:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 27)

Me: I see. Let's look at the types of items they missed. Did you create

                 the test?

James: No, it's from the textbook. Why, should I have?

Me: Well, that would depend on the purpose of the test. Do you want

	to see if your kids could recall the story or do you want to see if they can transfer the skills you taught using the story to a new text—a cold read, one they've never read before?
James:	I never thought about that.
Me:	What do you notice about the students' responses?
James:	They did not do well on the vocabulary section. They've got to use the words. They're not doing that. They're just memorizing.

We examined the items and patterns of student responses. The districts' data management system allows teachers to analyze the patterns of students' responses to multiple choice test items. Teachers can see the percentage of students choosing the correct answer versus incorrect answers. It also shows progress toward mastery of the tested standards in the colors green, yellow, and red. We examined the alignment of particular questions to the depth of knowledge required by the standard. This presented me with the opportunity to discuss the limitations of textbook-made tests. My intention was that I could help James realize that he could assess the same skills and increase students' authentic use of vocabulary through writing by showing him how the textbook generated tests did not assess students at the level of rigor of the standards:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 27)

Me:	So the core idea is that as long as learning is going on and fits the standards, then EOC won't be a problem. What do you think about giving them time to read independently?
James:	I do that. They read *Upfront* magazine for informational text.

	They can choose anything they want to read out of the
	magazine. Then I have them write about what they read.
Me:	Ok, how about young adult novels?
James:	I want them to read and read anything. I want them to gather information and enjoy reading. Students do like to check out books from the library, but they don't want to write.
Me:	Why do you think that is?
James:	They've probably only had formulaic writing experiences. You know, prepping for the test.
Me:	Well, that may be true somewhat, but I know the teachers they had last year in eighth grade used lots of writing during reading and building up to an essay at the end, so these kids have had some experience with gallery walks, carousel brainstorming, and writing in response to reading. I know you're doing a lot of that in your state PLO meetings. What do you think you want to focus on for our time together this semester?
James:	I want to get this vocabulary piece right. Vocabulary is key. Let's focus on that.
Me:	I noticed that you had them copy the words from the board, define them, and locate context clues in the sentence. How did you choose those words?
James:	They are the ones from the book.
Me:	There are two strategies we can try. One is to give them a list and

have them rate their knowledge of the words. The other is for them to create the list. Let's talk about the vocabulary inventory first.

This excerpt demonstrates the need to follow the teacher's lead in coaching conversations. I wanted to move James toward implementation of the balanced literacy framework by trying to direct the conversation first to components of writing workshop and then to independent reading when he said, "I want them to read and read anything." In this interchange I was trying to decide what aspects of balanced literacy he might be comfortable in trying. In the moment I saw his desire for his students to read more in his statement. As I attempted to steer the conversation in that direction, he brought up writing again. In my response about the eighth grade teachers, I hoped I would be able to direct the conversation to writing as a response to independent reading during reading workshop; however, my line of reflective questioning led to James circling back to his need to "get this vocabulary piece right." At that moment I decided to start small with James by offering student-centered vocabulary strategies.

Reflections on coaching conversations. Throughout my work with the teachers in this study, I found myself making choices between following the teachers' lead and following my own agenda. My ultimate goal was to change teachers' practice, but I worried that pushing teachers too far too fast would harm the relationships I had built with the veteran teachers and sabotage the new relationship I was forming with Amy.

I often felt tension between my positionality as an administrator and coach. I wanted teachers to make changes because they wanted to and not because I, as an administrator, suggested they do so. This caused me to make choices in the moment on

which topics to pursue. By offering a literacy strategy or a small change to a teacher's approach, I felt as if I were being supportive rather than judgmental. This was important to me because I was working to show the teachers that I genuinely cared about their professional growth rather than merely improving test scores. I understood that changing a teaching practice involves risk. I wanted them to feel comfortable and see me as a partner in this work.

Each teacher needed different levels of support based on their specific situations. Coaching conversations provided a space where I could serve as a model for reflective practice and offer additional forms of support. Offering resources and strategies gave teachers a chance to try a slightly different practice independently where modeling and co-teaching offered teachers more direct support.

Being there: Modeling and co-teaching. Modeling and co-teaching also offered forms of support in order to move teachers toward student-centered instruction. In my work with Sandra and Amy, modeling and co-teaching became another tool for professional growth and a regular feature of our work together. Both of these teachers were new. Amy, a first-year teacher, was new to teaching. For Sandra, working with ninth graders was a new experience. Coaching conversations with both teachers revealed how being new to teaching or new to teaching a particular grade level created a sense of uncertainty about their teaching craft. Modeling and co-teaching supported Amy and Sandra by providing a live example for working through areas of uncertainty in their practice.

Sandra. Upon observing a lesson on February 28 from Sandra's argument writing unit that we had outlined together in a previous coaching conversation, I realized

that she was unclear about how to teach students to write a problem-solution

essay. During the post-observation conference, Sandra asked to observe me teaching

students how to write a problem-solution essay. Modeling for Sandra encompassed more

than demonstrating a lesson. Sandra was having difficulty making the adjustment from

teaching seniors to teaching ninth graders. Working with students who needed focused

instruction and clear feedback in order to produce a specific type of essay was new to her.

I chose to provide three specific types of modeling in this instance. These were planning,

teaching, and assessing the effectiveness of the learning.

The first form of support for Sandra started before the model lesson by providing

her a copy of the lesson plan. Lesson planning was an area we had generally addressed

when we outlined the minilessons students would need in order to produce an effective

problem-solution essay during our coaching conversation on February 20. After

observing the lesson on February 28 and reflecting during the coaching conversation, I

realized Sandra needed a specific model for lesson planning. I shared the following

lesson plan with her in preparation of the model lesson on March 4:

Standard: E1-W.1.1

Learning Target: Today I will learn how to generate ideas for and structure a problem-solution essay.

Success Criteria:
- I chose a topic of interest.
- I identified an audience for my essay.
- I wrote a "how" question for my topic.
- I described the problem in detail.
- I generated a list of possible solutions with my audience in mind.
- I wrote a clear thesis statement that stated the problem and identified solutions.
- I completed an outline.
- I began/completed a draft of my problem-solution essay.

(10 min.) Bell ringer: The video "How Gen Z Will Change the World," explains how

today's teens are different from other generations. After watching the video, write a response explaining why you agree or disagree with the experts. Use evidence from the text to support your response.

(10 - 15 min) Minilesson: How to structure a problem-solution essay.
- Anchor chart with steps
- Generate list of problems facing youth today
- Model getting started & drafting an outline

(45 min) Independent Writing:
- 1:1 conferences/small group re-teaching (as needed)
- Students complete outline & begin drafting

(15 min.) Closure:
- Review anchor chart
- Students self-assess/peer assess progress using success criteria checklist
- Share out (if time)

Figure 4.2 Model lesson plan

By sharing the lesson plan, I wanted to show Sandra how each portion of a lesson is focused on a learning target aligned to a specific English language arts standard. I also wanted to demonstrate how I planned to segment the time during the class period to enable students to apply the concepts demonstrated during the minilesson. Finally, I wanted Sandra to see how defining success criteria for the lesson provided clarity for both the teacher and students. I hoped that this model lesson plan would provide her with a concrete example to use when writing her own lesson plans.

Modeling an entire lesson for Sandra was an eye-opening experience for both of us. In my position as ELA coordinator and my former position as a literacy coach, I have modeled many lessons. The context of this lesson posed a particular challenge as I detailed in an excerpt from my reflective coaching journal on March 4:

I feel about as frustrated as she does. The students were mostly well behaved, but they kept trying to pull me off the lesson plan to avoid working/learning. I can see why she gets distracted and doesn't get much accomplished. If I didn't

have a good handle on my content or classroom management techniques, I would

not be able to continue with this group.

At the start of the lesson, I gave the students a small handout that listed the learning target and success criteria identified in the lesson plan. I planned to use this as a tool to help the students see what I expected we would accomplish that day. This strategy also served as a self-assessment for students. By checking off the success criteria they mastered, they would be able to see if they were on track for meeting the learning target.

During our coaching conversation later in the day, Sandra and I discussed how I dealt with the behavior challenges her students posed and how I used the success criteria checklist to keep students focused. She was able to observe how having a detailed lesson plan serves as a guide when students actively try to distract others from learning. She was also able to see that I did not accomplish everything I had intended to do in my lesson plan because even I overestimated students' prior knowledge about writing essays and their willingness to engage in learning. This conversation validated some of the concerns she was having with the students' behavior and academic ability.

Students struggled with each step of the lesson from responding to the bell ringer to describing a problem in writing. We discussed how I modified the lesson when I realized students were not ready to write a thesis and generate an outline. I explained what I was thinking in those moments and why I chose to deviate from the lesson plan. After the lesson, I read and responded in writing to students' work in meeting the first five bullet points on the success criteria checklist. I did this so that Sandra could see how I assessed students' mastery of the portions of the lesson we were able to complete. I divided the students' papers into three stacks: met, approaching, and not met.

During our coaching conversation, we examined students' work from the lesson. I showed Sandra how to assess students' progress toward mastery of the learning target and how to use student data to adjust the lesson plan for the next day. I shared her concerns about the students' writing ability. This served as further validation for the frustrations she had been feeling with this group. However, I needed her to understand that planning lessons for this group of students had to take their abilities into account, and that her work with this group of students would have to go further than assigning an essay and providing time to write. As I continued to coach Sandra over the semester, I spent less time observing and more time conferring with students during the portions of the lesson where they were writing independently. This co-teaching approach served as a way to assist Sandra in supporting the students' academic needs.

Amy. While I did not model a minilesson for Amy, I did work with individual students during the lessons and debrief with her afterwards about the instructional decisions I was making during that time. This coaching move served as a model for how to individualize instruction for students. As evidenced by the following excerpt from Amy's post-study questionnaire, co-teaching served as a way to support Amy in her professional growth as well as provide support for her students in thinking deeply about the work in which they were engaging:

> My students LOVED when Mrs. Kimpton was here. While I was in front teaching, she was going around helping those who really needed one-on-one. I wish that support system could be a classroom norm for them.

This form of co-teaching also served as a model for how to confer with students. Amy consistently taught from the front of the room. Her room was arranged

with the desks in rows of three on each side of the room facing a center aisle. At the front of the classroom were the Promethean board, teacher's desk area, and a podium located in the center front of the room. This classroom arrangement allowed ample room to reach every student; however, Amy rarely ventured from the podium and desk area.

By positioning myself at the back of the room, I could easily move among the rows on each side. When they were responding to texts in writing, I would also provide one-on-one support to students who seemed to be struggling with putting their ideas on paper. I would ask them to tell me what they were thinking so that they could hear their own response. This approach helped them think through their answers before starting to write. During turn-and-talk portions of the lesson, I would listen in to students' conversations and provide small group support to encourage their analysis by asking probing questions.

Amy became more comfortable supporting students individually by the end of the semester. In an observation on May 2, I noticed that Amy came from behind the podium to confer with students on the left side of the room while I was working with students on the right side. This shows how co-teaching provided Amy with a concrete demonstration of new ways to work with students. Engaging in reflective coaching conversations about the work we were doing together in the classroom provided Amy with a space to consider how these new practices were supporting students' academic growth.

Amy's increasing comfort with using student-centered instructional techniques also appeared in her teaching of writing. As we planned the unit in March, I had suggested that Amy model how to write the character analysis essay by incorporating shared writing into her minilessons. Although I was privately concerned that her

apparent discomfort in engaging with the students in a way that demonstrated vulnerability would hinder her from attempting this strategy, she began using shared writing regularly as the semester continued.

The following excerpt from our last coaching conversation on June 5 shows how Amy became more comfortable as the semester progressed:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, June 5)

Me: What changed for you over this semester?

Amy: In modeling writing, I showed how I let go of sentences. This was

new for them. They began to understand the importance of

picking the right quote. Some didn't understand that quote didn't

mean words in quotation marks. I want to try to do that again

when I teach the research paper next year. I think that will really

help.

Working with Amy through co-teaching helped her feel more comfortable in finding ways to support student learning. She slowly began to leave the safety of her teacher area at the podium and venture into the classroom to support students individually. Modeling writing provided her with an opportunity to demonstrate a particular craft move such as "letting go of sentences" and support students individually as they found sentences in their writing to revise.

Reflections on differentiating support. Working with each of the teachers required different levels of support for many different reasons. With Carl and James, I found myself following their lead in coaching conversations and looking for small ways to impact their teaching approaches such as offering strategies as I will discuss in the next

section. I felt more comfortable taking a hands-on approach with Amy and Sandra through modeling and co-teaching. This may be due to my perception of the teachers' willingness to change and my assessment of their classroom management strategies.

Carl and James did not have any issues with classroom management. Students completed the tasks assigned and any overt resistance to comply with class activities was promptly addressed. Carl and James both projected confidence working with students although their teaching styles were more traditional. On the other hand, I had concerns with the level of student engagement in both Amy's and Sandra's classes. I attributed this lack of engagement to classroom management and confidence.

In Amy's class, I determined the disengagement I observed was affected by the delivery of the lesson and Amy's reluctance to leave the front of the room. My coaching moves during reflective conversations centered on helping Amy reflect on the purpose of her instructional decisions, and co-teaching provided a model of how one-on-one and small group conferring supports student learning. I felt comfortable working with Amy and her students. She genuinely wanted to teach in a more student-centered way and had a firm grasp of the content. As Amy grew more confident in her facilitation of student-centered instructional practices, engagement increased.

I had more serious concerns with classroom management and student engagement in Sandra's class. Although Sandra had been teaching longer than Amy, she was new to teaching ninth grade students. In particular, Sandra was new to teaching reluctant readers and writers who needed explicit instruction during minilessons. I struggled with how to best support Sandra's professional growth implementing the balanced literacy framework

and understanding of English 1 content and standards as evidenced by my reflective

journal entry after an observation/co-teaching session on March 15:

> She's not ready for this [balanced literacy] with this group. She needs a detailed
>
> lesson plan to follow. She can't create this on her own. The textbook is not
>
> structured in a way that she can really use it. It jumps around a lot and isn't
>
> focused on a theme. It just moves from one story to the next without much
>
> connection. It's not a good example for someone to follow who wants to learn
>
> balanced literacy.

Sandra struggled with effectively aligning her lessons to standards in addition to

the challenges she was experiencing with classroom management. The lessons I had

observed thus far did not support students' mastery of English 1 content standards. I

determined the challenges she was experiencing from the students were largely due to a

lack of confidence in teaching freshmen, limited English 1 content knowledge, and

difficulty planning effective lessons. I knew she needed more support in understanding

what skills students were expected to master and how to scaffold lessons so that students

were able to reach mastery. After thinking more about how to use the resources available

to assist Sandra in planning lessons, I decided to suggest using the textbook as seen from

another portion of my March 15 reflective journal entry as I prepared for our post-

observation reflective coaching conference:

> After thinking more about this, there is a part of the textbook that does group
>
> around a theme. She hasn't used the book yet. I will suggest that she start with
>
> the text set part of Unit 1 in the textbook. It will give her some structured
>
> guidance and provide the students with more organized and grade-level

appropriate curriculum. The text set is on the theme of conformity. Most ninth graders can relate to this. All of the readings relate to the theme. The readings also cover several genres. This will expose students to more types of texts. This may be the best I can do to help the students get ready for EOC while providing Sandra something detailed and structured to follow. The unit ends with choices for essays. I will guide her to have students write an argumentative text using the "Writing to Sources" section on pp. 182-183. I will encourage her to finish up this writing assignment and begin the Unit 1 text set in the book next week.

Negotiating my roles of support as a coach and as an administrator became increasingly difficult. Sandra was extremely receptive to co-teaching and any suggestions I made during reflective coaching conversations, but the struggles she was experiencing with the students and content were being noticed by administration as well. On March 20, her principal asked to meet with me about the support I was providing. I briefed him on the lessons I had modeled and co-taught and the unit and lesson planning resources I had provided. We shared similar concerns about how prepared the students were for the approaching state end-of-course exam. After asking Sandra's permission to share our communications, I began to include the administrative team on all communications so that they could continue to support her between my visits.

After an observation/co-teaching session and reflective coaching conversation on April 11, I was once again frustrated that Sandra's lessons were not appropriately aligned to grade-level standards. She chose not to use the writing section of textbook I had suggested and instead wrote her own prompts. Her objective indicated that students would be learning how to compose a text-dependent analysis essay analyzing the theme

of "The Scarlett Ibis," but the essay prompts she had chosen to create required students to describe a personal experience instead of analyzing theme. In our reflective conference, I asked that she share the essay prompts with me so that I could review them and provide specific feedback. My tone in this April 12 email shows my struggle with straddling the line between coach and administrator:

> Thank you for sending me the prompts you were using yesterday as I asked. We previously discussed the structure of TDA [text-dependent analysis] prompts in preparation for this unit. I have provided feedback on how to improve these prompts so that they lead students into writing a thematic analysis essay. Students must understand that themes in literature cannot be stated in a single word or phrase. When looking for mastery, students must be able to independently determine a theme and analyze its development over the course of the text. To provide students with the needed instruction and practice before the upcoming EOC, please begin teaching the attached unit as soon as we return from spring break. If you have any questions, please let me know.

At this point in the semester, I was completely frustrated with the limitations of guiding through reflective feedback. The writing portion of the end-of-course exam was less than a month away, and the students were no closer to being prepared for this high-stakes test. I felt compelled to provide an even more detailed unit plan. This unit plan included analyzing mentor texts and composing a text-dependent analysis essay as a class. Step-by-step instructions were provided for teaching each lesson. Teaching this unit was no longer a suggestion or an option. Because of the frustration I was feeling, I assumed more of an administrative tone in my communication with Sandra.

My concern for the students affected how I chose to represent myself as a coach. With Sandra, I became increasingly concerned over time that students were not receiving the level of instruction needed to be successful on the end-of-course exam. This caused me to differentiate my level of support and take on more of an administrative role. With the other teachers, I felt confident in their content knowledge. I was able to maintain a coaching stance as they implemented new strategies and techniques. In the next section I explore how coaching relationships impacted teachers' practice through the strategies they chose to employ in their work with students.

Interest and Need Drive Change

As a result of reflective coaching conversations, modeling, and co-teaching, the teachers involved in this study began to make small changes to their instructional practices. My second research question explored how coaching affected instructional practice. This question asked: In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices? Analysis of the data for this research question resulted in one major finding: strategies employed are of personal interest and immediate need. The strategies teachers tried and the needs they presented in coaching conversations consistently encompassed these two driving factors.

"Make your chart!": Interest and need. All of the teachers with whom I worked identified areas of interest within the balanced literacy framework. The first step in support often came in the form of a tangible resource to support both their specific goal area and a move toward a student-centered instructional practice. Evidence for this theme first emerged in the pre-study questionnaire. The following excerpts from Amy's

and Sandra's pre-study questionnaire shows what each teacher wanted to accomplish from our work together:

Sandra: 1. I want to be able to be confident in my subject matter.

2. I desire to master literature circles and the writers workshop model.

3. [I desire] To gain a better understanding of how I can use data to influence my student's learning.

4. I desire to master all of the above and incorporate technology correctly with it.

Amy: Not only do I want a better understanding of balanced literacy, but I want to be able to effectively apply it in my classroom. I want to see growth and excitement from my students, and I want to have a hand in stopping readicide (the killing of reading...also a great book by Kelly Gallagher). [I want to know] how to implement effective lit circles and book clubs into our classrooms. Let's not kill reading.

Both Sandra and Amy expressed interest from the start in specific balanced literacy components they wanted to learn more about and possibly apply in their classrooms. This provided me with a focus for our first coaching conference and an idea of what I could do to provide support for their professional growth. They both also demonstrated a level of uncertainty. For Sandra, this is evidenced when she wrote, "I want to be able to be confident in my subject matter." For Amy this is evidenced when she wrote, "I want to be able to effectively apply it in my classroom." In contrast, Carl

and James did not identify specific resources or components of the balanced literacy framework they wanted to learn more about. They were generally interested in the concept of new ideas:

Carl: I am always open to trying new ideas; however, it must make sense to me as being better than what works. I want my kids to learn and to grow. I also want to maintain my sense of self and control in my classroom.

James: I have my own style that works that may not work with others, but I'm willing to be open to and share ideas with anyone.

Although Carl and James did not directly specify components or strategies they wanted to learn more about or improve, their responses indicated they were "open" to "ideas" that corresponded to their teaching identity. It is interesting to note that Carl and James are veteran teachers with more than twenty years of experience which may explain their hesitation to indicate a specific component at the start of the study. Even though Carl and James did not indicate a specific component, they were receptive to implementing resources they perceived as "new ideas" as we progressed through coaching cycles. This was evidenced after the first post-observation conference with each teacher.

James. Although James did not indicate a specific area to observe during the first pre-observation coaching conference, he did indicate an area of concern during the post-observation conference on February 27:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 27)

James: Vocabulary is the key to success. If they read anything, [over

time] they can gain 3000 words. They have to be able to use context clues. They have lots of trouble with that. They are just not using the words. That's why I had the homework tonight. They've got to use the words to learn them. EOC is all about context clues. Benchmark too. They have got to be able to do that well. Look at these scores. They're not getting it [gesturing to the screen displaying analytics of the test students took in class that period].

James wanted his students to be able to use context clues effectively when reading, but the instruction during the lesson did not focus on using context clues. Instead, instruction focused primarily on learning definitions for new words they would encounter in the upcoming short story as seen in the excerpt from the observation below. The only reference to context clues came from the fact that they would copy the sentence from the book that contained the vocabulary word. After copying the definition in the margin, the students indicated which words in the sentence provided context clues for the bold vocabulary word chosen by the textbook company.

10:55	(Test code displayed.)	(Students are taking a test on the computer on "The Gift of the Magi.")
11:00		
11:05	(Teacher writing on front whiteboard) On Board: Recopy Everyday Edit and turn in. Read pp. 80-81. Take notes in notebook. Vocabulary on back board.	
11:10		
11:15		
11:20		
11:25		
11:30	(Remarked about notetaking and vocabulary assignment.) "Like we always do—vocabulary, definitions, and context clues."	(Student collected highlighters)

Figure 4.3 Excerpt from observation: James

These portions of the observation transcript and post-conference coaching

conversation show a tendency toward using traditional instructional strategies such as

copying definitions and underlining context clues. Clearly James was frustrated with the

results of these strategies when he stated, "they are just not using the words" and "they've

got to use the words to learn them." Since he had previously indicated that reading

widely helped increase students' exposure to new words, I attempted to guide our

conversation to resources to initiate independent reading:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, Feb. 27)

Me:	So the core idea is that as long as learning is going on and fits the standards, then EOC won't be a problem. What do you think about giving them time to read independently?
James:	I do that. They read Upfront magazine for informational text. They can choose anything they want to read out of the magazine. Then I have them write about what they read.
Me:	Ok, how about young adult novels?
James:	I want them to read and read anything. I want them to gather information and enjoy reading. Students do like to check out books from the library, but they don't want to write.

I had planned to offer independent reading resources, but the nature of our

conversation circled back to vocabulary as the main area of concern. In the moment, I

opted to follow his lead and provide student-centered vocabulary strategies and save

authentic responses to independent reading for another conversation:

Me:	I noticed that you had them copy the words from the board, define

them, and locate context clues in the sentence. How did you

choose those words?

James: They are the ones from the book.

Me: There are two strategies we can try. One is to give them a list and

have them rate their knowledge of the words. The other is for

them to create the list. Let's talk about the vocabulary inventory

first.

Following this exchange, we discussed how to use a vocabulary inventory so that

students could self-assess their knowledge of the words provided. I also discussed with

him ways to enlist students in choosing vocabulary words from texts read in class. I

provided a vocabulary inventory chart and an explanation of how to use the strategy in an

email following the coaching conference.

The vocabulary inventory shared with James provided a tangible resource that he

could use with students. The strategies for creating student-generated vocabulary lists we

discussed during the coaching conversation provided James with an alternative method to

traditional vocabulary instruction. Providing specific strategies and resources to try with

students added purpose and direction in our work together.

Carl. Coaching conversations with the other teachers in the study also followed

the pattern of providing immediate resources to use in the classroom. Carl also did not

indicate a specific component of balanced literacy to address in his pre-study

questionnaire; however, after observing and reflecting with him about concerns he had

with students not responding to teacher-directed questions, I emailed resources for

student-centered engagements that could be used with his upcoming unit on Julius Caesar.

> Me (email Mar. 1):   Here's some JC engagements to get kids into reading JC without a study guide. Don't think you have to try it all. Choose something that appeals to you and let's talk.

During a subsequent observation, I noticed evidence of one of the reading literature strategies I had provided on the whiteboard. The strategy requires students to think about a text they had previously read in four different ways and share this specific thinking with a partner or small group. First, they sketch a part of the text they considered important. Next, they write an explanation of their sketch in detail noting what they drew and why. Then, they analyze the portion of text they sketched as if they were a professor lecturing a class. After the students complete the first three parts in writing, they enter discussion with a partner or small group to share these parts of the written engagement. During this discussion, students are expected to share their sketch, explanation, and analysis. Finally, as a close for the activity, students have space for free response and creativity. In this fourth space, students can write a poem or creative response about the text, summarize what they learned from the group, analyze how the discussion changed their thinking, or indicate areas that are still unclear.

Carl also implemented the use of double-entry journals and leveled questioning during the reading of *Old Man and the Sea*. During an observation on April 4 I noted "1st row, seat 6-Using Costas stems chart to write questions in double-entry journal." I had suggested using these resources as a move away from students using study guides during reading. I also suggested using these strategies as an alternative to teacher-

directed questioning during discussion. I thought that if students had a mechanism for generating their own text-dependent questions, then class discussions would become more student-driven and the burden for analysis of text would lie with the students instead of students relying on the teacher to lead the analysis of literature. Providing material resources and strategies became the primary way to gain entry into classrooms as a way to elicit a move toward balanced literacy instruction.

   Sandra. Resources provided took many forms depending on what the teacher I was working with felt was needed. Sandra indicated she was interested in establishing writing workshop with her students in the pre-study questionnaire. During an early coaching conference, we discussed beginning a writing workshop on argument to coincide with the speeches they had been reading:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, Feb. 20)

Sandra:	Yeah, I want to finish that up and write an essay.
Me:	Ok, what do you want them to do informational, argument, literary analysis?
Sandra:	Let's do argument.
Me:	Ok, what type of argument?
Sandra:	(silence)
Me:	Problem-solution, editorial, speech--
Sandra:	Problem-solution. They need that. Let's do that.
Me:	Ok, let's write a prompt before I leave so we have a plan for writing workshop next week.

The students in her class would be taking a state end-of-course exam at the end of the semester that required them to be able to deconstruct a three-pronged prompt and write to sources. Because of this and my knowledge of her students needing additional support in these areas, I focused on crafting a three-pronged prompt together and discussing what minilessons students would need during writing workshop.

As the semester continued, I realized Sandra needed more specific resources for planning lessons with ninth grade students. Her background working with seniors who needed very little instruction in how to organize and develop essays had not prepared her for students who needed more support. Sandra's immediate needs deviated from her stated interests at the start of the study. Through our work together, I gave Sandra a planning template to use modeled on the lesson plan I shared with her March 4. After I saw she struggled with planning a complete unit of instruction in March, I provided her with a literary analysis essay unit to use in April that had lessons already prepared and resources hyperlinked. Providing planning resources to Sandra helped her focus her work with students and become more productive in teaching lessons.

The resources and strategies teachers chose to use differed significantly from the ones I had expected to offer after reading their pre-study questionnaire. This questionnaire provided them the opportunity to identify one or more goal areas on which to focus for the semester. It provided an idea of something they expected they would learn more about and possibly try with their students.

Both Amy and Sandra indicated interest in implementing literature circles in the pre-study questionnaire. However, both also indicated students' unwillingness to read independently for a sustained amount of time which is a necessary prerequisite for

implementing effective literature circles. This is evidenced by the following interchange in a coaching conversation with Sandra February on 20:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 20)

Me: What do you want to work on with this group? Last semester, we started independent reading. Are you still giving time in class for independent reading?

Sandra: Yeah, we need to get back to that. I've got a lot of reluctant readers, but I want to continue independent reading.

As part of my position in the district, I had been working closely with Sandra in the previous semester. Many of the students in this particular class had also been in her English elective class the semester before. That elective class was designed by the district as a way to provide students who needed additional support extra instruction in how to use comprehension skills effectively. During the last quarter of fall semester, she had begun independent reading but had not continued the practice as they moved into English 1 CP spring semester. While she stated that she did want to continue to try to implement independent reading, her main concern seemed to be preparing students for the end of course exam. The following excerpt shows how Sandra's interest in implementing independent reading with fidelity began to wane as her need for having students prepared for the end of course exam became a more pressing concern:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 20)

Sandra: Students have amnesia when it comes to skills they need on high-stakes tests. These kids aren't ready. In second block I have ten with IEPs, two ESOL, many African American Language

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speakers. They act like they are helpless. I have very few high achievers, many behavior issues as well. Right now I have about five with ten-plus referrals, one on medical homebound, one new student from New Jersey, and one repeater.

I shared Sandra's concern about her students being prepared for the exam. While I wanted her to embrace independent reading and use her minilessons as a way to teach comprehension strategies the students could then apply when reading choice texts, I also realized in this moment that her concerns about high-stakes testing coupled with the behavior problems she mentioned were her more immediate need. In this first pre-observation coaching conference, I made the decision to follow Sandra's lead as she identified an immediate area of need as evidenced by the following excerpt:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 20)

Sandra: Mr. M*(principal) modeled a lesson with my class.

Me: Ok, tell me about that. What did he do?

Sandra: He went over rules, policies, dress code, and did the "I Have a Dream" speech with them. I gave them the Obama speech on education and we looked at information on the cost of prison and lives.

Me: So is that what you are working on now?

Sandra: Yeah, I want to finish that up and write an essay.

This excerpt demonstrates an example of how interest and need affected my coaching decisions with Sandra. I had hoped to continue our work on establishing independent reading when I saw her desire to implement literature circles in the pre-study

questionnaire, but I quickly realized the more immediate need for Sandra and her students was to provide instruction that would prepare them for the end of course exam. In this moment, I decided to pursue assisting Sandra in establishing structures of writing workshop.

Amy. Amy, too, had indicated an interest in trying literature circles in her pre-study questionnaire. At the same time, she also noted students' reluctance to read as shown in this excerpt from her pre-study questionnaire:

> Amy: Lit circles or book clubs/studies/ independent reading. Students hate reading but I think it's more because they don't have the stamina for it. For independent reading I actually do timed reading. They don't have stamina at all when it comes to reading, so I'll have them read for three minutes, break, another three minutes on, two minutes off, etc.

I knew that establishing independent reading would be a necessary step in helping Amy implement literature circles. When I began coaching Amy, I quickly discovered that her more immediate need superseded her interest in literature circles.

These two excerpts from Sandra and Amy illustrate how personal interest and immediate need drive the choices teachers make when choosing areas of focus for working with a coach. Both Amy and Sandra had goals of wanting their students to be able to participate independently in literature circles, but both chose more immediate areas on which to focus when we began the coaching cycles.

Carl. During our first pre-conference, Carl also expressed interest in "trying literature circles this time." Carl was one of the teachers with whom I had worked in a

coaching relationship before over the course of one school year as part of a previous district initiative. In that year we focused on implementing writing workshop. Even though he had initially expressed interest in literature circles, he began to focus on a more immediate area of need as we progressed in our first pre-conference coaching conversation on February 19. Carl specifically asked me to notice students' responses to questioning when I came to observe his new English 2 Honors class. His more pressing concern was that this group of honors students were "too quiet" during class discussions:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 19)

Carl: They are silent. Completely silent. I can't get anything from them. When they write, some write too much but others don't write enough. They seem scared about making mistakes. I don't know what's going on with them.

Me: So do you want me to help you try to figure out why they are so quiet and what we can do to help them become more comfortable?

            Are both your classes quiet or just the first?

Carl: Both, but first is silent, and I have more time with them.

Me: When do you want me to observe, and what do you want me to look for or notice?

Carl: You can come on Tuesday. Let's figure out why they are so silent. [we discussed when they are silent; is it all the time or during direct questioning]

Me: Ok, so I'll look at questioning, pacing, and students' responses to

                direct questions.

This request established a focus for the first observation. Although Carl was

interested in implementing literature circles, the more immediate need in his opinion was

the fact that the students were not talking. He needed to understand if they were not

talking because they were afraid of "making mistakes" or if they did not know how to

have productive discussions about texts. Both of these possibilities would prove

problematic when trying to implement literature circles.

Carl continued to express interest in implementing literature circles in our

coaching conversations, but was hesitant because he was concerned about how students

would be able to analyze and discuss text to the level he expected without a study

guide. The following March 25 exchange illustrates the theme of personal interest and

immediate need as I attempt to provide Carl with ways to scaffold his students into

reading and analyzing texts without a study guide:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, March 25)

Carl: Well, I'd like to get to literature circles, but I don't know. How do

                I know that they'd get anything out of it? A study guide gives

                them certain things to look for when reading. How do I do that if

                they're reading different novels?

Me: They would definitely be doing some annotations to prepare for

                discussions. I always liked DEJs, double-entry journals. Y'all are

an AVID school too, so I would pair teaching them how to do DEJs with how to ask leveled questions of texts using Costas. I can share those with you.

Carl's expectation was that he would try to implement literature circles at some point in the semester, but his reality was that he was unsure how to have students analyze texts without a study guide. I realized in this coaching conversation that Carl and his students' more immediate need were strategies that shifted responsibility for analysis from the teacher to the students. Providing Carl with the Costas levels of questioning strategy and resources on how to analyze texts using a double-entry journal would be a good fit for his next unit of instruction on *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Carl used these resources to plan how students engaged with the *Old Man and the Sea*, and I conducted an observation April 11 to monitor students' engagement with the strategy. Over the thirty-five minutes students were reading and annotating independently, engagement on average was high at 93 percent. Carl, too, noticed improvement in students' overall performance on the compare and contrast essay students completed at the conclusion of the novel as seen in our last coaching conversation at the end of the semester:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, June 5)

Me: How did you feel about shifting to using the DEJ for *Old Man and the Sea*?

Carl: ...they [students] seemed to come away with a better

Understanding and were able to go deeper. In a lot of essays they

were comparing heroes in *Antigone*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Old Man*

and the Sea. It was clear they could analyze Santiago better.

While Carl's immediate need before venturing into literature circles was a way to

have his students become more responsible for analyzing texts, he never became

comfortable enough to implement literature circles. His comfort with more traditional

forms of instruction blocked him from moving from interest to implementation.

James. The theme of interest and need also appeared in the coaching conferences

with James. From our first pre-conference coaching conversation, James expressed

concerns about having his students prepared for end of course testing. Although our

district and individual school means are well below state average, James's English 1 CP

students typically score higher than other English 1 CP students across the district. His

concerns with preparing students for the test appeared often in coaching conversations;

however, he also often expressed the expectation for his students to "think critically" and

increase their reading volume. However, his more immediate reality was that students

did not have enough vocabulary knowledge and utilize context clues to effectively

enough comprehend grade-level texts.

The more immediate area of need for James was strategies for improving

students' vocabulary skills. He indicated this during our first post-conference coaching

conversation February 27 when he stated, "vocabulary is the key to success." While

conversations often included the acknowledgement that increasing reading volume

through independent reading was important, James was more focused on immediate

needs that were of personal interest to him as when he stated, "I want to get this vocabulary piece right. Vocabulary is key. Let's focus on that."

James's continued use of the vocabulary strategies introduced at the start of the semester were evident during an observation in April. Although his students were still using the textbook as the basis for their reading, his approach to vocabulary had changed to a more student-centered approach to instruction as seen in the following classroom observation excerpt from April 9:

(Notes from classroom observation, April 9)

James: Make your chart—Know it, Heard it, Have no idea. Read pp. 494-495 with your group. Pull vocabulary from the "Elements of Drama" notes on those pages…How do you know which words are important to know?

Student: They are bold.

James: Yes, then ask yourself the questions on the chart. Only write the definitions for the ones you don't know.

This excerpt shows how James's instruction of vocabulary shifted over the semester to a more student-centered approach. His immediate need in our first post-observation coaching conference to "get this vocabulary piece right" led him to choose a strategy that was of personal interest and added value to his teaching. As evidenced by the way he introduced the strategy in this excerpt saying, "make your chart," it was obvious students knew to what chart he was referring because they had done the same activity in previous lessons. James's use of this strategy over time suggests that

instructional strategies that fill a perceived need for improved student learning are more likely to become part of teachers' practice.

Reflections on interest and need. Each teacher attempted a new literacy strategy or teaching technique as a result of our work together. The strategies they chose to employ were dependent on what they perceived students needed instructionally in order to be successful. With James, he was most concerned about preparing students for success on the end-of-course exam through vocabulary instruction. Carl was concerned with helping his students become more vocal during teacher-led discussions. Amy was concerned with ways to support students' analysis of texts. Sandra was concerned about how to effectively teach and manage ninth grade students. Teachers' immediate instructional needs drove our work together.

Coaching must follow a teacher's perceived need and interest in order to build trusting relationship that supports continued change. I found myself trying to find ways to support teachers in ways that attempted to solve a particular instructional problem and also encompassed a more student-centered approach. While this approach to coaching did result in changes in practice, those changes were small. For coaching to be a successful way to support teacher change, it must continue over an extended period. In the next section, I will discuss how incorporating new practices challenges teachers' identity.

Teaching Identity

As I analyzed coaching conversations, I began to notice teachers' beliefs about high school English instruction were closely related to their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities as educators. My third research question asked: what do coaching

conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices? Analysis of the data for this question resulted in one major finding: incorporating new practices challenges teacher identity. The theme that encapsulates this finding is "I know me": maintaining comfort and control. In the following section, I will describe how teachers in this study communicated their beliefs about the purpose and nature of literacy instruction at the high school level which demonstrate their teaching identity.

"I know me": maintaining comfort and control. While working with the teachers over the semester, each tried a new strategy or technique; however, their primary method of teaching did not change significantly. Teachers' words and actions best exemplify their beliefs about the nature of literacy instruction at the high school level.

Carl. This can first be seen in the following three excerpts from Carl's pre-study questionnaire:

Excerpt 1:	I probably do not use an exact version of balanced literacy. I do cover all of the components, but it seems more conducive to me and my students to isolate each section and then incorporate them in as we read and discuss literature.
Excerpt 2:	Many of the members of my English department are like me in their approach to teaching concepts in isolation.
Excerpt 3:	I am always open to trying new ideas; however, it must make sense to me as being better than what works. I want my kids to learn and to grow. I also want to maintain my sense of self and control in my classroom.

Carl began to reveal his views regarding the nature of high school English instruction through these excerpts. In the first excerpt, Carl refers to balanced literacy as components he "covers" in "isolation" which both demonstrates a misunderstanding of the framework and shows his preferred method of instruction is a traditional transmission model. These words suggest that Carl believes students must possess specific skills and knowledge prior to discussing literature. His focus on coverage in the first excerpt shows that Carl envisions English teaching as the means of imparting these skills and knowledge to students. This view places students in the role of receivers of information who must rely on the teacher's knowledge before they can think independently.

He further reveals his adherence to a traditional paradigm in the second excerpt. He states that the other teachers in his department think and teach as he does by "teaching concepts in isolation." By referring to other teachers, he demonstrates a sense of safety in his adherence to a traditional approach. This comment shows he is not alone in his views. He surrounds his stance with the support and authority of his teaching community. This allows him to feel a sense of camaraderie with others in his traditional beliefs which serves as another means of validating his attachment to his current practices.

In the last excerpt from Carl's pre-study questionnaire, he concedes that he is "open to trying new ideas," but he immediately distances himself from opportunities to change by following with the contrasting statement, "however, it must make sense to me as being better than what works." This shows that he feels his traditional paradigm of instruction is successful. Carl finds comfort in the traditional roles of teacher and

student. It is a model with which he is familiar, so deviating from this paradigm challenges his long-held values and teaching identity.

Carl's next words provide a deeper view into why he is reluctant to move away from a traditional paradigm of instruction. Carl states, "I also want to maintain my sense of self and control in my classroom." The "new ideas" and practices that balanced literacy provides are a direct challenge to Carl's teaching identity. He perceives changing from traditional instructional practices as a loss of control. His use of the possessive pronoun "my" shows that he feels possession over his classroom and his current methods of teaching. By relinquishing traditional practices, Carl would be transferring authority to his students which is a threat to his "sense of self" as he describes it. A change from these traditional practices would overturn his view of how learning transpires in a high school English classroom. A move too far outside his realm of comfort and control poses a direct challenge to his sense of authority as a teacher and his values of how education operates.

Carl's resistance to change was also evident as he vacillated in his desire to implement literature circles. Throughout the semester Carl expressed interest in implementing literature circles, but he also expressed hesitation almost as soon as he began talking about the topic. This pattern presents itself during the first coaching conversation as evidenced in the following excerpt from February 19:

(Notes from coaching conversation, February 19)

Me:	Ok, so this semester what's something you want to try?

Carl:	Literature circles but I'm not sure how to do that or when I would try it.

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This first exchange shows that Carl knows implementing literature circles would pose a significant change to his normal method of teaching. His hesitation presents itself when he uses the word "but" as soon as he mentions a concept outside his conception of how English education operates. In response, I began to explain how to use literature circles around a theme or with an anchor text. As I continued explaining, I noticed his discomfort with the concept. At that point, the following exchange transpired:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, February 19)

Me: What makes you nervous about that [literature circles]?

Carl: I like using the textbook. Everything's already there. The vocabulary, questions. It's already put together; I don't see why I would need to try it a different way.

Carl's response demonstrates how his traditional practices are closely tied to his beliefs about education and literary criticism. The textbook serves as the authority on what needs to be learned from literature. Carl's embrace of using the textbook or a study guide for teaching students literature reveals his adherence to New Criticism and works neatly within his traditional paradigm of instruction.

Carl used the textbook or a premade study guide for all literature except when he taught a unit on *The Old Man and the Sea.* During this unit he began using leveled questioning and double-entry journals (DEJs). I suggested these strategies to him in a coaching conference on March 25. Since the start of our coaching cycles, we had been exploring why his students seemed quiet during class. As a result of my first observation, we discovered that teacher-directed questioning was the primary means of communication, even when he attempted to use a student-centered discussion

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technique. In an effort to provide an alternative to study guides and shift responsibility for analysis to students, I suggested teaching students how to write leveled questions to guide their reading within a double-entry journal.

Although he used these strategies for his unit with *The Old Man and the Sea*, he did not continue the practice with the next unit of instruction. During our last coaching conference June 5, we discussed his decision not to continue using the DEJs after spring break and what from the coaching cycles he would continue to use the next school year:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, June 5)

Carl:	I did not use the DEJs with *Of Mice and Men*. With *Old Man and the Sea*, they seemed to come away with a better understanding and were able to go deeper. In a lot of essays they were comparing heroes in *Antigone*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Old Man and the Sea*. It was clear they could analyze Santiago better.
Me:	Why not continue using the DEJs?
Carl:	I don't know. Comfort, I guess. There's a comfort in having study guide questions to know what they were looking for and evaluating what they know even though they can look at it on cliff notes.

Carl's focus on evaluating students shows that he believes students should develop a single interpretation of texts. His role in this paradigm becomes that of an assessor to check students' interpretation against his predetermined correct interpretation. He continues to reveal this through the next interchange during this same June 5 reflective coaching conversation:

Me:	What will you carry forward next year?

Carl: Definitely wait time--giving them more wait time and holding all

accountable for an answer, not just taking volunteers. And I want

to make them think. I'll continue modeling with writing and

reading anchor texts. I want to continue making them come up

with questions. I want to find a way to tweak that for my benefit

and find a way to grade it and see what they are getting out of the

text. I didn't do a very good job of assessing what they did. I

know me. I struggle with taking them [notebooks] up and giving

them back. I have to have a way of doing that.

Even when Carl acknowledged that his students' ability to analyze Santiago had

improved in their final essays for *The Old Man and the Sea* unit as compared to the

previous essay they wrote analyzing *Antigone*, he chose to return to using study guides

for the rest of the semester. His comfort with knowing the answers he expected students

to possess about a text outweighed the satisfaction he felt with his students' improved

analysis skills. This suggests that the need for control supported by a traditional

paradigm of teaching provides a feeling of stability for Carl. Study guide questions

provide an easy way to assess students. Answers are either right or wrong. DEJs do not

offer the same level of certainty for someone who holds a traditional view.

Amy. As a veteran teacher of over twenty years, Carl's teaching identity has been

fully formed. In contrast, Amy was in her first year of teaching at the same school during

this study. She is in the process of forming her teaching identity. Amy also had no

undergraduate experience in education courses. She is currently in an alternative

certification program where college graduates can begin working in their field of

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expertise while earning a teaching certificate. Amy majored in English with a concentration in creative writing. Her only knowledge of pedagogical terminology comes from what she has learned in her alternative certification program or from what she is learning about teaching through school-level professional development.

Amy's pre-study questionnaire begins to reveal her beliefs about the nature of education versus what she was coming to understand as a first-year teacher. The following excerpt shows this tension:

Amy: ...a lot of things I feel as though I cannot do because students

                don't comprehend what they're reading. I can't do studies on

                novels I think they would enjoy because I'm given a list of titles I

                HAVE to teach no matter how boring they are. I'd rather have the

                freedom to choose what titles I use to teach specific standards,

                within reason. I feel as though admin [administration] cares more

                about SLO scores than if a student can write a complete sentence.

Although the district did not provide a list of titles teachers are required to teach, Amy clearly received the message from her school that she must restrict her students to a particular list of "boring" titles which means works from the cannon. Amy also attended this high school as a student. The titles she felt compelled to teach were also the titles she studied as a student here. This shows that Amy was beginning to enact the traditional philosophy of teaching she received as a student even though she desired to teach in a different way.

When I first began coaching Amy, she was teaching a unit on *The Fall of the House of Usher* and other works by Edgar Allen Poe as she was moving students through

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the Gothic Romance period of American literature. Her background in creative writing

shined as she explained the project they would complete with that unit. Students were

expected to demonstrate their knowledge of Poe by creating a mock Facebook account;

however, her lesson that day demonstrated a conflicting belief system. The following is

an excerpt from her lesson on March 6:

Background Prezi on Poe -Look for simile, metaphor… -Began explaining Facebook project [very creative] -Showed a student example [artistic elements in example; cardboard/cardstock model of a smartphone with Facebook account on screen]	6 on phones Others listening to Prezi lecture on simile and metaphor.
Began playing recording of "The Raven" [background music is distracting] -Teacher is sitting in the front of the room behind the podium. Not addressing phones. -Looked in direction of student on phone -Moved from podium to address student individually. -Addressed students to put away phone from front of room [sitting behind podium]	4 on phones Others watching Prezi and listening to reading of "The Raven" Student raises hand back right [can't hear conversation]
Resumed Prezi lecture on "The Raven." Teacher-directed questions on examples of figurative language in the poem. [keeps answering her own questions]	Student at back left near me stated the raven was a symbol. [teacher did not acknowledge]

Figure 4.4 Excerpt from Amy's first observation

The method of instruction that day was lecture and teacher-directed

questioning. Amy only moved from the front of the room when a student had a question

she needed to address individually. Otherwise, she stayed in the front of the room to

present the Prezi lecture. As she moved through the slideshow, she asked questions about

figurative language but did not give enough wait time before saying or displaying the answer on the Prezi. One student began to explain how the raven was a symbol, but Amy clicked forward in the slideshow without recognizing the student's contribution.

Amy's use of teacher-directed questions with already determined correct answers shows how she viewed her role as a high school English teacher. This observation suggested that she believed students must have the correct interpretation of a text before they could engage with the material in a creative way. Amy's use of study guides helped her maintain control over students' learning. If only one interpretation of a text is correct, study guides provided the correct interpretation. Lecture and teacher-direct questioning offered the most suitable practices to elicit the correct answers from students. Her use of this style of teaching demonstrated inconsistency in her enacted practices and beliefs.

In this early observation, Amy demonstrated a conflict between the student-centered values displayed by her responses in the pre-questionnaire and her use of traditional teaching practices. In her questionnaire, she demonstrated preference for student-centered instructional practices when she stated, "I'd rather have the freedom to choose what titles I use to teach specific standards." She further demonstrated a tendency toward student-centered approaches when she said, "I want to see growth and excitement from my students and I want to have a hand in stopping readicide (the killing of reading...also a great book by Kelly Gallagher)." Her creative project with Poe also demonstrated a tendency toward student-centered practices; however, her use of lecture and study guide questions suggested Amy harbored more traditional beliefs.

As the semester progressed, cycles of coaching conversations and observations began to show increased alignment in Amy's beliefs and practices. In our last coaching conference on June 5, Amy explained how she finally "let go" of study guides. The following excerpt explains her decision:

(Notes from reflective coaching journal, June 5)

Me:	I noticed during your Gatsby unit that you were using a study guide even as you began using the three questions during shared reading strategy. Did you continue using them?
Amy:	I did let them go because I was tired of doing them. They [students] were waiting on me and terrified of getting them wrong. I just stopped after chapter six.

Amy's decision to discontinue using study guides shows that she began to place more emphasis on the time she was giving students to respond to her questions in writing and discuss their answers with a partner. Using the study guides gave Amy a sense of control over the content and skills students she believed the students needed to master. As she gained confidence in her abilities to guide student learning using more authentic, student-centered methods, Amy began to "let go" of traditional teaching methods. This created more harmony between Amy's chosen instructional practices and her developing teaching identity.

After the conclusion of this study, Amy joined a class I began over the summer in disciplinary literacy. Work for this course continued into the fall semester. Amy's continued refinement of her beliefs and practices can be seen in the following online post from Amy on August 14:

Teachers need to also remember that we are students. Everyday is a new lesson for us as well. I agree that we do not just teach students our subject area. We are teaching them how to learn and how to cultivate their gifts and talents.

This comment demonstrates Amy's growing confidence in her identity as a high school English teacher. Positioning herself as a learner in her classroom changes the power dynamic she displayed during my first observation. As she has become more comfortable in her perception of her role as a teacher, Amy has shifted her focus of learning from a traditional transmission model to a constructivist model.

Her beliefs about the nature of instruction are becoming more congruent with her chosen instructional practices. This provides Amy with a sense of control over the practices she chooses to employ in the classroom. This can be seen by the following excerpt from an October 15 online post concerning her continued use of shared writing this semester:

Shared writing is a weekly thing. At first it they [students] didn't understand what was happening and they didn't believe I didn't have something prewritten, but now they look forward to seeing me write stuff out on the Promethean board before they have to.

Amy is now in her second year of teaching. As she continues to align her beliefs and practices, she is resolving the tensions displayed at the beginning of this study. Enacting the traditional practices to which she was exposed as a student in the high school where she now teaches began to challenge Amy's developing teaching identity. She was able to explore these tensions through reflective coaching conversations. This allowed Amy to

find harmony in her beliefs and practices and maintain a sense of control over becoming the high school English teacher envisions herself to be.

Reflections on teaching identity. From this work with teachers, I began to realize that teaching identity is closely related to beliefs and values about the nature of education. The instructional practices teachers continue to use (or not use) after our work together show how beliefs and practices are inextricably intertwined. The need to find harmony in these beliefs and practices seems to drive acceptance or rejection of new practices. In working with teachers, I must remember that any change is dependent on beliefs. When these beliefs have been held for many years, as in the case with Carl, change is less likely to continue without support.

Although teachers in this study entered into cycles of coaching with me over one semester, my support of their continued professional growth has not ended. I continued to provide district-level professional development and observe as reflect with teachers using a coaching model of administrative support. Literacy coaching provides differentiated support as teachers' examine their instructional beliefs and practice through reflective conversations. In the next chapter, I will explore implications for this practice.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, and Implications

In this chapter I provide a brief summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the major findings. The implications for administrators working with teachers using a coaching model and recommendations for future research are presented.

Summary of the Study

In the spring of 2019, I worked in a literacy coaching relationship with four high school English teachers located at three different high schools within my school district. I entered into coaching cycles consisting of a pre-observation coaching conference, observation (modeling or co-teaching), and a post-observation coaching conference. The purpose of this study was to discover what a coaching model of administrative support reveals about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices. The specific research questions guiding this study were:

1. How can an English Language Arts Coordinator support teachers as they prepare to implement a balanced literacy framework of instruction?

2. In what ways does participation in a coaching relationship affect high school English teachers' instructional practices?

3. What do coaching conversations reveal about teacher beliefs and practices?

I hoped to understand what supports teachers need to move from a traditional model of high school English instruction to a balanced literacy model of instruction. In doing so, I drew from participatory action research methods (PAR) to design this

qualitative study. I collected data using the following methods: questionnaires, coaching conversations, field notes, and reflective journals. I sought to use these methods of data collection to build a rich and complete picture in order to understand how to support teachers' professional growth within my role as an ELA coordinator housed at the district office. PAR assumes the researcher and co-researchers are working toward a common goal of change that may have lasting impact on the persons involved and the institution itself. I learned much more than what I originally sought to understand. I learned about teachers' professional needs for making changes to their practice, the importance of finding balance between instructional beliefs and practices, and the difficulties of assuming dualistic roles. In the following sections, I discuss conclusions drawn from major findings and the implications for educational professionals and researchers.

Discussion of Findings and Implications for Continued Action

As I collected and analyzed data for this study, I began to understand why high school English teachers have difficulty implementing a balanced literacy framework of instruction. I also discovered how literacy coaching opens a space for developing reflective practice. Through reflective coaching conversations, teachers can begin to examine their current instructional practices, new practices they would like to implement, and tensions that may arise from a disconnection between beliefs and practices. The implications for teachers and instructional leaders discussed in this section are based upon the findings of this dissertation study. These findings are limited to the context and design of this study and are not meant to be generalized; however, instructional leaders (i.e., ELA coordinators, principals, assistant principals, and literacy coaches) who support teachers through a coaching model may gain insight into the nature of change when

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implementing a new instructional model. Teachers may use the findings of this study to advocate for the type of personalized support literacy coaching can provide.

Several trends emerged from the studies reviewed concerning the effect of literacy coaching on teachers' practice. The findings from the studies reviewed suggest that literacy coaching can increase teachers' use of best practices when district and school leaders actively support teachers' professional growth through sharing a common vision, developing mutual trust, and engaging in reflective practice (Gibson, 2005; Mangin, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2009; Peterson et al., 2009). As I entered into coaching relationships with the teachers in this study, I drew upon my previous experience as a high school literacy coach and my role as a district literacy leader to support teachers in implementing pedagogical change. I knew developing trust in the process of coaching would take time, but I hoped my position as an ELA coordinator who had already established relationships with three of these teachers would allow us to focus on the work of implementing components more quickly.

The balanced literacy framework is a model of literacy instruction the district adopted six years ago. District-level professional development has been provided for teachers and communicated to principals; however, the frequency of administrative change at the school and district leadership levels has limited the full implementation of the framework within individual teachers' classrooms across the district. When administrative turnover is high, progress toward a common vision slows. This has been the case for CSD. In addition to administrative change, the effects of high-poverty and historically low standardized test scores create an urgency in leaders to see rapid change in teachers' practices and as a result in students' test scores. The research on literacy

coaching suggests substantial change in teachers' practice occurs gradually as they become more reflective practitioners (Gibson, 2005; Knight, 2004; Peterson et al., 2009).

As a result of engaging in this study, I have come to the conclusion that high school English teachers in CSD need a school-based literacy coach who can support their development of reflective practice. The teachers in this study made small changes to their instructional practices by trying new literacy strategies or techniques, but continued use of these practices is dependent on teachers' willingness to change and willingness to engage in reflective practices on their own. Teachers do not need a literacy coach to think critically about what they can do to improve student learning. They could keep a reflective journal or form professional relationships with colleagues to examine their practices; however, these practices are less likely when they have not been modeled or expected. Having a literacy coach at each school would provide teachers with someone who can lead this reflective practice on a consistent basis.

Coaching as a tool for individualized professional development. Studies of literacy coaching reviewed found that the coaching model affects change in teachers' instructional practices (Cantrell et al., 2009; Steckel, 2009). Studies also found that literacy coaches provide an effective tool for assisting teachers in becoming reflective practitioners (Gibson, 2005; Peterson et al., 2009). Additionally, studies found that literacy coaches' support for teachers varied based on teachers' perceived instructional needs and professional interests (Blamey et al., 2008; Cantrell et al., 2009; Knight, 2004).

Findings from the studies reviewed as well as data collected during this study support the connection between literacy coaching and adult learning theory (Rogers, 1969; Knowles, 1984). Through data analysis, I concluded that the strategies and

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techniques teachers chose to implement were ones they were intrinsically motivated to explore in order to satisfy perceived needs they felt concerning student learning. Rogers's (1969) theory of experiential learning suggests significant learning is more likely to take place and have a lasting effect when learning is self-initiated, personally relevant, and non-threatening. Literacy coaching has the ability to satisfy these principles.

Each teacher in this study tried at least one new student-centered instructional practice over the course of the semester. These practices included the implementation of a new approach to vocabulary instruction, annotation techniques, shared reading and writing, conferring, and lesson planning. Using the coaching model allowed me to develop supportive relationships with the teachers in this study. My observations and coaching conferences provided a low-threat environment for teachers' professional learning. Using an administrative model of coaching, positioned me as a colleague rather than an administrator. Observations never included formal evaluation instruments. Data collected were discussed as facts used to examine practice against student outcomes. Work with teachers was based on their interests and their goals for student learning. While my interest was in preparing teachers to implement balanced literacy instruction, I knew teachers' interest must serve as the basis for moving toward student-centered instructional practices.

Similarly, Knowles (1984) recognizes that adult learning is inherently personal and problem-centered in nature. Coaching conferences with teachers in this study always included a current problem with student learning they were interested in solving. The strategies and techniques proposed during reflective conversations served as both a way

to address teachers' needs concerning improving student learning outcomes and a way for me to support incremental changes in their instructional practice. Cycles of coaching also provided space for teachers to experiment with a new approach. Between goal setting during the pre-conference, implementation of the literacy strategy or technique, and post-conferences, teachers were able to tailor support to meet their needs. At times this presented as modeling, co-teaching, or observing. This space to try without the threat of evaluation supported key principles from Knowles's (1984) theory of andragogy which suggests adult learning is experiential, problem-centered, personal, and timely.

Implications for the coaching model of professional development. The findings from this study coupled with support from adult learning theory hold implications for educators. Administrators who adopt a coaching model of support can break down traditional barriers that exist between leadership and teachers. When professional development embodies the key principles of adult learning theory, teachers may feel more freedom to try new instructional approaches. This could make the change process easier as teachers begin to feel professional development is more relevant to their professional interests and instructional needs. Conversely, if teachers do not feel a need to engage in the process of coaching, then professional growth may stagnate. Coaching for instructional and institutional change is a process that takes more than one semester. The time limitations of this study show that changing teachers' beliefs about the nature of student learning are inextricably tied to their practices and discord in beliefs and practices can cause the change process to slow or even halt.

Creating harmony between instructional beliefs and practices. Reflective conferences became the vehicle for examining progress in meeting teachers' self-initiated

goals and moves toward student-centered instructional practices. Bandura (1986) suggested "people not only gain understanding through reflection, they evaluate and alter their own thinking" (p. 21). The purposeful questioning used during reflective coaching conferences served as a way for teachers to verbalize their beliefs as they examined their instructional practices. Burns (1992) contends that teachers' personalized theories about how to teach and how students learn underlie their classroom practices and often remain hidden and implicit. Creating a space for professional learning through reflective coaching conversations brought teachers' implicit beliefs into the open where teachers could investigate why they may have been holding onto a practice that is no longer effective.

The inherent need for creating harmony between beliefs and practices was an important driving force motivating teachers in this study to sustain changes to their instructional practices or abandon those changes for more comfortable practices. Zheng (2013) explains teachers' beliefs and practices are complexly intertwined with teaching conditions and are subject to variations based on context. In this study, three of the four teachers experienced a level of newness. One was new to teaching, another was new to the grade level, and the other was new to the school and had not taught that particular English course in many years. The fact that three of the four teachers were in the midst of change may have contributed to their resistance or acceptance of new instructional practices. Teachers experiencing this type of change need professional learning that is ongoing and job-embedded to support them in sustaining student-centered practices.

Literacy coaching provided a chance for teachers to explore new ideas in a space that met them where they were. Support was nonjudgmental and tailored to the

immediate instructional needs and interests of each teacher. Administrators who attempt to engage in this model of support may not enjoy the same freedoms I did. Building level administrators such as assistant principals and principals are often required by state or local mandates to complete evaluation instruments. This would inherently change the nature of a coaching relationship. Also, the duties of managing a school could limit the time building level administrators have to engage in complete cycles of coaching.

Limitations of using coaching to affect instructional change. Although I was able to remain in a non-evaluative role, my duties as a district level ELA coordinator did impact the amount of time I could spend at each school. Consistent cycles of coaching over an extended time are needed to sustain teachers' professional growth. Districts and schools wanting to see high school teachers move from the traditional model of teaching to a social constructivist model must provide teachers with ongoing support through reflective communities of practice or a dedicated on-site literacy coach. ELA coordinators who try to take on this model of support must understand the limitations of not being present in the school on a daily basis. Change in this circumstance is not inevitable; however, those who take up this work must understand that the change process will take time. Through collaboration with the principal or administrator responsible for professional development, an administrative model of coaching could be used to align the school and district goals for teacher growth with teachers' own professional learning needs.

Implications for future action. This study provided incredible insight into how my role as the district ELA coordinator holds both limitations and possibilities for supporting teachers' professional growth. With nearly 1000 kindergarten through high

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school teachers in CSD, I cannot possibly enter into coaching relationships with all who need individualized support to implement the balanced literacy framework. Balancing time among sustained cycles of literacy coaching and other administrative duties was extremely difficult and not sustainable over time; however, merely offering professional development on the balanced literacy framework during the limited district in-service days is equally ineffective. Others must share in this work, and more opportunities for on-going professional development must be provided.

One action I have taken since the conclusion of this study is to offer professional development courses to teachers and administrators. These courses satisfy the mandated legislative literacy credit teachers and administrators must earn to keep their educational license current and provide an extended opportunity for professional development which includes coaching to implement the practices learned in the course. Two of the teachers in this study have joined the professional development course for teachers. John and Amy are continuing to implement components of the balanced literacy framework and have increased their use of more student-centered instructional practices over the fall semester. As all of the teachers in this course continue to implement more of the framework, they serve as models for other teachers in their buildings.

Offering an administrator-centered professional development course is essential in sustaining the effort to increase the implementation of the balanced literacy framework. School-level administrators are in the best position to affect change in classrooms. This course offers them a chance to learn how the balanced literacy framework should be implemented and requires they examine the current state of literacy in their buildings. One of the course assignments is to work with a teacher in a coaching relationship during

a unit of instruction. This provides administrators hands-on experience using the administrative model of coaching. Another requirement is to develop a plan for literacy professional development. This professional development course offers a way to share the responsibility for changing instructional practices that isolated district in-service cannot.

Building the capacity of school-level reading and instructional coaches is another way to support teachers' professional growth. The elementary reading coaches have been trained by the state department of education; however, none of the middle school instructional coaches have been trained in a coaching model. The high schools do not have coaches. Department chairs and assistant principals of instruction share the responsibility for providing school-wide professional development during in-service each Friday and supporting teachers' on-going professional growth. The secondary teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators who serve in these roles must be trained in coaching. With the entrance of a new superintendent, there is a possibility of beginning a district-wide training program for those in the position of a coach.

Implications for future research. The nature of this particular context and methodology of this study created limitations. Participatory action research (PAR) requires cycles of action with engaged participants who often do not have experience as researchers; however, PAR levels the power dynamic other forms of research create. While this methodology positioned me in the role of support for teachers as we engaged in cycles of reflective coaching conversations to examine practice and beliefs, I cannot be sure teachers continued to engage in reflective practice when I was not there to guide their reflection.

Teachers in this study were asked to keep a reflective journal as a means of engaging in the type of reflection alone that we experienced through coaching conversations. As I met with teachers, I would ask them how journaling was going, but I did not ask teachers to share their journals with me during those times. Only two of the four teachers submitted reflective journals at the end of this study. The ones who did submit reflective journals did not write in them on a weekly basis. In many of the entries, teachers summarized what transpired during a coaching conversation or classroom visit without much reflection on how these encounters affected their thoughts about instruction.

Researchers who are interested in using PAR to study literacy coaching should budget additional time to review reflective journals and code the data together. I assumed that explaining the coding process and providing instructions on basic coding techniques would be enough support. At the time I believed that examining their reflective journals together during the cycles of coaching would limit their depth of written reflection and influence the way they perceived their data. In hindsight, I believe the data could have been even richer had I given time to examine reflection journals together the way we examined observational data.

Another limitation to this study was time. Developing a coaching relationship takes considerable time because teachers' comfort in trying new practices is dependent on the level of trust established in the relationship. Researchers interested in how literacy coaching changes teachers' beliefs and practices may want to design a longitudinal study that uses multiple extended cycles of PAR. As a researcher studying the context of my

professional work with teachers, I can continue this work as I design professional

learning opportunities.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand what a coaching model of administrative support

revealed about high school English teachers' beliefs and practices and how literacy

coaching supported teachers as they prepared to implement a balanced literacy

framework of instruction. I drew upon Vygotsky and Bandura as I stated my belief in the

social nature of learning (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). Coaching provides a space

where teachers can develop new instructional practices through working with someone

who has a degree of expertise in a particular area. As teachers learn to implement new

instructional strategies and techniques, they benefit from the modeled practices and

guided reflection coaching provides. Through the process of working with a coach,

teachers are able to learn naturally through observation and are given the reflective space

they need to make changes in their teaching practices.

I also must acknowledge how adult learning theory applies to literacy coaching.

In my belief that learning must be person-centered (Knowles 1984; Rogers, 1969),

coaching becomes a tool for differentiating professional development. Coaches must

take into account teachers' needs and areas of interest when entering into a coaching

relationship. While the impetus behind literacy coaching may be for adopting a specific

model of instruction, district and school leaders must understand that change takes time

and is led by teachers' involvement in the process.

The findings in this study add to the body of literature available on literacy

coaching as a model of professional development. Specifically, this study explores

coaching in the high school English setting. As a result of this study, I have gained

greater insight into how I can continue to support teachers in my role as an ELA

coordinator. I have also gained insight into why teachers in this particular context have

not completely implemented the balanced literacy framework. As I go forward in my

work with teachers in my district, I will use the findings and implications of this study to

continue to support teachers' professional growth.

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Appendix A: Pre-study Questionnaire

Teaching Background
1. How many years have you been teaching? What are your certifications? What grades/courses have you taught? Which are your favorites? Is there anything particular you would like to share about your teaching experiences? (First year of teaching, other teaching experiences, etc.)

Balanced Literacy
2. What is your definition of balanced literacy?

3. What do you know about the components of the balanced literacy framework of instruction? Provide a description for each of the components you are familiar with below.
   Read aloud/interactive read aloud:
   Shared Reading:
   Guided Reading:
   Literature Circles/Book Clubs:
   Independent Reading:
   Shared Writing:
   Interactive Writing:
   Guided Writing:
   Independent Writing:
   Minilessons:

4. Do you feel that you implement a balanced literacy framework in your classroom? If you do, how do you feel that you implement balanced literacy into your classroom? If you don't, what framework do you feel you follow? Please explain.

5. Do you feel that your school follows and/or supports a balanced literacy framework? Why or why not?

6. What areas (components) do you feel are easier to implement in a balanced literacy framework?

7. In your opinion, which areas (components) are harder to implement within the framework?

8. What professional development related to implementing any type of literacy within your classrooms does your school provide?

9. What do you want to accomplish through our coaching sessions this semester?

10. If given the chance to pick the professional development that your district would provide for balanced literacy components, which workshops/PD programs would you ask to be provided?

Appendix B: Post-Study Questionnaire

Balanced Literacy
1. What is your definition of balanced literacy?

2. What do you know about the components of the balanced literacy framework of instruction?
   Read aloud/interactive read aloud:
   Shared Reading:
   Guided Reading:
   Literature Circles/Book Clubs:
   Independent Reading:
   Shared Writing:
   Interactive Writing:
   Guided Writing:
   Independent Writing:
   Minilessons:

3. Do you feel that you implement a balanced literacy framework in your classroom? If you do, how do you feel that you implement balanced literacy into your classroom? If you don't, what framework do you feel you follow? Please explain.

4. Do you feel that your school follows and/or supports a balanced literacy framework? Why or why not?

5. What areas (components) do you feel are easier to implement in a balanced literacy framework?

6. In your opinion, which areas (components) are harder to implement within the framework?

7. What do you consider your greatest success in implementing the balanced literacy framework this semester?

8. What are your plans for implementing the balanced literacy framework next semester?

9. How has participating in a coaching model of administrative support affected your beliefs about literacy instruction? Your practices?

10. If given the chance to pick the professional development that your district would provide for balanced literacy components, which workshops/PD programs would you ask to be provided?

Appendix C: Coaching Conference Record Form

Teacher(s): _____   **Grade/Subject:** _____

Coach: _____   **Date:** _____

How It's Going: **Items Discussed:** **For Future Discussion:**

Next Steps
Goal:
 	
Action Steps:
          Teacher:
 	
          Coach:
 	
Next Meeting:
 	
Bring to Next Meeting: